Title:	Young People's Concerts Scripts: Musical Atoms: A Study of Intervals [pencil on yellow legal pad paper with emendations in red & blue pencil & red ink; [Outline/Notes]]
Name(s):	Bernstein, Leonard 1918-1990
Resource Type:	text
Note(s):	From: Young People's Concerts Television Scripts Series
Subject(s):	Philharmonic Hall improvements Wagner: Lohengrin Baker, Julius Musical meaning Intervals Octaves Melody Harmony Inversion Brahms: Symphony No. 4 Scales Major scales Minor scales Williams: Symphony No. 4
URL	http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.lbypc.0351

PDF dynamically generated by the Library of Congress.

Previews
Thurs eve
28 April '60

My dear friends: The warm weather is indeed upon us; and if anyone complains ~~of the light~~ that a ~~concert~~ program of ballet-music is too light for a regular Philharmonic concert, let him rethink himself of the weather. Besides, we have just ~~finished a~~ passed through a number ~~plenty~~ of extremely serious & weighty weeks, during which we have presented a series of major works so weighty that ~~the equivalent of which~~ you would be hard put to find their equivalent in the annals of any orchestra on earth: the Missa Solemnis, Das lied von der Erde, the Bloch Sacred Service, Pergolesi's Stabat Mater, special works for tape-recorders & multiple orchestras, Copland's high-school opera "The Second Hurricane", and so on & on — all in one month. ~~It is time~~ Now it is the time of dogwood and ~~lilac, and~~ daylight-saving time — time to lighten the atmosphere.

And so our programs for the next three weeks — our final weeks, alas — will comprise a spring festival of theatre music. But why should theatre music be lighter, necessarily, than straight concert music? What's so light about Wozzeck or Fidelio or Martha Graham's Clytemnestra? It's just this: that no matter how grim or ponderous the subject matter, the music by itself doesn't ~~bear~~ have to bear the full responsibility of the weight; it is a partner in a marriage, and like any good partner in any good marriage, does not fully exist all by itself. And this is true of all theatre music, whether it be incidental music, which ~~at~~ can barely stand up on its own without the drama for which it was intended, or operatic music, which

can stand up a bit better by itself, away from its plot and stage investiture, as ballet music, which stands up best of all in its divorced state. And the reason for this is that a ballet composer is far freer to shape the form and even the content of his work than is the composer of operatic or incidental music, ~~than~~ ~~pen~~ who is so helplessly glued to the words, actions, moods, timings & what-not of the drama he is involved with. But the ballet composer is not saddled with words; and even in a story-ballet, with very specific action, he is freer than his operatic colleague, since the dance is itself so flexible a medium. Usually it is a case of a scenario being presented to a composer by a choreographer or a producer or a writer or whoever thinks it up; the composer then writes his music, & the music is then set, or choreographed, rather than the other way around, as in opera, where the words are set to the music. ~~As~~

Still, I can remember all too clearly instances ~~from~~ of my own ~~experience in this~~ collaboration with Jerome Robbins, when ~~bars~~ bars were eliminated from my music under my very nose, or when a bar of 4 beats became one of 3, or when an official ~~de~~ proclamation was made demanding 16 more bars of music, ~~[illegible]~~ entirely altering the mood of what I had written. It seems to me I wrote the whole ballet facsimile with Jerry Robbins standing behind me, peering over my shoulder, directing my hand from note to note.

figuratively, of course; and yet I can still feel his hot breath on my neck as he suggested, rejected, improvised, and sang what he hoped ~~might take place~~. I might feel like inventing. But actually I can tell you this in all seriousness: whatever good work we have done together, whether Fancy Free or West Side Story, I attribute to just this kind of note-by-note collaboration, torture though it has — and it sometimes is just that. There is no substitute that I know of for it, especially in highly detailed dramatic dancing. OVER Of course, I don't really know how closely Beethoven collaborated with his choreographer Viganò, — nor does anyone, apparently. Nor do we know too much about how closely Debussy worked with Nijinsky, or Chaikovsky with whomever Petipa assigned to the Nutcracker job; but I do know that Copland worked very closely indeed with Agnes De Mille on the Rodeo score. Perhaps modern ballets require more intimate collaboration than older ones which were more, shall we say, predestined in their classical stereotypes. I say perhaps, because, who knows, Beethoven may have lived night & day for a month with Signor Viganò, although I rather doubt it.

