

COMPARING SETTINGS.

The PIERROT LUNAIRE poems occur in the Giraud/Hartleben collection. in the following order:

3. *Der Dandy* (*Pierrot Dandy*' is the French title, but as we shall see, Josef Marx's setting under this title is of a different Hartleben text) – this one does in fact coincide with Schoenberg's numbering.

5. *Eine Blasse Wäscherin*.

6. *Serenade*.

10. *Colombine*.

14. *Raub*.

16. *Mondestrunken*.

17. *Galgenlied*. (this does occur as Vrieslander's no. 17)

19. *Nacht*.

21. *Der Kranke Mond*.

24. *Enthauptung*.

26. *Valse de Chopin*.

28. *Madonna*.

29. *Rote Messe*.

30. *Die Kreuze*.

31. *Gebet an Pierrot*.

34. *Heimweh*.

35. *O Alter Duft*.

36. *Heimfahrt*.

38. *Der Mondfleck*.

42. *Parodie*.

45. *Gemeinheit*.

It is perhaps significant that the identifiably 'religious' texts ('*Madonna*', '*Rote Messe*' and '*Die Kreuze*' occur in a block together, whereas Schoenberg deliberately kept them apart.) There does not seem to be any identifiable dramatic shape in the order of the poems as published. Schoenberg did of course, shape a satisfying, persuasive and moving emotional and spiritual journey in his chosen sequence.

OTHER COMPOSERS' SETTINGS OF THE PIERROT POEMS

OTTO VRIESLANDER (1880-1950) wrote many German lieder in High Romantic style, but later gave up composing to become an editor, teacher and transcriber.

Vrieslander set almost the entire collection of Hartleben translations, for voice and piano, some years before Schoenberg's opus. By an odd coincidence, the first, and largest batch of these (46 of them) was completed in 1903, and published in 1905 on the very day that Hartleben died.

Four more settings were published in 1911 alongside a new edition of the German texts. None of these coincides with Schoenberg's PIERROT LUNAIRE choices.

They are:

'*Rot und Weiss*' (1906) (This is rather oddly catalogued as an 'alternative' Hartleben translation of Giraud's no. 25, when the first one, in fact, bears no resemblance whatever to the content of the original French. This later version clearly corresponds to the original poem.)

'*Spleen*'. (1907). This is another alleged 'alternative' to the setting, first entitled '*Herbst*', but which again is entirely different to Giraud's no. 15 '*Spleen*'. The 'new' version quite obviously sets the correct translation. The origin of the two earlier 'incorrect' texts is as yet unknown..

'*Landschaft*' . (1907) is a second setting of Giraud's poem no. 46, and '*Die Harfe*' (1908), (listed as no. 51 in Gregory Richter's invaluable book '*Albert Giraud's PIERROT LUNAIRE*' (Truman State University Press) sets a Hartleben text for which the French original has not been found.

It is interesting to compare the way Schoenberg and Vrieslander have set the same texts. Surprisingly, Vrieslander, like Schoenberg, sets the 'incorrect' 'Mondstrahl' instead of 'Lichtstrahl' at the end of '*Der Dandy*', as early as 1905 . One wonders if this can be mere coincidence. Schoenberg may well have come across this early setting, since Albertine Zehme is known to have performed the Vrieslander settings, They are fascinating rarities, and extraordinarily varied, sometimes verging on eccentricity. The extrovert , somewhat bombastic piano parts tend to dominate, and bear the brunt of the drama. All 21 of Schoenberg's chosen texts occur in the main Vrieslander set, but in a totally different order. The Vrieslander volume also does not adhere to the order of the original poems as printed in the Giraud collection.

1. GEBET AN PIERROT.

(no 9 in PIERROT LUNAIRE, but the first that Schoenberg wrote.. It is also no. 1 in the later Max Kowalski cycle.)

This is in F Minor. (for mezzo – or perhaps baritone.). Compared with Schoenberg's setting it is a little characterless.. A rather grey, lowish vocal tessitura makes it difficult to be highly expressive. Loud dynamics are not very practicable against massive piano chords, and there are no punctuating gaps in the vocal setting. Successions of straight quavers in 2/4 time continue through the most colourful part of the text '*Rossarzt der Seele, Schneemann der Lyrik*' etc.)

There is an interesting verbal discrepancy: we have ' gieb' instead of ' gib (mir wieder) . 'if you would only give me'. This slants the meaning very slightly towards a more exaggerated yearning. The fluency of composers who are writing in their own language does seem to produce these minute differences.

A distinctive feature is that Vrieslander deliberately accents the MIDDLE syllable of '*Pi-ERR-ot*' in all songs where the word occurs! Perhaps in this case the skewed rhythm could indicate a choking sob or snigger. It is even possible that Schoenberg retained some memory of this and used it, uniquely and expressively, for the plaintive staccato/tremolando '*Pi-er-rot*' in his own setting. Unlike Schoenberg, Vrieslander sets the 'coda' identically to the opening line.

