



SCHOENBERG'S *Models for Beginners in Composition*

EDITED BY
Gordon Root

The ~~occasional~~ 6-chord after I or as $\frac{6}{5}$, $\frac{4}{3}$ or even Root position of II is seldom used.

(C) The two measure phrases on the harmonies should also be practiced systematically like the preceding models.

SCHOENBERG'S
MODELS FOR BEGINNERS
IN COMPOSITION

SCHOENBERG IN WORDS

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IN COMPOSITION

EDITED BY GORDON ROOT

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*To the imagination and inspiration
of a creative mind*

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Preface

On the History of *Models for Beginners in Composition*

On February 9, 1943, Carl Engel, Arnold Schoenberg's editor at the American classical music publishing company Schirmer, congratulated Schoenberg on the completion of his new textbook, *Models for Beginners in Composition*:¹

On my return to the office today I find at last the printed copy of your "Models." It was a difficult birth, I admit, but now that the child is with us, I hope that it will meet the father's satisfaction and that it will enjoy a long and happy life.

Some seventy years after the initial printing of *MBC*, most of Engel's wishes for the longevity of Schoenberg's diminutive syllabus have come true. Since its publication in February 1943, this outline for the study of tonal form and school composition has appeared in three English editions (the present one excluded) and in Chinese, French, German, Spanish, and Russian translations. Its "difficult birth" took place over the short span of seven months, from August 1942 to February 1943—for Schoenberg, a time filled with numerous problems related to its publication.

Schoenberg was motivated to create *MBC* by the need for a syllabus designed to cover precisely a semester's worth of material in a single six-week summer course, Beginning Composition 105a at UCLA. In the summer of 1942 Schoenberg and his assistant at the time, the pianist and musicologist Leonard Stein (1916–2004), finished a first version of the syllabus consisting only of musical examples.² Schoenberg then paid Golden West Music Press of Los Angeles to make photostat copies of these handwritten examples, which he offered to the students enrolled in his course for \$1.25.

Encouraged by its success as a syllabus for Composition 105a, Schoenberg sought to make it available to a broader audience. On August 8, 1942, he wrote to Engel:

Today I mailed to you a syllabus: "Models for Beginners in Composition."

I made this syllabus, because I was at first desperate to teach students, who have no special talent for composition, in *six* weeks matters which only the best could master in a regular semester of 16 weeks.³

After receiving a letter of acceptance from Engel, Schoenberg secured a contract on September 10, 1942, along with the first \$100 installment of his \$500 advance. However, Engel also stipulated that the final acceptance of *MBC* would be contingent on several conditions. He required the inclusion of a preface that would "enable the teacher or pupil to understand the 'Models' more intelligently." Secondly, he specified that Schoenberg write it in German rather than English and that Schirmer be responsible for a translation ultimately to be approved by the composer.⁴

Schoenberg wrote a preface and explanatory text to accompany the syllabus, and as Facsimile 1.1 demonstrates, its earliest drafts are in German, as Engel requested (see also the transcription in Example 1.1). In this draft, Schoenberg's language drifted increasingly in and out of German and English as he struggled to express himself in his native language. He found that the ideas necessary for explaining the nuances of composition and form no longer came naturally to him in German. Finally, with only a few pages written, he

nicht so wichtig, dass die Reallote schön, "vollkommen" (2
melodisch und ausbalanciert" sind. Der Lehrer wird die
Schlehtäten ausstreichen oder verbessern und erklären warum
sie zu arm oder überladen sind. Die Hauptarbeit bei
allem dem ist, dass der Schüler möglichst viele Formen
erkennt, so dass die harmonischen Möglichkeiten im
einem Gedächtnis sich verankern und er sich ihrer
erinnert, wenn er ^{später} eine "erfundene" Melodie verbessern
will. Später wird er nämlich in ähnlichem Abstand operieren,
Themen zu erfinden sollen.

