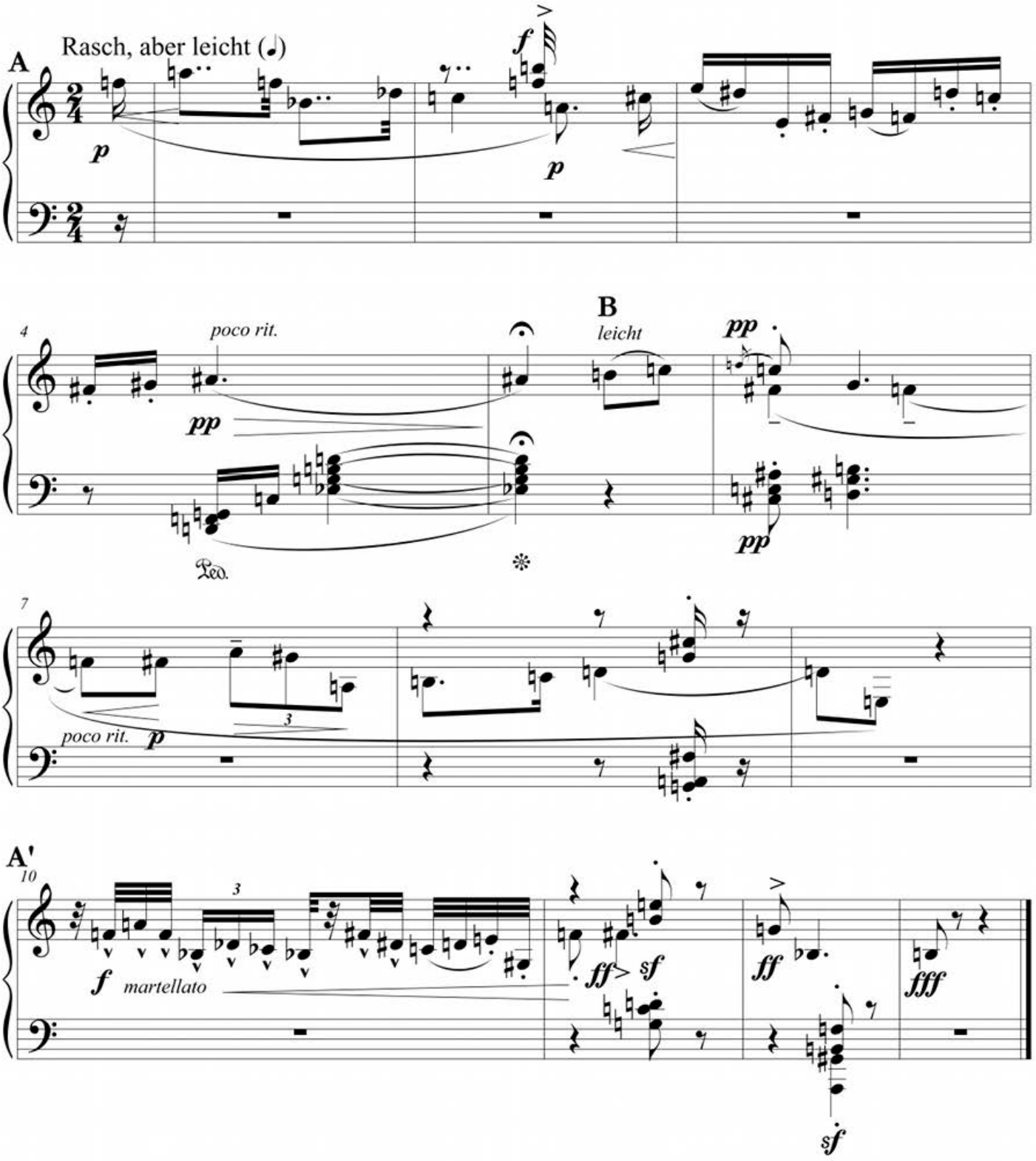
A JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR MUSIC THEORY

MTO 23.4 Examples: Johnson, Tonality as Topic

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)
http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.17.23.4/mto.17.23.4.johnson.php