In any case, the Beethoven music turns out to be absolutely charming. Which is surprising, since charm is hardly the word that springs to one's lips when thinking of Beethoven. In fact, ~~one~~ his music

Of course, it's not always been this way. For example, Mr Robbins made a long complicated ballet out of my Second Symphony "The Age of Anxiety" long after it had been written & performed in concert. And only two nights ago a new ballet was presented at the Met to my Serenade for Violin & Strings — and I've never even seen a step of it! So you see, it can work in many ways.

is justly famous for its ruggedness, its anger, awkwardness, gigantism — precisely, that is, for its charmlessness. And yet, here is that same genius, so sensitive musically that any occasion elicits the exactly right response from him, so that for the ballet Prometheus, out pomed an hour's worth of pure balletic charm. I think you'll be amazed & delighted at this music, & only wish we ~~could play~~ had time to play the whole ballet for you; but even in these brief excerpts you will be immediately detect those unmistakable ballet ~~sounds of Dance~~ that inevitably mean the heroic entrance of the male soloist, the pattering appearance of the distaff corps de ballet, the ~~adagio~~ adagio & pas de deux — in this case a heavenly duet between the oboe and the basset-horn. To say nothing of the grand finale with all the trimmings. A ballet by Beethoven! Just think of it. Strange, isn't it, that no choreographer in our time has bestirred himself to make use of this unlikely but ~~be~~ brilliant score? Perhaps after this little teasing taste of it we shall play, some choreographer will yield to Beethoven's blandishments.

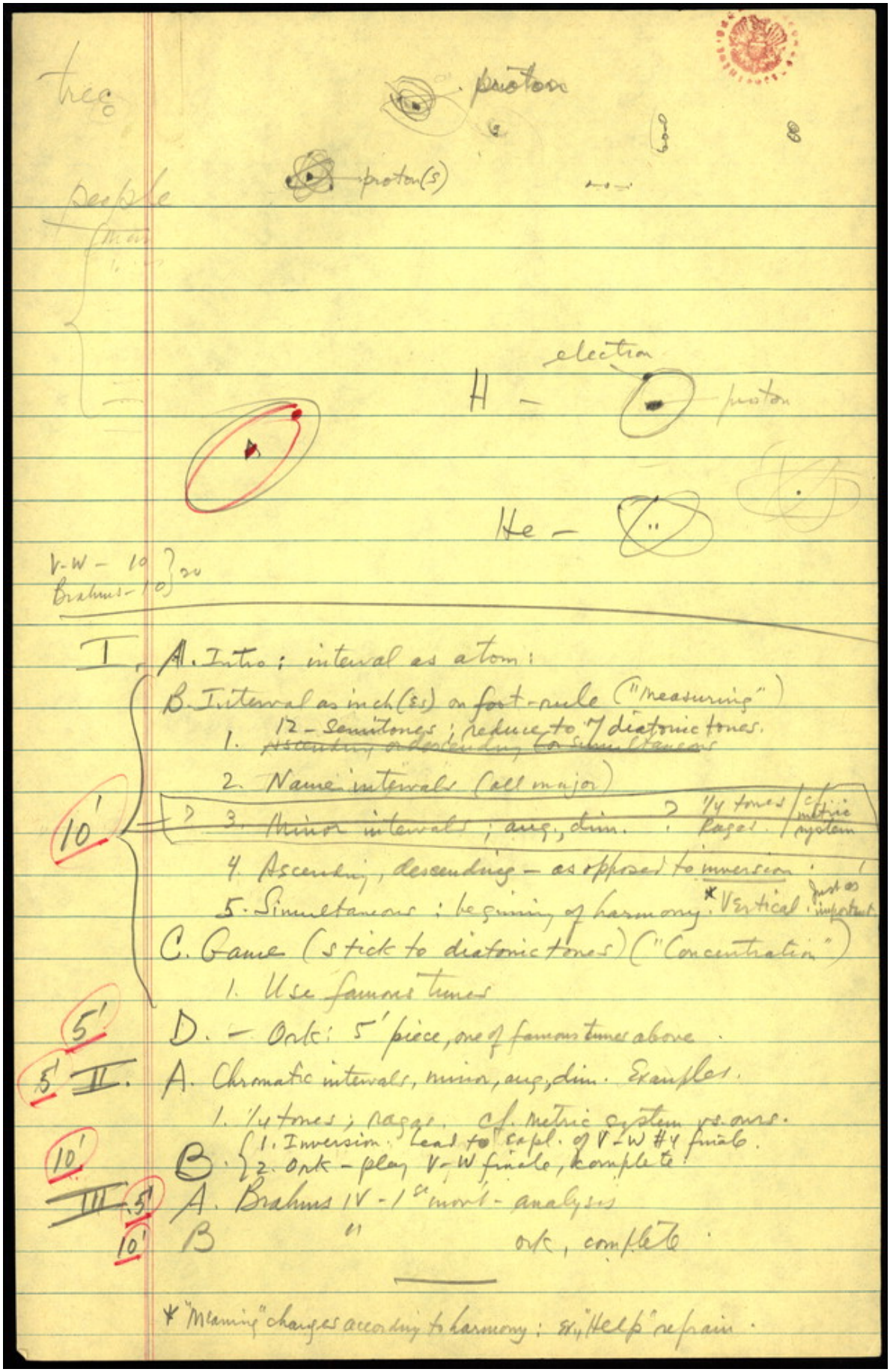
As to Debussy's Jeux, I suggest that you ~~simply~~ forget the risqué little scenario of the fantasie, and simply listen to this incredible piece of music, almost never performed — partly