(B) Die gleichen Übungen wie unter A unter
zwei Harmonien: I-V,

I-V (ex 20-29)
I-VI (ex 30-36)
I-IV (ex 37-43)
I-III (ex 44-50)
I-II (ex 51-57)

In ex 34 and 36 chromatics are inserted

In ex 41 and 42 an artificial dominant
seventh chord on the 1st degree emphasizes
the progression to IV.

Ex 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50 use
III as artificial dominant leading to VI
or, by deceptive cadence to IV (or III)

The second II appears commonly as
6-chord after I or as $\frac{6}{5}$, $\frac{4}{3}$ or even $\frac{6}{4}$.
Root position of II is seldom used.

(C) The two measure phrases on three
harmonies should also be practiced
systematically like the preceding models.
But

add

V-I

IV-I

IV-V

add additional
more Rh & motifs
and intervals

FACSIMILE 1.1

Schoenberg's initial attempt to write the preface and explanatory
text of MBC in German. Courtesy Arnold Schönberg Center.

	<p>nicht so wichtig, dass die Resultate „schön“ „vollkommen“ „melodisch und „ausbalanciert“ sind. Der Lehrer wird die Schlechtesten austreichen, oder verbessern und erklären warum sie zu arm oder überladen sind. Die Hauptsache bei alle dem ist, dass der Schüler möglichst viele Formen erdenkt, so dass die technischen Möglichkeiten in seinem Gedächtnis sich verankern und er sich ihrer erinnert, wenn er später eine „erfundene“ Melodie verbessern will. Später wird er nämlich instinctively and spontaneously Themen erfinden sollen.</p>
<p>add V-I IV-I IV-V</p>	<p>B. Dieselben Uebungen wie unter A über zwei Harmonien: I-V, I-V (ex 20-29) I-VI (ex 30-36) I-IV (ex 37-43) I-III (ex 44-50) I-II (ex 51-57)</p>
<p>Add abbreviation sheet mark Rh v motifs and intervals</p>	<p>In ex 34 and 36 chromatics are inserted In ex 41 and 42 an artificial dominant seventh chord on the 1st degree emphasizes the progression to IV. Ex 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50 use III as artificial dominant leading to VI or, by deceptive cadence to IV (or II) The second II appears commonly as 6-chord after or I as $\frac{6}{5}, \frac{6}{3}$ or even $\frac{6}{2}$. Root position of II is seldom used. C. The two measure phrases on three harmonies should also be practiced systematically like the preceding models. But</p>

EXAMPLE 1.1

Transcription of Facsimile 1.1. Courtesy Arnold Schönberg Center.

Note: Schoenberg's German text in Example 1.1, a draft of page 5 from *MBC*, is translated as follows: not so important that the results are "beautiful," "perfect," "melodic," and "balanced." The teacher will either strike out the worst of them or improve them and explain why they are too poor or overloaded. The main thing about all of it is that pupils devise as many forms as possible, so that the technical possibilities become embedded in their memories and that they can recall them when they want to improve an "invented" melody. Later on they should be able to invent themes instinctively and spontaneously. B. The same exercises as in A on two harmonies:

abandoned this text for one exclusively in English. On September 12, 1942, he contacted Engel regarding this decision:

I started to write in German, but suddenly I wrote English. I felt the whole time that I was translating from bad English into worse German. So I started all over again in English. Now I am conscious of the shortcomings

of my English, and I hope you will help me to correct it. I have a copy of the entire manuscript. Therefore it will not be necessary to return the manuscript with your corrections. The best is to send a questionnaire [*sic*] (two copies, so that I can keep the one and send you the other with my answers (agreements—I suppose). I would like to know how you find it now.⁵

Engel granted Schoenberg's request. He empathized with Schoenberg's humorous description of having to "translate" his thoughts from "bad English into worse German," and he described his own similar vacillation between the two languages:

As concerns your English text: I can well understand that you are beginning to live in that unhappy state in which I have passed the last thirty-five years of my life—of losing control over German and not acquiring full command of English. It is a devil of a state to be in. You need not apologize for your English. It is probably good enough for oral delivery in a classroom where any questionable point can be easily clarified by added explanations. For a printed record, as you have sensed yourself, it is not good enough. Therefore Mr. Reese and I shall be glad to "correct it," *liebevollst*. But it cannot be done with a questionnaire, as you suggest. We shall have to go over the whole text and send you a completed revision, which you can then criticize if you think that in any place your meaning has been obscured instead of having been made more intelligible.⁶

Schoenberg was indeed aware of "the shortcomings" of his English and of the imperfection of language in his American texts. However, as he made clear in a letter to his editors at Schirmer, Willis Wager and Gustave Reese, he felt that certain kinds of excessive editing could be detrimental to the individuality of his thought:

Dear Mr. Wager:

I want to thank you and Mr. Reese most cordially for the excellent way in which you made my English as perfect as possible. I think it can stand now as it is. I realize that there are some differences in the way of thinking which are distinctly mirrored in the organization of my style. But I also think that it

would rather destroy the individuality of my writing if one would correct also these differences. Probably a mere translation would have produced a more perfect result as regards to the English language, but it seems to me that, being now nine years in this country, I have to write English, even if it is less perfect, than formerly my German writing. I am afraid you will have to correct also much of the glossary, though I think I have learned to avoid some of my errors.

Many thanks again.

Most cordially, yours⁷

Occasionally problems during the editorial process stemmed from Schirmer's desire to replace Schoenberg's literally translated German terms with conventional American ones. For example, Schoenberg translated the German terms *Vordersatz* and *Nachsatz*, or "fore-" and "after-sentence" to describe the parts of a period—terms which the editors at Schirmer replaced with the English "antecedent" and "consequent."⁸ Regarding this point, Schoenberg expressed disbelief that his literal translations of the German terms might cause confusion, but in the end he acquiesced.⁹ And it is in part due to this concession that we owe the clear distinction between terminology related to sentence and period forms in Schoenberg's written works.

Not all the correspondence regarding text editing was amicable. One particularly heated and mildly entertaining exchange occurred between Schoenberg and Felix Greissle, his son-in-law and a music editor at Schirmer. In a letter dated October 6, 1942, Greissle wrote to Schoenberg regarding a few problematic wordings in the syllabus. Regarding one of these passages, Greissle took a conciliatory tone, explaining how he had attempted faithfully to follow his father-in-law's wishes by making only slight grammatical changes to the text, but that in doing so he distorted the meaning. In such cases, he explained, it was sometimes necessary to "use slight circumscriptions." Consequently, he suggested that Schoenberg write a glossary to explain his terminology. Schoenberg's response three days later was both swift and sharp. "I am very frightened," he wrote, "about the 'corrections' in my text,"—"especially," he emphasized, "about the circumscriptions."¹⁰ In a second response several days later, Schoenberg addressed the problem once again, specifically in relation to what he regarded as specious allegations of parallel octaves in Example 227:

The idea that I might have misunderstood your question comes to me suddenly. Did you want to say that perhaps students or teachers might think that these are wrong parallels? I admit that this can happen. If this was your idea, why did you not formulate it? I suggest adding a footnote to this example: something like this is not unusual in piano style—these are not wrong parallel octaves.¹¹

After such correspondence on the text and one day before his sixty-eighth birthday (September 12, 1942), Schoenberg ultimately mailed his completed draft of *MBC* to Carl Engel:

Dear Friend: Usually 2 or three days before my birthday I finish a work. Yesterday, 2 days before my 68th, I finished the “Models for Beginners in Musical Composition.” Today I airmailed it and had just received the contract. I hope you do not mind that it became so much larger. Will it not be almost double of what it was? Frankly I hope you will be glad, that it is now so much richer. The preface alone comprises 16 typewritten pages, and there are 113 new examples. I am very enthusiastic about it. It must be a success.¹²