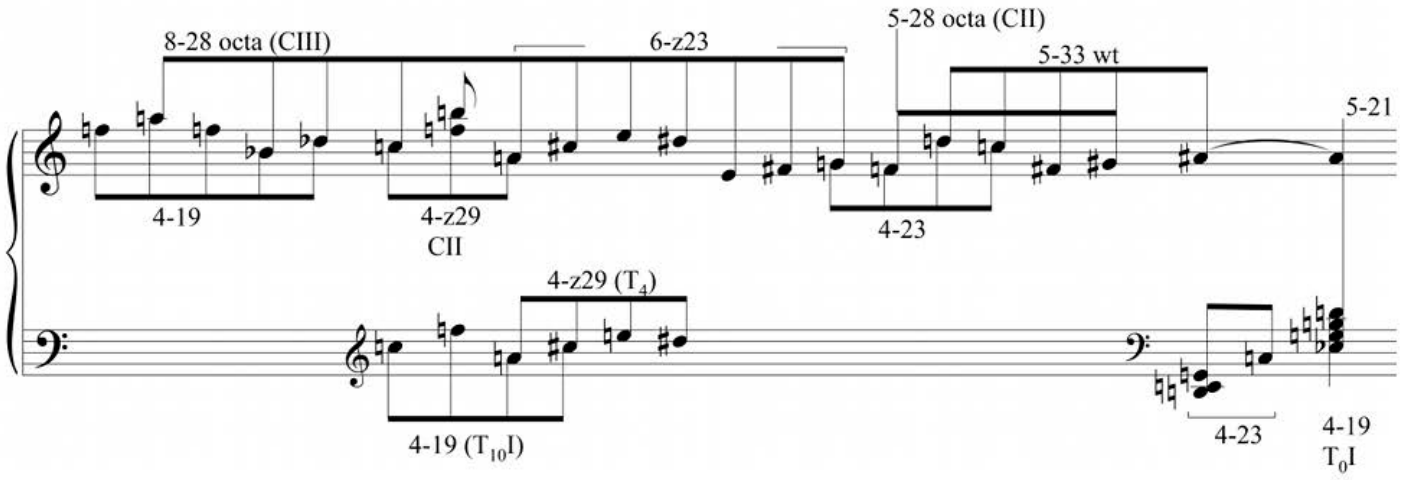
Example 1. Full score of Schoenberg's Op. 19/4 with Almén's (2008) topically oriented section labels

A invokes a dance topic. B suggests a recitative topic. A' parodies each of these



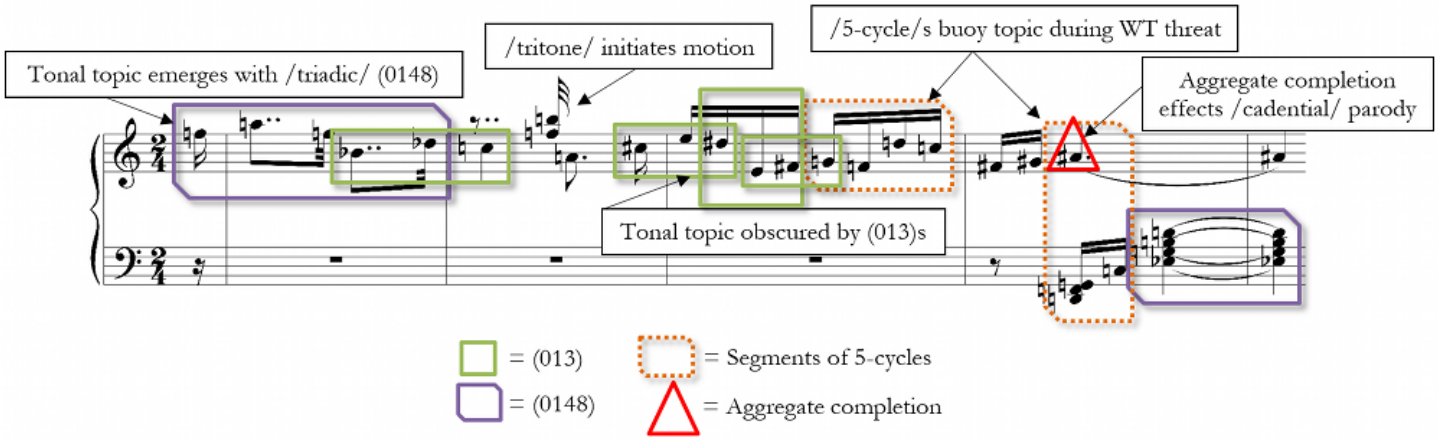
Example 2. Forte's (2003) analysis of Schoenberg Op. 19/4, **A** section, mm. 1–5

