

PIERROT INTERPRETATIONS PAST AND PRESENT: THOUGHTS AND COMPARISONS.

For many years I was extremely chary of listening to other singers' performances of PIERROT, preferring to work alone, my perspective unclouded by outside influences. With anyone possessing a trained musical ear there is always the danger of imitating, however unconsciously. Arresting details imprint themselves on the memory instantly, and are all too easily recalled when performing.

The intensive listening I've undertaken over the last few years has been something of a shock to the system; one that I anticipated with some trepidation. I have constantly had to re-evaluate my own entrenched ideas and avoid being unduly judgmental and over-critical. I am all too aware of the magnitude of the artistic challenge, and the weight of diverse musicological musings and analyses (the vast majority of these by non-singers, however). But the experience has also had elements of pleasurable surprise, and provided a stimulus to the germination and flowering of fresh ideas about the piece from many different and often unexpected angles. Ultimately, I have found this detailed probing into others' efforts a thoroughly worthwhile and liberating exercise.

As a performer it is instinctive to feel empathy with one's fellow-professionals who are embarked on a similar quest. Everyone is surely giving their best and continually aiming for greater improvement. One should never be too proud to glean tips from others, or to acknowledge the merits of interpretations that may not happen to accord with personal inclinations.

The matter of style in general continues to be controversial. My own research has raised even more questions than I envisaged, and proved somewhat unsettling. Several admirably faithful and polished modern performances have tended to concentrate on the 'light ironic' aspect which Schoenberg mentioned as important. Yet it seems to me a pity to leave out the element of Expressionism altogether, especially for the more violent and power-driven passages. Too lightweight an approach can be a little uninvolved. Earlier interpreters, despite lapses of rhythmic and tonal accuracy, often seem to be successful in preserving the distinctive flavour of the time of the work's conception and creation.

Audiences, both general listeners and critics, tend to react according to whether they already know the piece intimately or not. Sometimes they are merely responding to the physical impact of the vocal effort put in, and to the sound of an individual voice, according to personal taste and prejudice. Ideally, the work should be appreciated as an organic musical-dramatic whole, but this can prove an elusive goal. .

As an audio experience PIERROT ought to be compelling enough, without the aid of the visual element. One should always bear in mind, however, that recordings are 'artificially' balanced and may boost weaker strands, removing the effort of achieving the more extreme dynamic contrasts as stipulated by Schoenberg.

The rise of the recording industry and huge advances in technology can perhaps give us unreal expectations. Artists whose lives are now spent mainly in the recording studio can even be

reluctant to develop their voices to full capacity. There is now a considerable audience market for the pure, even naïve, child-like quality favoured for early music in particular.

Even on the operatic stage these days, discreet amplification is often used to boost voices that in previous times would have been deemed unsuitable for the repertoire. Schoenberg had a keen interest in gadgetry, but his severely classical roots would surely have prevented him from approving the idea of any technological help in balancing PIERROT for the concert hall.

It still seems to me, and, I find now, to a majority of colleagues, that one should continue to aim for total accuracy of pitch, as well as of rhythm and dynamics. Schoenberg would surely have been happy if someone at the time had been capable of realising exactly what he wrote. His notation is so precise that it must matter how the voice relates to the instrumental parts, and what intervals are exposed (and not just those in movements with strict canons or repetitions.)

Some artists of considerable musical integrity have, however, opted for relative pitch intervals. A very few (with whom I am less able to identify) feel that Schoenberg's equivocal instructions leave everything wide open for them to be as free as they wish. Regrettably, a diva-worshipping public, or even the occasional non-singing fellow-professional, can seem to encourage superficial attitudes. Such is the lot of the singer: to be judged subjectively, with often highly personal emotional responses predominating

Voices differ greatly in weight and range, yet many recorded performances are surprisingly similar. In some of the more recent ones there is much evidence of cross-pollination. It is tempting to speculate as to who has heard whom. One is of course aware that even recorded performances may not always contain the singer's best 'takes'. Ensemble considerations may well have taken precedence, with moments of raggedness edited out.