Once they received Schoenberg’s text, Schirmer immediately purchased all the available copies of Schoenberg’s 1942 self-published version (through Golden West) from the UCLA bookstore. While their action eliminated the problem of unauthorized copies, it created a new one for Schoenberg: he had counted on the book’s being ready in time for classes, which began on October 12.¹³ Schoenberg’s immediate solution was to have Schirmer return twenty copies of the Golden West syllabus to be sold to his class. However, in an effort to protect their financial interests, Schirmer had destroyed all copies of it. Editor Gustave Reese’s immediate countersolution was to quickly prepare copies of pages 3–21 of the new edition and arrange for students to pay the full \$2.00 price for this excerpt—with the understanding that they would receive the complete version by December 1, 1942. This date, however, was entirely unsatisfactory to Schoenberg, although it was one he would no doubt have accepted had he known that the first printing would be delayed until February 1, 1943.

When December passed and the syllabi did not appear, Schoenberg first grew impatient with Schirmer and then ultimately despondent with the result. Had he known that it would take so long, he would have either suggested a “good copyist” or spent the time improving the unnecessarily rushed examples:¹⁴

I am desperate. Tomorrow are examinations, and I am afraid the result will be terrible, though I did perhaps three times as much for my classes than in the summer session. Please, *bitte tausendmal*, can you do something that I get it now? The student’s cooperative store has ordered 100 copies. The second semester starts a few days after examinations. I have based my teaching this time entirely upon the assumption that the students will study the syllabus. It is very difficult now to change. I am sorry to have to bother you, but I am really in trouble now.¹⁵

The new book ultimately arrived for the 1943 composition class at the beginning of the spring semester.¹⁶ The rush to complete the text caused countless errors to appear in its initial printing.¹⁷ Moreover, the executives at Schirmer were reluctant to jeopardize their potential profit by correcting the imperfect manuscript in an immediate reprinting. They opted for a temporary solution instead—an errata sheet, which Schirmer pasted to the inside front cover of the first printing (Example 1.2).¹⁸

In February 1943 *MBC* began to fill the shelves of music stores across the United States, selling for the substantial sum of \$2.00 a copy. In their advertisements, the executives at Schirmer wholeheartedly supported their product and its author, describing Schoenberg as a composer known for “advanced tendencies” and at the same time “profoundly imbued with the spirit of the masters” (see Example 1.3, 18). This “new book of first importance” would “lead the student directly into the process of composition,” laying out “the whole process, from the invention of a melodic phrase through larger entities to complete small forms.” And if this promise failed to attract the aspiring composer, the convenient layout in two separate volumes (a design Schoenberg had proposed in correspondence with Engel “for ease in use in connection with the examples”) would dispel any hesitations.

ERRATA

MUSICAL EXAMPLES



page 8, 2nd staff, last measure (left hand): instead of E, read G#

page 13, bottom staff, 1st measure, 3rd chord: instead of IV, read VI

page 17, 1st staff, last measure (right hand), last chord F-C-F	} should be marked with +
3rd staff, last measure (right hand), first note B♭	
5th staff, 4th measure (right hand), first notes G-E♭	



page 21, 6th staff, 2nd measure (left hand), below 2nd ♩ : instead of I, read H



page 22, 4th staff, 2nd measure (left hand),

{	below 1st 	: instead of IV , read IV
	below 4th 	: instead of VII , read VII V

page 25, 5th staff, 3rd measure (right hand), 3rd : add # before C

page 27, 8th staff, 3rd measure (left hand), instead of III, read VI

page 29, 6th staff, 2nd measure (left hand), 3rd  : add higher note E 

page 45, 4th staff, 6th measure, 1st  : instead of G, read F 

SYLLABUS

page 6, line 31: instead of 91, read 92

page 8, lines 25 and 26: instead of 217, read 220

page 9, last sentence on page should be transferred to end of preceding section

page 10, 6th line from bottom: instead of 13, read 18

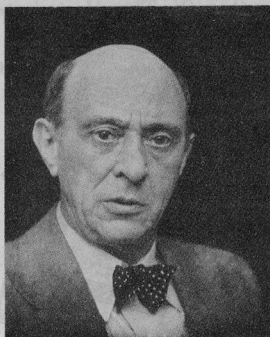
EXAMPLE 1.2

Errata sheet in Models, first printing. Courtesy G. Schirmer.