3. VALSE DE CHOPIN .

(Schoenberg's no.5.) For soprano. (dedicated to Madame Marcelle D.)

This, a fairly conventional, if rather dull waltz setting is in a 'modal' B flat minor in 3/4 time. The piano introduction leads into a flowing accompaniment. At the climax of the song '*(Heiss und jauchzend)*' the voice, surprisingly dips down into a low register. Although a lilting rhythm prevails, the effect is somewhat faded, with a lame and repetitive piano postlude to end.

6. HEIMFAHRT.

(PIERROT LUNAIRE no. 20.) This is for medium voice, in F sharp major and is 'In Honour of A. Giraud'

The marking is '*Sehr langsam, vollig entrückt.*', although there are continual and somewhat fussy syncopated rhythms in 8/8 time. Perhaps these are meant to illustrate rippling waves. 'Holding back' produces a rather plodding effect. This is a much more laboured homeward journey than Schoenberg's!. The one light touch is a rapt '*kopfstimme*' on a high F sharp on the word '*grüne*'.

Again there is the 3 syllable '*Pi-err-ot*' with emphasis on the middle syllable. The voice ends over an unresolved harmony, leaving the piano to complete it – this also seems to be a Vrieslander trademark.

9. GEMEINHEIT

(PIERROT LUNAIRE no. 16). This is dedicated to the composer's brother 'John Jack') and is very low, for alto or bass-baritone

Marked '*grotesk aber durchaus tragisch*' it has a slow tempo in 6/8. (surprising for this text). It is a little academic in style, based around a melodic minor scale. There appears to be an inhibiting reluctance to adopt a more contemporary idiom, which prevents the song from flowing naturally. The crucial '*Schädelbohrer*' is marked *sf* within this slow tempo, and '*echten*', '*Türkschen*' and '*Tabak*' all have accents.

Phrases are smooth at first, and a more appropriate 'cabaret' element enters the picture for '*Drann dreht er*' etc.. (Vrieslander sets the correct '*behäbig*' instead of Schoenberg's '*behaglich*').

The general mood is more darkly menacing rather than sadistically spiteful .. Again the piano resolves the voice's unfinished cadence.

11. PARODIE.

(PIERROT LUNAIRE no. 17)

This is for soprano or tenor, in F minor, is dedicated to 'Ihrer Exzellenz der Frau Baronin E. von der Tann' and marked '*Geschwind*'. This is a much more imaginative setting song with plenty of spirit, and a quirky and varied piano part.

There is a good rhythmic bounce and attack from the outset, with the voice starting alone.. The middle section is well-contrasted. Once again the characteristically accented 3-syllable '*Pi-er-rot*' is featured. A swooping melisma enhances the word '*Röckchen*'. There are some characterful piano figurations, including a *tremolando* accompaniment to '*Plötzlich*', followed by whirling demi-semiquavers and chromatic scales, with an effective throwaway end. Surprisingly, the 'character' verbs of '*kichert*' and '*äfft*' are not made much of.

12. MADONNA.

(Schoenberg's no. 6.) This is in 8/4 time and A flat major, and requires a dramatic soprano. There are block chords in piano throughout and many chromatic shifts under sustained vocal melodies. The words are not set very smoothly – the emphases on '*Steig o Mutter aller Schmerzen*' fall somewhat unnaturally, with the first syllable of '*Mutter*' disproportionately short. There are many ties over bar-lines, and there is a

rather turgid ‘chorale’ interlude. Oddly, perhaps significantly, Vrieslander substitutes ‘*Töne*’ for ‘*Verse*’ making it more personal to the composer’s situation.). The impression of the whole song is heavily ‘churchy’ and solemn, although there is a strong climax on ‘*meidet*’ and an impassioned ‘coda’ rising to high A flat on the final ‘*Schmerzen*’.

13. *DER MONDFLECK*.

(Set as no. 18 by Schoenberg). This is ‘for Karl Berger’ and is in C Minor. It is very large-scale song, although still hampered by academicism, and not entirely practical. The tempo is a slow one in 3/4 time..

Here we find a rather sad and droopy ‘*Pi-er-rot*’ (again that special quirky rhythm!) The piano carries the drama, starting with a mainly chordal introduction, and progressing to more rapid, manic activity. The voice proceeds in stuttering fragments, as the piano becomes ever busier and more frenzied. When in a low tessitura the voice is liable to be swamped. Word setting in general is not naturally mellifluous – for instance ‘*und so geht er*’ skimps the important verb - .Incongruously, there is a sudden long, held note on high G (7 whole beats) on ‘*Gips-*’ – not ideally comfortable. The repeated ‘*wischt*’ is set to long legato notes, and ‘*(her)-‘un-ter*’ is set especially oddly , on a low B natural followed by C flat (a curious enharmonic moment!). There is a dramatic change to G flat major for the last section, and the vocal coda is, by complete contrast, slow and mournful.