Interestingly, after hearing a great many recorded performances, some of them from 'live' concerts, it appears that, in many of them, (including Schoenberg's own) some of the more challenging movements for all the musicians (e.g. nos. 8 *Nacht*, 13 *Entauptung* and 18 *Mondfleck*) are apt to come off best. This is perhaps because these have needed more rehearsal, giving the vocal soloist a chance to gain security and familiarity.

Even though Schoenberg's own recording with Erika Stiedry-Wagner ('made in one evening in 1940 in precarious conditions' according to Pierre Boulez,) is by no means flawless, it gives us a vital link. (An incomplete recording of a live New York concert that preceded it makes for an interesting comparison. This has a greater degree of spontaneity, but the ensemble comes adrift in several places.) Stiedry-Wagner makes a characterful effect throughout, and the special 'Viennese' stylistic touches are noticeable. She certainly employs *glissando* to authentic effect, especially in 'dance movements' such as *Valse de Chopin*. The more demanding movements (11, 13, 14, 15) do indeed tax her considerably and are not entirely convincing, but there can be no gainsaying the historical importance of this performance under the composer's own supervision and baton. At the Arnold Schoenberg Center in Vienna I recently had the opportunity of listening to the test pressings for that recording, newly acquired by the Center. In some of them, the vocal performance strikes me as slightly more assured than on the final recording, but ensemble is often a little shaky.

It seems that opinions of the best 'takes' were canvassed during the recording sessions from several interested parties. Erwin Stein, who had coached Albertine Zehme, the work's original commissioner and performer, and Schoenberg's young pupil, the late Dika Newlin, were amongst those present to help choose from the various alternatives.

One suspects that the PIERROT exponents of Schoenberg's day may not perhaps have had the technical command to sustain the very longest phrases and control rhythms precisely and accurately, but Schoenberg is known to have appreciated Erika Stiedry-Wagner's efforts. Like Frau Zehme, the original performer, she was an actress as well as a singer, and a sound musician. She and her conductor husband Fritz Stiedry were good friends and sympathetic colleagues of Schoenberg, and she gave a good many performances under the composer's auspices.

Schoenberg had been somewhat less happy with the German soprano Marya Freund (1876-1966) who gave the Paris premiere in French on the 16th of January 1922 under Darius Milhaud. This had been preceded by a partial performance on the 15th of December 1921, which was attended by Poulenc. Schoenberg felt that Freund 'sang' too much. Maria Gutheil-Schoder, his original choice for the American premiere, (and a superb exponent of the voice part of his Second String Quartet) apparently also had problems in this regard, as we read in Dika Newlin's book 'Schoenberg Remembered'.

Later, there was a double private hearing of the work in Vienna in August 1922 at Alma Mahler's house: first, Erika Wagner performed it with Erwin Stein conducting, and then it was the turn of Marya Freund under Milhaud (although some sources say the composer was directing this.) Freund continued to perform the piece for twenty years or more, evoking mixed reactions, and, despite his apparent disapproval, Schoenberg did conduct her performance twice more. Writing to ethnomusicologist André Schaeffner about his own 'recent' performance in 1961, Pierre Boulez uses the term 'freundisé' to describe parts that were 'too sung'.

It has been instructive to listen to some of the earlier recordings, even though a few are a little unsatisfactory in respect of German pronunciation as well as variety of timbre. Vocal tone sometimes sounds a little insecure, perhaps unlikely to transfer well to less specialised repertoire within a balanced concert programme. But as some were made under the influence of people close to Schoenberg, such as René Leibowitz (1913-1972) they merit our respectful attention. The performances of Ellen Adler (on the first recording made after Schoenberg's own) and Ethel Semser are typical. I regret very much that the recording by Hedli Anderson, that most distinguished early exponent in England, does not appear to be available at present. I understand that the master tape was destroyed in a fire.