Later that year Schoenberg again contacted his editors, this time to discuss the creation of a new edition of the syllabus. Ultimately, his plan was to add a number of new harmonic patterns for thematic structures, models for varied recapitulations, alternate harmonic frameworks for contrasting middle sections, and several new minuets and scherzos—but the project never came to fruition.¹⁹ The executives at Schirmer had been receptive to the idea, but as Schoenberg explained in a letter to Engel (April 10, 1944), several factors, including illness, had forced him to reprioritize his activities. As a result, the completion of his new counterpoint text would take precedence over the syllabus. Engel's sudden death less than a month later, on May 15, 1944, ended any further possibilities of revision. After that, Schoenberg's relations with Schirmer rapidly deteriorated.

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of

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The text is bound separately for ease in use in connection with the examples.



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[17]

BULLETIN No. 8

EXAMPLE 1.3

Advertisement for MBC, from "Bulletin of New Music Published and Imported by

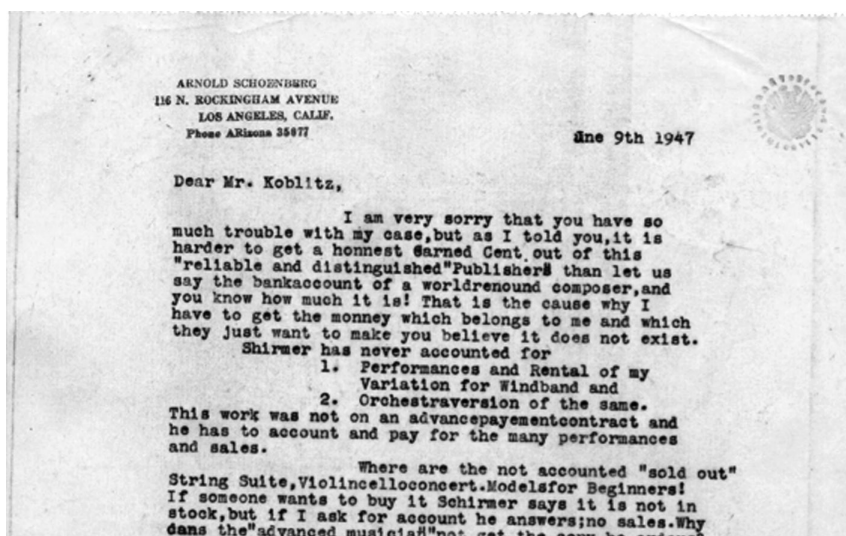
G. Schirmer, New York," Bulletin No. 8, 1943. Courtesy G. Schirmer.

Appears as a loose-leaf paper in Schoenberg's annotated copy of MBC, S142.C3.

Courtesy Arnold Schönberg Center.

One of several contributing factors to these soured relations appears to have been Schirmer's refusal to grant Universal or Dyname Editions the rights for *MBC*'s German or French translation, respectively. Eventually, the long-term unavailability of *MBC*, combined with Schirmer's alleged failure to account for proceeds from performances, rentals, and sales of his Theme and Variations for Band, Op. 43b (1943), Suite in G Major ("in Ancient Style") for String Orchestra (1934), and the Concerto for Cello and Orchestra after Keyboard Concerto by Georg Matthias Monn (1933) led Schoenberg to seek the advice of the Los Angeles-based lawyer Milton S. Koblitiz.

Schoenberg maintained correspondence with Koblitiz over several years. However, his clearest account of the case against Schirmer appears in a letter from June 9, 1947 (Facsimile 1.2).