Vrieslander sets ‘*beschaut sich*’ as in the original text, where Schoenberg has ‘*besieht sich*’.

No. 15. *ENTHAUPTUNG*.

(Schoenberg’s no. 13). This is, revealingly, marked ‘*Langsam, in der Art einer Farce*’. The Schoenberg setting certainly does not emphasise this humorous aspect. Written in the bass clef in C major, it will suit a high baritone with a reliable high F sharp. The familiar ‘*Pi-er-rot*’ with its middle syllable stressed, is found again here – the awkwardly skewed rhythm here carries a danger of throwing the singer off balance. The vocal line is wide-ranging, angular and highly chromatic. Some insistent, double-dotted rhythms perhaps illustrate Pierrot’s ‘fear of death’. In a loud bombastic passage, there is a surprisingly large gap, filled by the piano, between ‘*Todesängsten*’ and ‘*zum*’. This could make it difficult for the singer to hold the tension. Also, ‘*Er*’ and ‘*wähnt*’ are separated, and have *tenuto* marks. After a crazed build-up the voice hurtles to the end somewhat abruptly, with yet another unresolved cadence.

No.17. *GALGENLIED*

(PIERROT LUNAIRE no. 12.) Dedicated to one Benno Berneis.

Suitably marked ‘*mit Humor*’ this has a sprightly tune in D minor and 4/8 time. The important verb ‘*steckt*’ has only a perfunctory semiquaver, and the piano part seems a trifle heavy. ‘*Pi-ni-e*’ is given three separate syllables, and the vocal rhythms seem a little pedestrian. The song goes into D major for its loud coda.

No. 21. *EINE BLASSE W_SCHERIN.*

(No. 4 of PIERROT LUNAIRE.)

This is in a gently lilting E minor. The rhythm remains almost the same throughout except for a momentary duplet effect in the first repeat of the opening lines, which seems a little contrived. ‘(licht) -gewobnen’ is as in the Hartleben text, (Schoenberg added an extra syllable :-‘gewobenen’) The first syllable of ‘Linnen’ is suddenly extended, and this seems to go against the grain. For the second half of the song the piano part has a fuller texture.

No. 24. *MONDESTRUNKEN.*

(the opening movement of PIERROT LUNAIRE).

Again this has a 6/8 metre. The key focus is F sharp minor in its melodic version. The piano accompaniment is rather too thickly-textured, and the vocal line never quite takes off. The strong verb ‘giesst’ is virtually thrown away. However, ‘süss’ covers two notes, both bearing tenuto accents. For ‘berauscht sich’ and also ‘heilgen’, ‘Himmel’ and ‘wendet’ the vocal line has some odd tied-note groupings which seem unnecessarily complicated in context. In addition, ‘ver-zückt’ carries a detailed attempt at word-painting, complete with *tenuto* marks which could be quite effective. ‘schlürft’ is also given lingering treatment. The setting closes with a ‘Tierce de Picardie’ major chord at the very end.

No. 28. *O ALTER DUFT.*

(this is of course is the final poem in PIERROT LUNAIRE – was Schoenberg perhaps deliberately keeping as far away as possible from Vrieslander’s order?) The song is, appropriately, marked ‘*Innig und einfach*’ (inward and simple).

It is a much more lyrical and easily singable setting than many of the others, in a soprano register in G major. Surprisingly, in view of the marking, it seems extrovert and romantic, with moments of strong declamatory expression. Phrases soar naturally, and, when the line becomes plainer near the end, the effect is rapt and moving, including a poignant E flat on the final ‘*Märchenzeit*’. Vrieslander, correctly, sets ‘*gab*’ instead of Schoenberg’s ‘*geb*’. Perhaps Schoenberg was deliberately making a point about being in the present tense, ending his cycle on a more positive note?

Vrieslander’s next four consecutive settings all occur in PIERROT LUNAIRE, but in a different order as usual.

No.31. *ROTE MESSE.*

(no 11 of PIERROT LUNAIRE)

This is in G minor and 4/4 time. It begins in a disappointingly predictable fashion, rhythmically speaking, with a march-like processional in pulsating, syncopated triplet chords, but the piano part then becomes increasingly bombastic to the point of wildness. There is a tricky rhythmic quirk on ‘*triefend*’ which does not seem to fit in with the general tone. The climax on ‘*Herz*’ involves a *fortissimo* held high F for the singer. (this in sharp contrast to Schoenberg’s chillingly soft high ‘sung’ version) The piano continues to pound away on incessant chordal triplets. The text is oddly spaced

out, with key phrases, such as *'in blut'gen Fingern'*, isolated between frenzied bouts of pianistic activity, culminating in a very loud postlude.

No. 32. *COLOMBINE*.