When considering historic performances, one has always to be aware of the tensions of scholarly possessiveness, and the claims of various musicologists and Schoenberg pupils to be the true representatives of the master's vision. In an article *Trajectoires* in 1949, the young Pierre Boulez expressed some irritation at Leibowitz's assumption of the role of true upholder of Schoenberg's standards, and later admitted his relish at stirring up 'les vieux staliniers du schoenbergisme'. In fact, a highly valuable historical perspective can be gained by reading the published correspondence between Pierre Boulez and the veteran musical scholar and cultural guru André Schaeffner. Their often bracing exchange of letters continued intermittently from 1954 to 1970,

affording some marvellous insights into the musical climate in Paris. Boulez was twenty-five when they first became acquainted, and Schaeffner, thirty years his senior, was able to recount vivid memories of early PIERROT performances in Paris, as well as to discuss more modern versions from a broad aesthetic viewpoint. Boulez in a letter of 1961 describes Erika Wagner's recorded vocalising as 'miaowing like a cat dreadfully on heat,' but his attitudes have doubtless mellowed since then.

His own famous *Domaine Musical* Schoenberg concert in 1961 featured the dramatic soprano Helga Pilarczyk as *Sprecherin* in PIERROT. This was followed by a recording in 1962. Pilarczyk apparently made a great impression with a stunning outfit, and the performance was much admired by Schaeffner for its freshness, although he wished for more dramatic lighting to enhance the impact.

It has always been Boulez's view that any terror or horror expressed in the PIERROT texts is ironic and mocking, and that it must never become hysterical or exaggerated. In that letter to Schaeffner in 1961 he says that for him PIERROT LUNAIRE is a sort of 'superior cabaret'. Schaeffner, in reply, warns him about dwelling too strongly on this factor, and suggests that it is a '*cabaret noir*' since it includes such searing images as *Rote Messe* (undoubtedly a 'Black Mass' in his opinion). Boulez, in defence, promises that the heavier items such as *Nacht* no. 8, *Rote Messe* no. 11, *Die Kreuze* no.14, and *Madonna* no. 6 will have a dose of feigned terror 'to the limit of endurance'. He adds further that he meant 'cabaret' not 'chansonnier'! Boulez did in fact have some direct experience of cabaret, touring with the *Renauld/Barrault Company au Brésil* in both 1950 and 1954.

In another letter of 1962, Boulez expresses the opinion that PIERROT LUNAIRE has never found a model interpretation from the vocal point of view, on which one could base oneself. I recently listened to a tape (made on January 28th 1966 for Radio Zurich) of a fascinating and animated dialogue between Boulez and the philosopher Theodor Adorno. In it, they compare and discuss two particular PIERROT recordings: Boulez's own in 1962 with Helga Pilarczyk, and Schoenberg's of 1940. This conversation is now published in German.

Schoenberg may perhaps have under-estimated the trained singer's reluctance to abandon the habits of a lifetime spent polishing and honing an even tone, joining note to note in perfect *legato*. To subvert all this must have been traumatic for some early exponents, perhaps causing them to lose the confidence needed for a bolder personal approach. It is also small wonder that those artists who have struggled conscientiously to master the pitches are loath to relinquish them. The unfortunate result is often rather more 'sung' than intended.

I have the greatest respect for those people who, relatively unused to 'difficult' music, have managed to be accurate without the aid of perfect pitch. Yvonne Minton's recording with Pierre Boulez has acquired some notoriety as the 'sung PIERROT', but I greatly admire her exactness of pitch, which must have taken a great deal of commitment and effort. Even the more recent and much-praised recording by Pierre Boulez with the gifted German soprano Christine Schäfer has moments of pure singing in places that are not marked thus, the most telling being the opening line of no.21. It is this phrase in particular that seems to defeat many experienced artists. This is otherwise an admirable and polished performance, pleasing to the ear. The only interpretation I

myself heard before trying the piece, is Alice Howland's for Saga. This is a respectably straightforward version, if perhaps lacking a degree of excitement, since the vocal quality hardly varies throughout.