FACSIMILE 1.2

Schoenberg's letter to Milton S. Koblitiz, June 9, 1947, excerpt. Courtesy Arnold Schönberg Center

Ultimately, Koblitz was unable to recover Schoenberg's royalties. As Schirmer explained it, they had already "over-paid" Schoenberg through advances, a claim that Schoenberg was unable to disprove but felt was false. Furthermore, the replacement of Engel by both William Schuman and Hans Heinsheimer signaled an unfavorable shift in attitude toward Schoenberg's music. Schuman, chief advisor of publications, was at best indifferent to Schoenberg's music. Ultimately he championed a more conservative brand of tonal composition for Schirmer's catalog—one that included many of his own works.²⁰

If poor health, changing priorities, and problematic relations with Schirmer had made any subsequent editions of *MBC* unlikely, the posthumous publication of *SFH* in 1954 and *FMC* in 1967 relegated *MBC* to a footnote in the discussion of Schoenberg's ideas on music—and it remained a work that was somehow associated with, but ultimately deemed unessential to, an understanding of his theoretical output as a whole. This lack of attention is perhaps best typified by Alexander Goehr's otherwise insightful and pioneering 1974 article on Schoenberg's theoretical works, in which he condenses all discussion of *MBC* into a single terse and exceedingly non-descript statement: "In addition, there is a short work, *Models for Beginners in Composition*."²¹ Goehr's focus on *TH*, *FMC*, and *SFH*, is understandable. His tacit value judgment is predicated on the belief that the content of *MBC* is included in these other texts—even though, very simply, it is not. *MBC* reveals the complex array of different issues confronting Schoenberg in his attempt to fashion a practical manual for the understanding of formal functions and composition of school forms in the American classroom. In this sense, *MBC* stands alone.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to all those who have helped bring this new edition of *Schoenberg's Models for Beginners in Composition (MBC)* to fruition. Special thanks to Nuria Schoenberg Nono and to Ronald and Lawrence Schoenberg, who have generously allowed me to publish their father's manuscripts. Their devotion to the dissemination of his work and thought is truly a model for anyone interested in Schoenberg's music.

I wish also to thank the Arnold Schönberg Center for awarding me an Avenir Grant to travel to Vienna in order to study the classroom notes of Leonard Stein and Gerald Strang, as well as Schoenberg's manuscripts and corrections for *MBC*. During my stay, the archivists Therese Muxeneder and Eike Fess generously shared their knowledge at every step. The assistant director, Karin Nemec, was always helpful during my stays in Mödling.

I am indebted to my friend Adam Shanley for copying the majority of the musical examples, to my colleague Matthew Wilson for his final formatting of these examples and sound engineering for the companion website, and to my colleague Dmitri Novgorodsky for performing the musical examples in *MBC*. My appreciation is extended to several readers, including John Jansen, Jim Davis, Sean Doyle, Michael Markham, and Paul Murphy, and to

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Chart of the Regions in Minor, *SFH*, 30.

Example 19, Derivation of the substitute tones, *SFH*, 9.

Example 55, Chart of Transformations, *SFH*, 38.

Example 59, *SFH*, 40.

Scale degrees as inclusive classes from *TH*, 387.

Example 183, *TH*, 246.

The Kirchner Heirs, Lisa and Paul Kirchner

Kirchner's Minuet for Composition 105, 1941, Appendix 3, Facsimile 6.5.

Special thanks to the Kirchner heirs, Lisa and Paul Kirchner, for allowing me to reproduce their father's minuet (Facsimile 6.5), a student work composed in 1941 for Schoenberg's Beginning Composition course, Music 105, at UCLA.

The Arnold Schönberg Center and Belmont Music Publishers

Schoenberg's correspondence.

Schirmer

Errata Sheet in *Models*, first printing.

Advertisement for *MBC*, from "Bulletin of New Music Published and Imported by G. Schirmer, New York," Bulletin No. 8, 1943.

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Scale-degree chart, *TH*, 246.

Example 183, *TH*, 246.

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Example 59, *SFH*, 40.

Scale-degree chart, *TH*, 387.






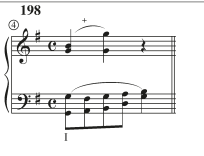









Example 183, *TH*, 246.