(5)

because it is so difficult to play, & partly because audiences don't seem to clap when it's over. You may clap or not clap; but what's important is to hear this extraordinary piece of late Debussy, part Scriabin, part Boulez, but all Debussy. In the key spots of avant-garde Europe, the boys all talk about Jeux; Jeux, it seems, holds the seeds of all the new music, from Webern on. I'm not sure I see the connection, but I do see the beauty of the music; for sheer sensuous thrill, shivers, tremors, frissons, as they say, it has no equal.

As to the Nutcracker & Rokeposnites, I need say nothing at all. They are for your relaxed pleasure on this lovely dogwood-blooming night.

Leonard Bernstein.


proton
proton(s)
electron
H –
proton
He –
V-W – 10
Brahms – 10
20
I. A. Intro: interval as atom:
B. Interval as inch(es) on foot-rule ("measuring")
1. 12 – Semitones; reduce to 7 diatonic tones.
2. Name intervals (all major)
10'
3. Minor intervals; aug., dim. ? 1/4 tones / cf. metric system
Ragas.
4. Ascending, descending – as opposed to inversion.
5. Simultaneous: beginning of harmony. *Vertical. Just as important.
C. Game (stick to diatonic tones) ("Concentration")
1. Use famous tunes
5'
D. – Ork: 5' piece, one of famous tunes above.
5'
II. A. Chromatic intervals, minor, aug, dim. Examples.
1. 1/4 tones; ragas. cf. metric system vs. ours.
10'
B. 1. Inversion. Lead to expl. of V-W #4 finale.
2. Ork – play V-W finale, complete.
III. 5'
A. Brahms IV – 1st mov't – analysis
10'
B " ork, complete.
* "Meaning" changes according to harmony: ex. "Help" refrain.

Magic number 9 - sum of any interval & its inversion

"Help" refrain: ex. of same intervals changing "meaning" acc. to harmony

Intervals
(Famous tunes that start with:)

1 Minor 2nd - Habanera ↓ — merch. wedding march ↓ - So in Love Am I. Dark Eyes.
2 Major " - My Country 'Tis - Doublemint Gum
3 Minor 3rd - Mack the Knife ↑ (+ major 2nd) - Am. the Beautiful ↓
4 Major " - Beeth #5 ↓ - cuckoo ↓ - Beeth 5th Finale ↑
5 Fourth - Columbia the Gem. Pop goes the Weasel. Aida March (open natural overtone) cf. bugle Taps, Reveille
~~Dim 6~~ Aug. 4th Maria cool Smoothing Comin 12th interval is unison or octave
7 Fifth same
~~8~~ Dim Fifth WSS motto Twinkle 4th + aug 4th.
8 Minor 6th - Chopin Waltz ↑ (inv. Beeth 5th)
9 Maj " - My Bonnie
10 Minor 7th (somewhere) (Deep purple: {minor 2nd ↑ major 7th ↓})
11 Major 7th Aida finale
Octave

Come A Tine

Brahms 4th opening descending major 3rd - cuckoo, but with harmony changes in meaning.