(No. 2 of *PIERROT LUNAIRE*) Spellings of the title tend to vary: Marx has 'Kolumbine'. Kowalski 'Columbine' and Schoenberg accords with Vrieslander/Hartleben.)

Vrieslander asks for this song to be *'sehr innig und intim (sic)'*. Here we have another flowing 6/8 fluctuating between A major, and the favoured F sharp minor. This is rather a conventional setting, with the classic art song relationship between voice and piano, as also found in the Marx and Kowalski settings of this text. It is not perhaps very distinctive but lies well in the voice. The few special moments involve a *zurückhaltend* on *'selig leis'* (the two words are clearly separated) and a sudden *pianissimo* on high A on the first syllable of *'mär-chenheimlich'*, which works well vocally.

No. 33. *DIE KREUZE*.

(no. 14 in the Schoenberg, but the last to be completed by him).

This is another song for male voice, written in the bass clef, in F minor and 4/4 time. The beginning is inclined to be turgid, but the word 'blind' has a high E flat. Unlike in the strenuous Schoenberg setting, there should be no breathing problems, as phrases are fragmented, progressing in a rather stilted manner. There is a gap for breath between *'Geier'* and *'flatterndem'*. The words do not always seem to have been set idiomatically despite it being in the composer's own language. The colourful *'prunkend'* and *'schwelgten'* are given no special emphasis. Things pick up a little after *'erstarret die Locken'*, but the direction *'sehr ausdrucksvoll'* cannot be easily implemented in this disappointingly dull setting. The accompaniment fills out more (to represent the watching crowd, perhaps) at a change to 12/8 and F major, but reverts to the opening key and metre when the singer re-enters. The baritone's monotone is relieved by a build to a climax on high G flats and G naturals, before descending again, while the piano's relentless chords continue..

No.34. *DER DANDY*.

(Pierrot Lunaire's no. 3). This bears the rather strange direction of *'Vornehm mit Grazie'*. Unexpectedly, it is a waltz (in B flat major).

Accompanied by arpeggiated chords, the voice has a rather plain line in crotchets. After *'Bergamo'*, the piano has shimmering trills (they must be *'wie ein zartes Wasserspiel'* – like a delicate fountain.) The voice continues in plain crotchets to the end of the exposition, with the trills continuing throughout. There is very little attempt to colour the text in vocal terms, with the sole exception of *'(me-) tallischen Klänge'* which has *tenuto* accents rather than the more piercing variety. The repeat of the opening lines is slower and the music calms down for the new section (*'Pierrot mit wächsernem Antlitz'*), which is marked *'parlirend'* (sic). Vrieslander seems to have a characteristic and inventive way with words! This passage is on a recitative-like monotone but preserves the waltz rhythm. A quirky, accented triplet on *'schiebt er das'* adds a distinctive touch. The final *'Mondstrahl'* is spun out on long notes.

Astonishingly, Vrieslander, like Schoenberg and Kowalski, also has '*Mondstrahl*' in the last line, in place of Hartleben's '*Lichtstrahl*'. One wonders if he was the original culprit here, and that the others imitated his misreading.. Vrieslander may in fact have altered it for vocal reasons in his setting, but it is less easy to explain Schoenberg not making use of the extra sibilance for his whispered version. This must remain a puzzle!

(After this the composer seems to have run temporarily out of steam- the following two settings are disappointingly one-dimensional)

No. 35. *NACHT*.

(No. 8 of PIERROT LUNAIRE – the start of Part II).

This is another waltz setting, but a very dark one in A flat minor, fluctuating between 3/4 and 6/8, and marked '*langsam, schwer und lastend*'. The vocal line is low, suiting an alto, and there is continual syncopation, contributing to a rather laboured impression. Despite an attempt at a breathless, panting effect later on, this song is one of the weakest of the Vrieslander settings and dullness prevails. .

No. 37. *RAUB*

(Schoenberg's no. 10). Again we have an interesting instruction : '*dumpf und mystisch*'. The piece is in 2/4 time in B flat minor. The composer seems to have a predilection for oppressive heaviness. This is another song for low voice (alto or bass) with a slow-moving melody accompanied by syncopation in the piano. We have the '*Pi-er-rot*' 'signature' once more, this time on demi-semiquavers, which make it extremely hard to negotiate the middle accent effectively. The vocal line is otherwise quite unadorned. The middle section marks a change, with the piano moving in semiquavers over a syncopated bass part . '*Durch die Finsternis*' is unexpectedly slow, with more use of monotone and syncopation. The singer descends to a low F on '*Schreinen*'. The wonderful opportunities provided by the text are not exploited at all.