His tetrachords supply me with tonal *figurae* while his larger source sets might be profitably understood as pointing outward towards the octatonic and whole-tone collections



Example 3. A section of Schoenberg's Op. 19/4 with narrative-generating *figurae* shown

Though (013) is the most common trichord within a diatonic collection,
the overlapping iterations obscure the tonal topic

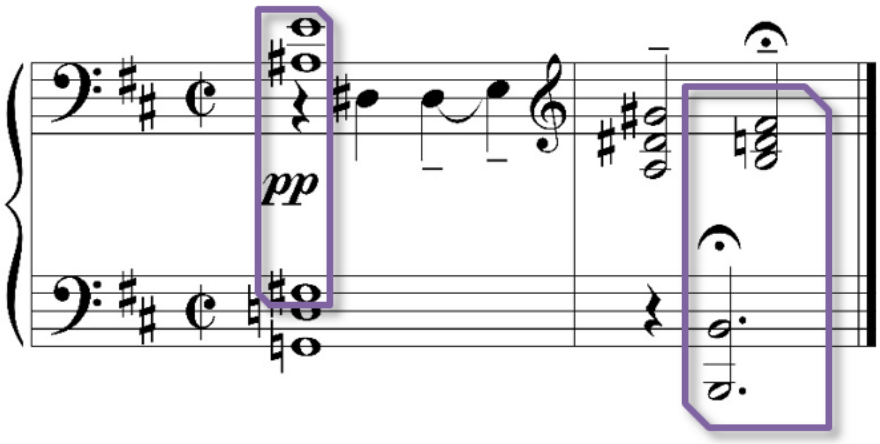


Example 4. Stefan George's text for Schoenberg's Op. 14/1, tr. Bryan Simms (2000)

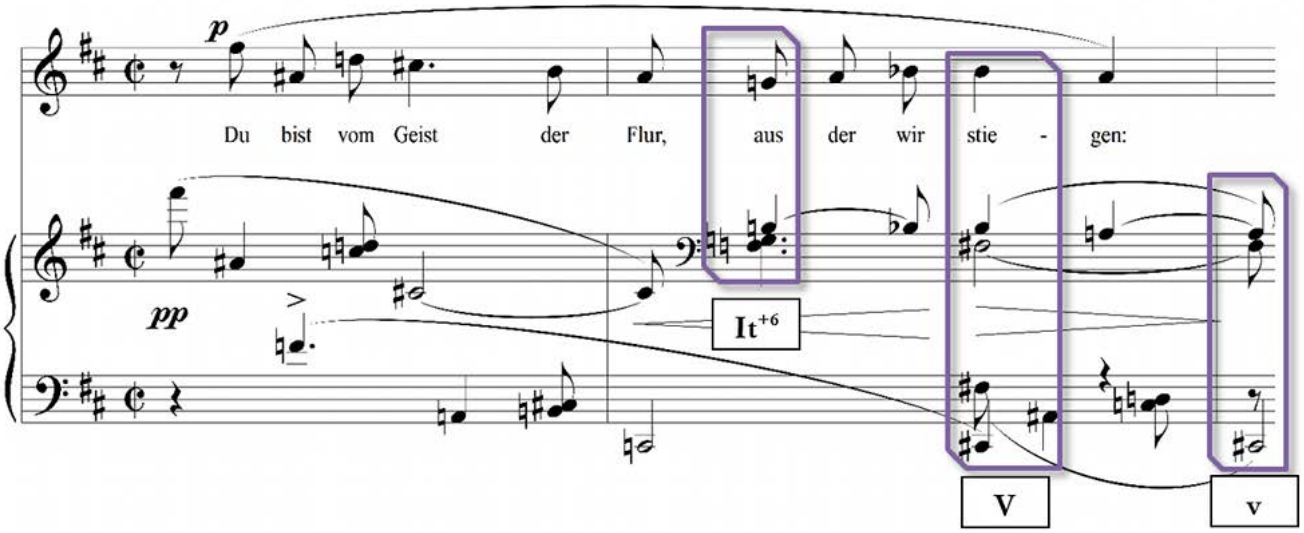
Ich darf nicht dankend an dir niedersinken.	I must not kneel in thanks before you.
Du bist vom geist der flur, aus der wir stiegen:	You came from the spirit of the fields, from which we rose:
Will Sich mein trost an deine wehmut schmiegen,	If I try to ease your melancholy,
So wird sie zucken, um ihm abzuwinken.	You turn away in rejection.
Verharrst du bei dem quälenden beschlusse,	Must you remain with your agonizing decision,
Nie deines leides nähe zugestehen,	Never to acknowledge the nearness of your sorrow.
Und nur mit ihm und mir dich zu ergehen	And only to walk with it and me
Am eisigklaren tiefentschlafnen flusse?	Along the river trapped in icy sleep?