In the matter of delivery of the German text, there is a wide divergence between some of the early recorded versions. A huge increase in foreign travel and the proliferation of multi-media sources of education has inevitably led to a much greater level of familiarity with other languages, and a generally more sophisticated approach. The earlier non-German speaking artists tend to suffer in comparison with contemporary exponents, almost all of whom, despite their nationality, manage to sound at ease in the language, with authentic-sounding accents. Awareness of the 'music' of the text, and its specific sonic properties is a prime factor in achieving a successful performance, and those interpreters who possess strong verbal command as well as idiomatic German are particularly satisfying. The nature of speaking in contrast to singing is that, in speech, sounds are more 'clipped' in general. Continual elongation of vowels can blur outlines and sound a little unnatural, and one or two non-Germans fall into this trap

Some of the most appealing recordings are those that seem to preserve an authentic *fin-de-siècle* feeling – this is especially so of the Pilarcyck/Boulez (1961) and Héricard/Rosbaud versions. The latter, from 1957, is an impressive and thoroughly convincing rendering, even though vocal pitches are relative rather than as written. A lucid programme note, by Josef Häusler, describes *Sprechstimme* in its role of releasing the singer from the ingrained habit of orthodox vocalising, as 'the emancipation of noise' (a nice parallel with Schoenberg's well-quoted aim of 'the emancipation of dissonance'.) Large intervals at climactic moments can provide ideal expressive opportunities for swooping *glissandi*. Early performances contain many examples, and these were presumably guided by people in close contact with Schoenberg, such as Leibowitz and Rosbaud. However, for my taste, one or two subsequent interpreters overdo this a little, and the contours of the vocal lines risk becoming obscured by too many undulations. There seems to be a slight trend towards fewer *glissandi* in more modern performances.

Marie-Thérèse Escribano's interpretation has been much admired on the Continent. She is highly musical, light-voiced and flexible, often sounding rather coy and skittishly humorous. No doubt the text's ironic aspect is uppermost in this reading, although I feel there is not quite enough physical involvement in the more full-blooded and strenuous items. The excellent Hungarian Erika Sziklay employs *glissandi* fairly liberally- another lightweight but charming and flexible performance, which has much in common with Escribano's. As for those essaying a wider variety of timbre and imaginative characterisation, there are many splendid examples: Lucy Shelton (in both German and English), the Norwegian Anne-Marie Berntsen, and Marianne Pousseur all display a particularly broad range of colour and attack. Salome Kammer, like Stiedry-Wagner and Zehme a trained singer and actress, would seem to have the ideal background, combining the major attributes of dramatic and musical experience in a beautifully thought-out performance under Hans Zender.

There is a good deal of healthy cross-referencing amongst existing recordings. Several of the American singers in particular closely resemble one another and have clearly been familiar with each others' efforts. A truly original approach is much harder to come by these days, given the abundance of recordings and performances. A favourite amongst those heard thus far is the highly-experienced Anja Silja. She seems perfectly equipped, possessing a soprano voice of dramatic weight with a prodigious range and effortless reserves of power. She also has the requisite stamina, along with a striking presence and innate musicality. Sounding completely at home throughout, she commands an impressive variety of timbres. This performance is genuinely idiomatic and strikes at the very heart of the work.

The extreme diversity of the soloists who have appeared with Pierre Boulez in the work attests to his flexibility of attitude. In my recent interview, I found him most sympathetic and open to different views of interpretation, although I suspect he still dislikes any extreme vocalising that could verge on ugliness. One might here mention the role of the conductor, or leader of the ensemble. It is possible that, in some circumstances, collaboration between singer and conductor may not have been entirely happy. As singers we have all occasionally experienced undue autocracy, with our own wishes and views ignored. That said, no conductor should be subservient to the whims of a *prima donna* who wishes to convert the work into a personal vehicle, with instrumentalists reduced to subsidiary roles.