No. 41. *SERENADE*

(PIERROT LUNAIRE no. 19.). The instruction '*Im Vortrag grotesk*' is all very well, but the music often fails to convey this, leaving it all to the interpreters. In the matter of the word setting, Vrieslander adheres to the correct version in the Hartleben text. (it is in this piece that Schoenberg makes a radical change of word order - the original has '*fasst den Kahlkopf er am Kragen*'). Also, the rhythm of '*nächtgen Virtuosen*' is rendered more practicable by having one syllable less than Schoenberg, who inserted an extra one ('*nächtigen*'). This phrase is marked '*sehr graziös*'. The key is basically E flat, starting in 3/4 and changing now and then to 2/4 and 6/8. Again the 3 syllable 'motto' '*Pi-er-rot*' is featured. The key centre is often difficult to ascertain because the music is highly chromatic. The piano's plaintive opening figure presumably represents the giant viola of the poem, and the '*pizzicato*' is depicted by sharp piano chords just after it.. The 'waltz' frequently goes out of kilter into different time signatures. Cassander's entry marks a more recitative-like section, with a change to E major and 3/8, at '*von sich wirft er jetzt*'.

The words '*Kahlkopf er am Kragen*' are set too fast for comfort. This setting does at least have some interestingly quirky moments, and the general atmosphere is rather more playful than grotesque.

No. 43. *DER KRANKE MOND*

(Schoenberg's no. 7 – the end of Part I of *PIERROT LUNAIRE*). This is yet another waltz setting, in D minor, marked '*langsam, schwermütig*'. Vrieslander sets the original '*schleicht*' instead of Schoenberg's '*geht*'.

The first half of the song is rhythmically very plain. The voice rises to a high G, somewhat inappropriately, on the word '*tief*'. There is then a sudden change to 4/4 and B flat at a faster tempo. The piano has dotted chords and the voice is given an effective melisma on '*Liebsten*'. In fact, the song takes off most engagingly at this point. Unfortunately the rather dreary waltz then returns for '*dein bleiches*' which does not seem to suit the text at all.

No. 44. *HEIMWEH*.

(*PIERROT LUNAIRE* no. 15 – the start of Part III).

A pleasant lilting 6/8 in B minor again includes the characteristic '*Pi-er-rot*' motif. The singer has some decorative grace notes and accents on '*tönt*', and some rich, pulsating syncopated chords in the accompaniment enhance the effect. The vocal line rises up naturally at the repeat of the opening lines, and the volume and textures also increase accordingly. A rapturous change to E flat carries an emotional charge. '*Trauer-minen*' appears to be a mis-spelling.) Word setting is much better here than in many of the other songs, for instance, the wide-ranging line incorporating '*Fluten*', which works particularly well. '*Heimat- Himmel*' rises to high A flats. The 'coda' reverts to B minor as at the start. The piano repeats its figures but within a wide dynamic range.

Throughout the Vrieslander opus, the piano carries the main dramatic output and often illustrates the images of the text. The vocal lines are, in general, far less assured.

The distinguished Austrian composer **JOSEF MARX (1882-1964)** was no lover of Schoenberg's music. He was a conservative, but prolific songwriter, and made delectable settings of 4 of the *PIERROT LUNAIRE* poems for voice and piano, including *Valse de Chopin* -1909 (no.5 of *PIERROT LUNAIRE*) and '*Kolumbine*'. - 1911 (no.2 of *PIERROT LUNAIRE*).

Marx's '*Pierrot Dandy*' (1909) is not, in fact, the same poem set as Schoenberg's no. 3, but an entirely different poem by Hartleben, albeit describing a similar scene. Under the title it is stated that it does indeed originate from Giraud. This remains a mystery, although it is interesting to know that there is a poem of that title in Jules Laforgue's 1886 anthology of *PIERROT* poems '*L'Imitation de Notre-Dame la Lune*'

The fourth setting '*Die Violine*' (1909) appears at no. 32 in the Giraud/Hartleben collection.

In all the songs, Viennese waltz and cabaret elements are evident and there are constant mercurial shifts of tempo and dynamic. The piano parts are especially

intricate and impressively demanding. The vocal writing is fairly conventional, but flatteringly lyrical and rewarding to sing.

In the two extremely appealing PIERROT LUNAIRE settings, Marx relies characteristically on continually flowing piano figurations. These propel the drama of the texts and illustrate their content, as well as expanding the songs considerably, by way of solo preludes, interludes and postludes.

VALSE DE CHOPIN.

The marking '*Phantastisch und mit Leidenschaft*' is hardly necessary, since the musical language is unabashedly 'heart on sleeve', and the music, like Schoenberg's is packed with swiftly changing dynamics and nuances. The queasier aspects of the poem are not much in evidence.. The pianist immediately launches into a lengthy introduction, in dotted waltz rhythm (F sharp minor – a favourite key of Vrieslander's as we have seen). The singer's opening lines are fairly plain, with some heavy minim downbeats, in contrast to the more natural 'speaking' rhythm of Schoenberg's setting, with its use of syncopation and ties over bar-lines.

In keeping with the Viennese character, there are slurs over '*Wie ein*' and '*Tropfen*' to indicate stylish *portamenti*. The tessitura is quite low, (especially on '*einer Kranken*' which invites the use of chest voice, and works extremely well, emphasising the cabaret element.