Editorial Notes

This edition of *MBC*, with critical commentary, supplemental materials, and newly transcribed musical examples, incorporates the author's 1944 corrections. Owing to the book's original function as a course syllabus, many of Schoenberg's theoretical concepts such as transformation, regions, and the relationship between harmony, form, and motivic development, remain only briefly outlined in Schoenberg's original text—at UCLA, students would have had a background in these topics from taking other required music theory courses (e.g., Structural Functions of Harmony, Music 106A and B; Form and Analysis, Music 104A and B). The extensive analytical commentary and appendices in this new edition explore relevant theoretical topics not covered in detail in *MBC* and situate them within Schoenberg's collected music-theoretical output.²² Further appendices including Schoenberg's teaching schedule at UCLA and related pedagogically oriented manuscripts complete this most recent edition.

Schoenberg's handwritten 1944 corrections, incorporated into this text, are found in three separate copies of the book housed at the Arnold Schönberg Center in Vienna (ASC), call numbers S142.c1, S143.



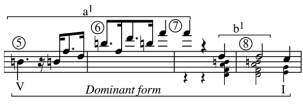

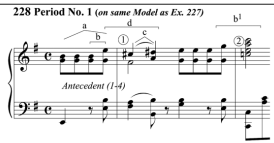
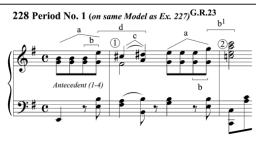
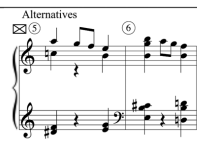
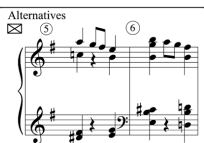
c3, and S143.c4 (see their description in Appendix 1). Most, but not all, of these corrections made their way into the 1972 edition of *MBC* published by Belmont Music Publishers and edited by Schoenberg’s former teaching assistant Leonard Stein. Example 2.1 shows the corrections new to this edition of *MBC*.²³

Location	1972 Edition	Present Edition	Source of Correction
Ex 85, m. 2			S143.C3
Ex. 193, m. 1			S143.C3
Ex. 198, m. 4			S143.C3
Ex. 220, 2 nd ending			S143.C3
Ex. 220	VI	V4	S143.C3
Ex. 225, m. 2			S143.C3
Ex. 225, m. 4			S143.C3
Ex. 231a Alternative I			S143.C3
IX. Phrases, Half Sentences, etc., Ex. 12, m. 1			S143.C2

Additional corrections of errors in harmonic analysis, page references, and courtesy accidentals are shown below.

EXAMPLE 2.1

Editorial changes to the current edition of MBC based on Schoenberg’s corrections

Location	1972 Edition	Present Edition	Rationale
Text, p. 7. “The examples are based...”	V-IV	IV-V	Accurately reflects the content of Example167 <i>b</i>
Exx. 44-48	III	III	Strikethrough reflects chromatic alteration of chord.
Ex. 91	II and IV	II and IV	Chromatic alterations
Ex.109	cautionary treble clef	deleted	unnecessary
Ex.149	VI and II	VI and II	Chromatic alterations
Text, Page 9. “For this purpose...”	pp. 30-33	pp. 38-41	Mistake in 1942 and 1972 edition
Ex.152			Beaming in motive <i>a</i> made identical to that of <i>a1</i>
Ex.167	a) VI - II b) IV - II c) VI - IV d) III - VI	a) VI - II (VI - II) b) IV - II (IV - II) c) VI - IV (VI - IV) d) III - VI (III - VI)	Chromatic alterations
Ex. 210			Beaming of <i>b1</i> in current edition of <i>MBC</i> now matches beaming of <i>b</i> .
Example 220	VI, II, and III	VI , II , and III	Chromatic alterations
Example 225			
Example 228 mm. 1-2.			Added motivic labels in m. 1 reflect motivic relationships.
Ex. 21, p. 39	II	II	Chromatic alterations
Ex.245, Alt.			Clarification (courtesy accidental)

EXAMPLE 2.1
(Continued)