Ilona Steingruber, though undoubtedly lively, is musically capricious to a degree that tends to overstep the bounds of acceptability, and she loses control completely in *Die Kreuze!* I also regret I'm unable to share the enthusiasm expressed by some for the free interpretation of a highly distinguished German film actress. Doubtless she is a riveting performer and has a powerful presence. She does, I'm sure, bring something special to the work – but I feel that she also takes something out of it. One has always to remember that Schoenberg felt that the music itself said all that needed saying.

Just recently I listened to a performance by Germany's excellent Ensemble Modern, with another actress as soloist. This was, unfortunately, even less satisfactory: the voice part reduced to a series of vague squeals and raspings, with dynamics and intervals virtually ignored throughout. One cannot imagine any other revered masterpiece being treated with such disrespect.

It is perhaps unfair to make judgements without full knowledge of the individual circumstances of each performance. Elise Ross, performing under Simon Rattle takes some surprising liberties with tempi and dynamics in the interests of conveying the drama. The 'live' performances I've heard on disk certainly seem to have an extra dimension – that of spontaneity, even if minor fluffs are evident. Karin Ott's performance on a Swiss recording is a good example. There is much to enjoy in this interpretation, and her *Sprechstimme* is well-realised, with *glissandi* employed to best effect. Luisa Castellani's recording under Giuseppe Sinopoli also has many solid virtues. This is a well-rounded performance, secure and accurate. A pupil of Dorothy Dorow, Castellani shows the scrupulous attention to detail and flair of that admirable artist (whose performance I regret I never had the chance to hear). Marianne Pousseur (daughter of the late distinguished Belgian composer Henri Pousseur) is distinctively stylish; a true '*diseuse*', with a strong low range, full of character and infectious humour. (No.16 *Gemeinheit* is especially good in this respect.)The Norwegian soprano Anne-Marie Berntsen possesses an

ample voice and a strong dramatic presence. Occasionally a little wayward in detail, she really comes into her own in the contrasting dramas of Nos. 7 *Der Kranke Mond* and 14 *Die Kreuze*, and has no trouble scaling the climactic peaks of the latter.

Lucy Shelton's interpretation (without conductor) in both German and English is extremely attractive and persuasive, full of delightful touches, and very thoughtfully put together. I admire her tonal variety as well as her musical precision. There is no doubt that the absence of a conductor contributes to the feeling of mutual rapport and flexibility, with all participants listening and reacting keenly to one another. Both Phyllis Bryn-Julson and Jan de Gaetani (the latter recorded early in her sadly shortened career) serve the music's challenges with great vocal and rhythmic aplomb. Their performances have much in common, and seem to favour a slightly less Expressionistic approach than some others.

Linda Hirst, in the first performance of Andrew Porter's ingenious English translation, is bright-toned and fresh, full of vitality. Her high-placed mezzo seems particularly well-suited to the piece. Yumi Nara on a Belgian recording is quite unusual, and difficult to pin down. Enunciation lacks a certain crispness, but she is musically acute and sensitive, and her tone quality is deliberately monochrome, harking back to some earlier exponents. Many years on, it is hard now to understand quite why there was such a *furor* of disapproval at Cleo Laine's recording with the Nash Ensemble. Certainly, pitches are not entirely accurate, but rhythms are mostly spot-on, and her artistry is irrefutable. One can only admire the hard work that she must have put in, coming from the very different discipline of jazz. As with her recording of Walton's *Façade*, there is a sure sense of drama and a zest for performing that sweeps all before it.

Bethany Beardslee's recorded performance on the complete Schoenberg/Columbia collection is rightly cherished as an important milestone in the history of 'modern' PIERROTS. It marks the moment when greater pitch accuracy became the preferred goal, and when singers of unimpeachable quality in all repertoires, including the standard classics, began to take the work on board. Her interpretation combines artistic insight and intelligence with musical command. Similarly, the late Mary Thomas, in two recordings made in 1973 with both the London Sinfonietta and the Fires of London, carries inspiring conviction and dramatic panache along with rock-solid musicianship.