Brahms #4

1st mov't Ex's.

based on 3rds + their inversions

Contrast: Scales

~~4th - 5th~~ ?

opening 1st Theme; 3rds + 6ths, + scales.

(C) -4 Trans. Theme built on 3rds

(C) acc. descending 3rds

(D) +9 2nd Theme scalewise, more chromatic

~~(G) 3rds Theme varied via scale's.~~

(E) Trans. Theme rendered scalewise

(G) 1st Theme rendered scalewise

(K) -8. 1st Theme acc. by scalewise variation in Thirds!

(L) Aug. 3rds + 6ths spread out for all to see. Then recap + great coda.

(The) Measuring (of) Music (Musical Measurement)

Time, pitch, dynamic

The interval: basic thing in music. Define: One note means nothing melodically until it moves to another

Inversion of intervals. Not inversion of line! Relates them: cf. Bach fugue, statement & answer. (Maj. becomes minor)

— Intervals can be ascending, descending, or simultaneous.

And. participation: Sing intervals via well-known tunes? Invert a game. (Ascending & descending) 1/4 tones ragas minor 2nd our smallest (cf. metric system & ours)

Last part: Brahms #4, 1st mov't. Analyse & play. (In terms of

V-W finale? (minor 2nd)

AC pno sonata scherzo
Aida finale

Foot-rule: 1 to 12. (= 1 octave)

any point on ruler is a note.
But ruler does not function except in terms of 2-points:

e.g. 3" point means nothing except as regarded from 0" point, measuring 3 inches. Or 3" point & 6" point also measures 3 inches. So 3rd note of scale & 6th note measures an interval — a span in the pitch-continuum. But it is a fourth!

'65-'66
YP-TV-1

Measuring Music

Greeting, etc.

After greeting: Conduct one note (ob.?) what's that? music? No. etc.

We're starting our new season, as usual, with a tough subject. I always feel it's better to get the ~~really~~ hard ones out of the way while ~~you're~~ we're all still fairly fresh from our summer vacations. ~~And so~~ That's why our opening programs are usually about the ~~whenever I [illegible] for the really basic~~ most basic subjects of music — like what is a melody, what is a Sonata, etc. And so, to open this season, I've been trying to think: what is the most basic subject in all music? ~~[illegible]~~ on these programs? What is the root, the center, the atomic nucleus of music — smaller than a ~~chord~~ melody, or a theme, or even a chord? Well, you'd say, A note, of course; one specific ~~what we call a~~ pitch, like (play) B♭, A, F#, or whatever. ~~[illegible]~~). But what's a single note, all by itself? Nothing. It's not yet music, not even a molecule of music, not even a musical atom. It's more like a single proton, or a single electron, which as you know, is meaningless all by itself; ~~but as you know~~, you need at least (one of each, at least, two atomic particles, ~~two [illegible]~~) to create an atomic nucleus; + in exactly the same way, you need at least two notes before music can begin to be made. ~~Once you have two notes~~ With one lonely note, all by itself, nothing is happening, it's just floating in space; But once you have two notes (play D-F#) you suddenly have a relationship, an electrical tension, (in other words, the beginning of a musical meaning) ~~a meaning~~. And with 3 notes, the meaning grows ~~increases~~ (play D-F#-A) — + before you know it (PLAY Blue Danube; v.o) you have music. ~~(play the Blue Danube a real time)~~. OVER

Check.

check "atomic nucleus" vs. "atom"

O.K.; ~~now~~, let me ask you the original same question again: What is the most basic ~~element~~ nucleus? (?) in music? But now you know the answer: it's not a note, but at least 2 notes; ~~at least~~; and that ~~element~~ nucleus, ~~of 2 notes~~ that 2-note relationship, is called an

You see what's happened? Rose musical protons & electrons ~~(PLAYD-FA-A) form~~ ~~have formed~~ into atoms; then the atoms ~~have~~ combined into molecules, which finally ~~by~~ combine ~~combining in the billions & trillions of them, they have become grown~~ into recognizable matter — like this wood, or this hair, — or ~~in other words~~ that Blue Danube Waltz.