

Arnold Schoenberg, *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, Op. 16

No. 3: *Summormorgen an einem See (Farben)*
(“*Summer morning by a lake - Colors*”)

This unusual slow movement is based on a single chord, C-G#-B-E-A (01348₈), the sound of which permeates the piece. It is significant to note that, in one of the early versions of the piece, Schoenberg entitled it “the changing chord,” for indeed the entire piece is based on this chord changing to a transposition to a new one. It is also significant to note that a canon of notes repeating in different instruments also runs throughout the piece. The canon separates the bass note (originally C) from the others: the bass is played at a faster rhythm and repeats twice in each measure, whereas the upper voices are stated only once. The lower voice canon is between the violas and basses, whereas the upper voice canon alternates the flutes, clarinet and second bassoon with the English horn, trumpet, first bassoon and French horn.

The chords do not change until the third measure. The process is that each voice first moves up a half step and then down a whole step. It begins with the E changing to F and then to Eb in the second flute in measures 224-226. While the second flute completes its movement to the Eb in measure 226, the first flute begins its movement to Bb and then Ab. Then the first bassoon moves from G# to A and G-natural in measures 227-229, and finally the clarinet moves from C# to D and C-natural in measures 227-228. Lastly, the bass moves from C to C# and Bb.

Interrupting this movement in measure 227 is the first of two motives that appear unexpectedly at various places in the movement, a descending whole step in the bass clarinet (F# to E). This recurs prominently in measure 229, just before the first fermata, which also marks the ending of the movement to the first transposition of the chord. The other motive, which is called the “leaping trout” motive, does not appear until measure 240. It includes leaping thirty-second notes followed by high chords in the strings.

The pattern of transpositions moves first down a half step and then up a perfect fourth to E in the bass, and then back down chromatically to the original C (indicating each chord just by the bass note), and then undulating chromatic motion (C-C#-C-B-C#-C) to the opening chord at the ending.