I have to admit an occasional, rare, disappointment, in the more unpredictable setting of a live concert. It was a little surprising to discover an established Continental singer, in a recent London performance, to be far less happy without conductor. Puzzlingly, dynamics were ignored and *Sprechgesang* and normal singing were often indistinguishable from one another. A promising young soprano in her first PIERROT had perhaps not fully anticipated the sheer scale of the task, and the need to have a wide margin of error. Nerves were an obvious factor here, resulting in a large number of missed entries and rhythmical errors, but some glaring mispronunciations in German betrayed a lack of proper preparation. A much happier occasion was a delightful performance by the young Natalie Raybould with the Kreisler Ensemble. This was hard to fault for musicality, vocal skill, language, rhythmic accuracy and basic concept, including her appearance in a charming and original 'girl-clown' costume. A nice touch was the use of a hand-held mirror: she arrived on stage at the end of the concert interval, putting on her make-up in view of the audience. She has developed her own highly convincing *Sprechstimme*.

Subsequent correspondence with Natalie has been extremely heartening: her attitude to the work is refreshingly idealistic and committed, informed by a combination of intellect and a sheer love of the music.

I have now also had the chance to hear the admirably versatile Mary Carewe, who has only recently embarked on the work from her distinctive vocal background. Mary is a classically-trained specialist in cabaret and show songs, but her PIERROT lineage is impeccable. She is the daughter of mezzo Rosemary Phillips, one of Britain's most distinguished early exponents (already referred to in 'Personal Journey'), and of the conductor John Carewe who studied with Schoenberg pupils Walter Goehr and Max Deutsch. Mary's account of the work is fresh and appealing, and shows enormous promise. She uses the score at present but will doubtless soon dispense with it. Amplification on this occasion favoured her light, delicate approach, and there were few moments of overt Expressionism, or of deliberately ugly tone. Advised and guided by her father, who was conducting (the gifted Berlin Kabarett Ensemble also included her cellist sister), Mary had elected not to adhere precisely to all the written pitches, but to follow the music's basic contours according to her own best range, as suggested by Erwin Stein, one of Schoenberg's closest colleagues. The performance, in London's Cadogan Hall, was enhanced by some attractively impressionistic nocturnal images projected high on the wall behind the performers.

In summing up, I find that vocal exponents of PIERROT LUNAIRE seem to fall loosely into the following categories, although some may combine qualities of more than one:-

- 1) High-voiced, attractive-toned, lightweight, but occasionally a little detached from the drama. They are musically accurate and scrupulous in rhythm, but may lack full-bodied expression. They are sometimes overstretched by the demands of those phrases requiring maximum breath capacity, especially Nos. 14, 11 and 6 (as well as the climaxes of nos. 5 and 15). Low-lying sections at a loud dynamic also tend to cause problems for them, but they successfully project the element of humour.
- 2) Heavier-voiced, dramatic and authentically expressionistic, but occasionally lacking the flexibility and poise needed for more delicate nuances
- 3) A little wayward as to detail and pitch accuracy, but with plenty of verve and dramatic flair.
- 4) Unvaried and over-careful, producing a somewhat one-dimensional sound, with every movement similar.

Even some of the more established performers have a tendency to lapse into actual singing as soon as the tessitura rises, thus evading the work's real challenge. Within such generalities, there are many variants, and most current interpretations do of course continue to evolve.

For my own part, although I love performing the work without conductor, I find the reliable musicianship of Roger Montgomery, the conductor of my ensemble *Jane's Minstrels* to be quite a boon when rehearsal periods are short. A conductor is no longer a necessity but a luxury (especially for no. 18 *Mondfleck*, and for the tempo variations in no. 15 *Heimweh*. Nos. 2, 7, 9

and 19 with their featured solos for, respectively, violin, flute, clarinet and cello, should not need conducting anyway. This also applies to the opening section for voice and piano of No. 14. *Die Kreuze*.