The second section beginning '*Wilder Lust*' is also set in the opposite way to Schoenberg's. This time, the singer begins on the offbeat, and one has to wonder if Schoenberg may have deliberately avoided Marx's choice of waltz 'swings'. Later '*heiss und jauchzend*' also starts on the second beat with a dotted note.

There are some curious textual discrepancies, the most crucial is Marx's substitution of '*tönen*' (resound) for '*stören*' (disturb) . One might even suspect this to be a mistake; a 'Schoenbergian' mishap in the heat of flowing inspiration while setting the composer's own language.

After a rapt pause on both syllables of '*schmachtend*', there is a change to a slower, dreamier tempo. Marx substitutes '*dem Sinn*' for '*den Sinnen*'. After this there is a long piano solo, followed by the voice returning, *fortissimo* on '*haftest mir*' (a minor discrepancy: '*an*' is replaced by '*in*' (*den Gedanken*). The singer swoops down a whole octave on '*Gedanken*', whereupon the piano embarks on an elaborately chromatic series of cadential harmonies, leading the voice on to the flattened supertonic G natural on '*Wie*' for the last line. A piano postlude completes this substantial song.

KOLUMBINE.

The piano's virtuoso figurations in 12/16 time (against the voice's 4/8) make considerable demands on technique and stamina, and they virtually carry the song along, in an irrepressibly rhapsodic and joyous way. The part ranges over the entire keyboard, with abundant chords and continually running semiquavers, all marked *sempre legatissimo*. There is no specific word-painting, but the luscious rippling texture supports a charmingly lyrical vocal line. This is a truly romantic setting, with words well-placed for vocal comfort, and swirling rubati and fluctuating dynamics contributing to an uninhibited and winning effect.

The soprano has a chance to float '*Blüten*' both times, and '*Juli-*' on high G sharp is also extremely grateful vocally. Unlike Schoenberg, Marx keeps the rhythm going through the central section, although there are plenty of attractive modulations to keep things lively. There is no final syllable on '*Strom(e)*'. The voice rises up to a sudden *piano* on '*Mond-lichts*', giving another perfect opportunity for an ethereal tone. The piano part has an appropriate *impetuoso* marking to keep momentum going. There is an exciting enharmonic shift from the basic B flat major to a rich F sharp, for a couple of phrases, starting at '*gestillt*'. The voice's chromatic and slightly lower-placed line here could be a little difficult in terms of balance, since tension and passion continue to mount, in sharp contrast to Schoenberg's gentle wistful setting of those final phrases. '*deine braune Haare*' is very loud indeed. After this, there is a welcome relaxation to a softer vocal dynamic and the final poised 'float' on '*Blüten*'. The pianist completes the song by maintaining more complex rippling figures right up to the close. The part is challenging indeed, but the effort will be rewarding.

MAX KOWALSKI (1882-1956) started out as a lawyer in Frankfurt, specialising in copyright issues, and later became a professional baritone and composer. He wrote music to '*Till Eulenspiegel*' in 1925 (30 years after Richard Strauss). From 1934 his music was banned in Germany. He was imprisoned in Buchenwald, and released in 1939, whereupon he emigrated to London where he remained until his death. He worked as a copyist and piano tuner, and eventually became a popular singing teacher. He made a great many song settings of German poets (Rilke and Heine, for instance) but also used more exotic texts in Persian, Japanese and Yiddish.

In 1912 he chose 12 poems from the Hartleben translations and his cycle for (unspecified) voice and piano '***Zwölf Gedichte aus Pierrot Lunaire***' (in Two Volumes) was published in 1913. Six of the texts: '*Gebet an Pierrot*', '*Raub*', '*Der Dandy*', '*Colombine*', '*Der Mondfleck*' and '*Heimfahrt*' are also set by Schoenberg. They are delightful and imaginative settings, and all preserve the Rondel structure of the poems. Both voice and piano are treated idiomatically and they make a most attractive contribution to the lieder repertoire.

Timothy Ewers (b.1958) has arranged all 12 of the Kowalski songs for the same instrumental ensemble as PIERROT LUNAIRE and they make an attractive companion piece to the Schoenberg.

Even more than Schoenberg and Vrieslander, Kowalski is prone to giving frequent, helpful verbal indications to suggest tone colour, mood and manner of delivery. He uses a mixture of German, Italian and English, with quite a droll and original choice of words. He has restored one of Schoenberg's 'misreadings' back to the correct word as in the original text ('*beschaut*' in '*Mondfleck*' – his no.9), but perpetuated the puzzling change to '*Mondstrahl*' for the last line of '*Der Dandy*' (his no. 4). This indicates that he was indeed familiar with Schoenberg's work, which, in view of the date of the composition, is extremely likely. The two composers are believed to have met in Berlin.

1. GEBET AN PIERROT

As we know, though it appears as no. 9 in PIERROT LUNAIRE, this was the poem that Schoenberg set first, and is also the first in the main Vrieslander collection.

In G minor, this neatly-constructed song is marked *'Lebhaft und kapriziös'* Unlike Vrieslander, Kowalski gives *'Pierrot'* two syllables, but puts the stress on the first syllable. The piano has some perky, accented rhythmic figures, setting up the voice's sprightly entry. There is a lengthy pause on *'Mast'*, (*'sehr traurig'*) before the voice resumes its playful course, with changes of mood and speed coming thick and fast: a fortissimo outburst for *'Pier-rot'* ('in sudden passion') is followed by a pleading passage (*'zärtlich, bittend'*). The wistful mood is especially well caught. Syncopations abound in the nimble lines. At *'Rossartzt'* the instruction is *'neckend, teasingly (sic)'*. The singer suddenly slows on *'Durchlaucht'*, floating up to a *pianissimo* pause on E natural for *'Mon(de)'*- this is marked *'höhnend/mockingly'*. As the pleading resumes more insistently than ever, words and phrases are repeated in classic lieder style to heighten the effect. None of the other composers uses this commonly-found device of elaborating a text. *'Pierrot mein Lachen'* comes twice, and as the music builds up further (*sempre più forte e animato/ immer starker und lebhafter*) *'Pierrot'* is reiterated three times, with the last one marked *'wütend'* (angrily). For the lighter soprano voice it may be quite difficult to attain the requisite volume, especially as the second syllable of *'Pierrot'* falls into middle range on A natural, which can often lack penetration. In general the cycle will suit a mezzo best. A most distinctive feature of the song is its ending: There is a long-drawn-out melisma on the first syllable of *'Lach-en'* (*con tristezza*) with a *ritenuto*, leading into a resumption of the sprightly piano motifs to end.

2. RAUB . (no. 10 of PIERROT LUNAIRE).

This is in a symmetrical ABAB form (plus 'mini-coda'). Rather surprisingly the main vocal theme is a slow and rather sinister waltz in D minor, (*langsam und schwer*), a far cry from Schoenberg's rapid, crisp *parlando*. Again, the tessitura seems to suit a mezzo voice, giving rise to the thought that Kowalski may have envisaged the cycle as a companion piece to PIERROT LUNAIRE. The whole set would certainly form a nicely-contrasting first half to the concert.

An arresting feature, repeated each time, is a *ritenuto* marked, unusually, on the very last low syllable of *'Rubin-e'*, before the waltz picks up again. There is a great deal of *rubato* and, at *'drunten'* the line goes even slower, as the singer has to dig deep in the voice (appropriately, according to the text) for a low G natural on *'(Ge)wöl-ben'*.

The 'B' section is a complete contrast both times. A change of pace (marked *'vivo/lebhaft'*) comes at *'Nachts'*. The syllable *'Zech-'* is shortened for bounce and emphasis, This passage is still a little low, and having to hold a pause on the final syllable of *'(raub)-en'* is unexpected and not entirely comfortable.

An exact repeat of the sinister slow waltz follows. For the second 'B' section the faster tempo returns, and there are two huge leaps down a twelfth to low A on the last syllables of *'Haa-re'* and *'Plat-ze'*. This setting does seem to focus consistently on stressing final syllables, albeit slightly against the grain. As in the Schoenberg version, there is now a frenetic build-up, with the vocal line reiterating semitones, finally lingering on *'Schreinen'* in a broad *fortissimo*.

For the vocal 'coda' the singer's slow melody goes up the octave for a chilling, and highly effective *pianissimo* ending, which lies very well.

No 4. *DER DANDY* (Schoenberg's no. 3 – unlike the Marx song, above, it is the same poem).

The text's watery images are reflected in the piano's rippling figurations. Like Marx' song, this is in B flat major. Flowing triplets in the voice part are supported by sextuplets in the piano. There is a rather tricky dotted triplet rhythm on '*die krystallinen Flakons*' somewhat akin to those awkward subdivisions in the voice part of Schoenberg's '*Mondfleck*' (his no. 18). This is repeated each time it occurs. The vocal line undulates freely up and down. '*Ber-ga-mo*' is given a fanfare-like figure. The section beginning '*in tönender*' lies in a rather grey middle area of the voice, and it could be quite hard for a lighter voice to bring off the drama as intended at full speed, since the line is mostly continuous. The piano part is required to be '*festlich/solenne*', in a slower tempo, which contributes to a darker impression than expected. '*metallischen Klangs*', in particular, is less penetratingly set than usual. Released from this rather turgid passage, the piano leaps upwards with some chromatic chords, leading to an exact repeat of the opening music. The singer's low monotone on '*Pierrot mit wächsernem Antlitz*' again may prove hard to articulate effectively but there is an appealingly quirky moment, (suddenly '*slow and capriccioso*' with much *rubato*), on '*heute sich schminkt*' - a figure which the piano instantly echoes.(EX?) The voice's dotted triplets then build in hectoring style to '*erhabenem Stil*' This is quite a long phrase, and not at all easy to negotiate, and as '*fort schiebt er*' etc. is consonant-heavy and there is nowhere to breathe, the singer could be under some strain. The Coda provides a bland, gentle repeat of the opening line. .