Except for one performance with Pierre Boulez, where he insisted on amplification, in accordance with his view of the piece as basically an ironic cabaret, I have never used a microphone, and all the trained singers whose views I have canvassed have also rejected the idea.

Schoenberg said, in a letter to Josef Rufer, that the vocalist should 'learn to speak with head voice'. He was probably relating this to the male voice's *falsetto*. It is intriguing to speculate on the idea of a counter-tenor for PIERROT. I believe this could contribute a ghostly and other-worldly character highly appropriate to the piece. To my knowledge, none has tried it to date, although there are indeed many gifted and characterful international artists well capable of taking on the challenge. There must surely always be room for bold new approaches, and there may have been too much caution in the past. An occasional male has ventured into the territory : the actor and tenor Simon Butteriss's splendid, persuasive programme note to his own performance at Aldeburgh makes out a strong case for a man as PIERROT (although I am somewhat nonplussed by his definition of the sunlight at the work's end as 'masculine'!) Butteriss, a bright-toned and versatile singer, is also a specialist in Gilbert and Sullivan 'patter' roles, possessing the dazzling verbal panache that these require. I greatly regret having missed his PIERROT.

Pierre Boulez is scathing about a baritone version he once heard in Salzburg. He feels strongly that having the vocal line so much lower destroys the aural blend of voice and instruments. Richard Hoffmann, however, Schoenberg's secretary, editor and pupil, believes the composer might not have minded a man in the role.

Intriguingly, Willi Reich in his invaluable critical biography tells of a performance in December 1921 in Frankfurt, when the part was performed by a man, but he gives no details as to whether Schoenberg was present, whether he approved, or of how the performance was received. An actor can certainly bring a fresh and imaginative view, but may perhaps lack the supported breath control of the trained singer. Untrained vocalists can find it quite a struggle to maintain intensity of sound without amplification. The pianist Julian Jacobson, long familiar with the work as instrumentalist and conductor, is already making great strides in his vocal interpretation, realising a lifetime's ambition. Amplified of necessity, he has taken a course in jazz singing, believing it can help attain an authentic style. It is fascinating to observe his progress in coming to terms with the challenges of vocal control, support and stamina. Musical command gives him a clear advantage, and his voice is rapidly acquiring greater resonance and legato. He once appeared attired as Idi Amin, complete with para-military uniform and cap, and blacked-up face, removing the cap and make-up during the instrumental Postlude to No. 13, and re-emerging rather hurriedly for No. 14 *Die Kreuze*. Although the post-modern reference is to be relished I am not quite sure how Schoenberg would have reacted to this! But perhaps a jolt to the sensibilities will prevent us all from becoming too precious about PIERROT. Julian continues to come up with imaginative ideas for portraying the drama through the music with subtle use of gesture and added variety of gait and demeanour.

Ultimately, PIERROT LUNAIRE's potency is sure to survive and transcend every possible treatment, and there is no doubt at all that it will continue to work its magic on succeeding generations. Although a *cause célèbre* beloved of musicologists, its chief joy is that it is performers' music above all, deeply satisfying on all levels. Those singers lucky enough to become involved in it find it has an irrevocable and imperishable effect on their artistic development, forging a strong connection between their verbal and vocal attributes, and welding them into a seamless whole.

To conclude, I can do no better than quote Natalie Raybould: 'I love the fact that every time I perform it, it feels like a different piece – a different journey, and my mood at the time affects that tremendously, more than any piece I have ever performed. I feel that the *Sprechstimme* in PIERROT LUNAIRE really helps to shape the work as it 'flies live' and then the audience 'bat it back' to the performer, and so on and so forth, which is possibly why I never enjoy recorded versions half as much as live ones. I always long to do another PIERROT! I hope at least to be able to perform one a year for as long as possible!' Now in my 45th year as '*Lunairiste*' I echo that final statement!