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No.8. *COLOMBINE* (No. 2 of *PIERROT LUNAIRE*).

The accompaniment has running semiquavers in B major and 6/8 time, in a charming 'Barcarolle' (cf. Pierrot Lunaire no. 20). The piano enters simultaneously with the voice. The flowing motion continues virtually throughout the song, but slows somewhat at '*mein banges Leid*', returning to the opening mode for an exact repeat. A rhapsodic piano solo leads to a new section on '*gestillt*'.

Like Marx's setting, the whole setting bubbles along in a much happier vein than Schoenberg's – the element of longing and lack of confidence is missing, although the song eventually reaches a more dreamy, musing vein at '*deine braunen Haare*'.(marked '*träumerisch*'), with the voice's soft, lingering G sharp and G natural. The tempo then picks up for a repeat of the opening vocal phrase, with the piano rounding things off with a condensed version of the 'rhapsodic' solo, finishing in a deft *pianissimo*. This is a delightful song which lies comfortably in the voice and maintains a breezy momentum, full of light and sparkle, in which the piano takes the major role.

No. 9. *DER MONDFLECK* (Schoenberg's no. 18).

This is a most distinctive setting of the text, totally unlike Schoenberg's. In 4/4 time and C minor, it is jaunty and march-like in character, as Pierrot strides out in search of adventure. Vocal phrases are fragmentary, almost *parlando*, often reminiscent of recitative style, although always accompanied and never completely out of tempo. The piano introduces the catchy rhythmic motto theme, which the voice then takes up. Snatched staccatos contribute to short-long patterns. 'fleck' and the first syllables of 'Rük-ken' and 'Rok-kes' (note the 'old German' spelling here) are flicked away ready for a heavier landing on the next pitch. The lingering cadence at 'Abenteuer' is marked 'sentimental'. The piano's detached, chugging chords in quaver motion constantly plug the gaps between vocal fragments. A short piano interlude ('*pathetisch*') leads to the voice's re-entry at 'Warte!'. The section which follows is surprisingly slow-moving and not easy to sing, mainly because of awkward rhythms on 'Das ist so ein Gipsfleck' and, later, 'und so geht er Giftgeschwollen weiter,' which make the words hard to project in an unrewarding middle range. 'Doch bringt ihn nicht herunter' also lies low but is at least more legato and slower still. Opportunities for vocal word painting during Pierrot's frantic rubbing efforts are overlooked. It is left to the piano, in a graphic solo burst of insistent accented and decorated chords, (marked 'zornig' and then 'wütend') to convey Pierrot's enraged frustration. Even after this, the tempo slows still further for 'bis an den frühen Morgen' (the final word marked 'languid/wehmütig'). The singer can make the most of the smooth elision of 'n' to 'M' for this drawn-out cadence. The 'coda' allows the voice to rise to a more comfortable range, for a slow poignant ending, with a *pianissimo* on 'Mondes'. Not all of the vocal writing in this setting is satisfactory, but, as often found with a pianist-composer, the keyboard part is consistently fascinating and holds it all together.

No. 12. *HEIMFAHRT*. (No. 20 – the penultimate setting of PIERROT LUNAIRE)

It is interesting that Kowalski chooses to end with the journey, rather than the arrival home. We may still wonder if he heard PIERROT LUNAIRE with its magical, sunlit resolution. Of course his cycle is punctuated by other poems that Schoenberg did not choose.

This final song in the cycle is quite simple, compared with others. It is in the 'comfort' key of B flat, as chosen by Marx for 'Kolumbine'. The voice spins rapt, lyrical lines above the piano's limpid accompaniment, in a smoothly curving waltz. The warm, wide-ranging phrases are rewardingly vocal, and rhythmic details, especially delicate dotted notes, fall easily into place. The piano has some subtle tripping rhythmic figures beneath 'Seerose'. There is a surge to a climax on 'zurück' and a *subito pianissimo* on 'Osten' which is especially effective and touching. All verbal repeats are treated identically. The first line's final repeat floats the melody in a tender *pianissimo*, and the piano brings the song to a gentle close.

The beautiful simplicity of this setting makes a memorable ending to an outstandingly characterful cycle, which deserves a regular place in the repertoire.

For the record, the other (non-PIERROT LUNAIRE) Kowalski settings, in order, are:-

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3. *Die Estrade*.

5. *Moquerie.*
6. *Sonnenende.*

Vol II.

7. *Nordpolfahrt.*
10. *Die Laterne.*
11. *Abend.*