Example 5. Final /cadence/ and clear manifestation of the tonal topic in Schoenberg's Op. 14/1, mm. 29–30, with /V^7/ and /tonic triad/ boxed

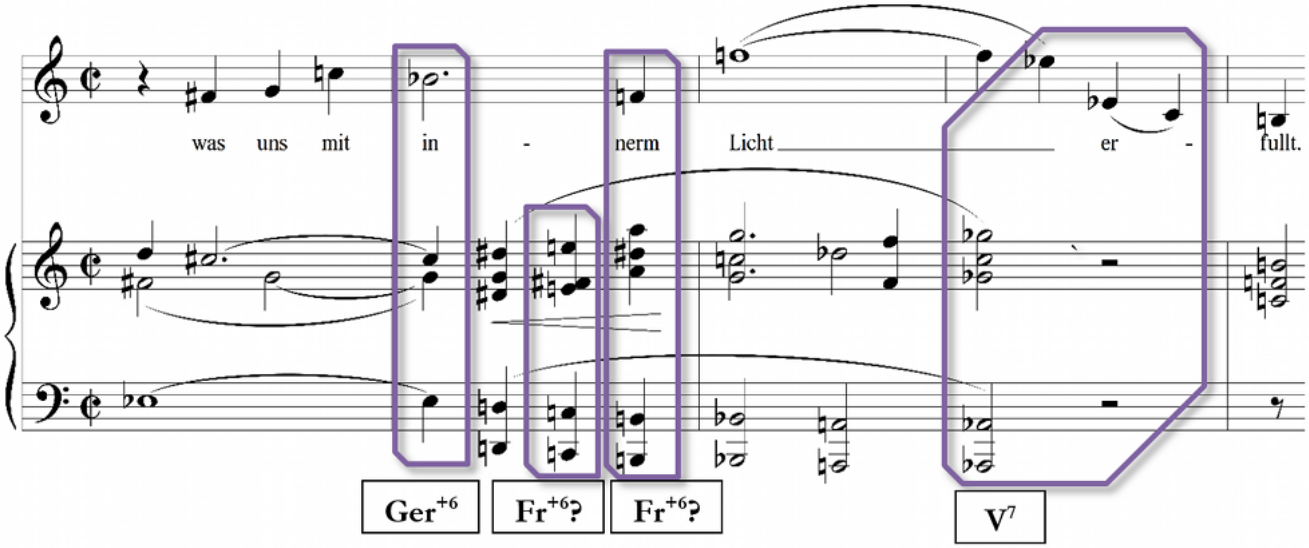
A /perfect fifth/ of G-D also alludes to tonality as topic in m. 29



Example 6. Schoenberg's Op. 14/1, mm. 6–8 with successive *figurae* contributing to a tonal topic

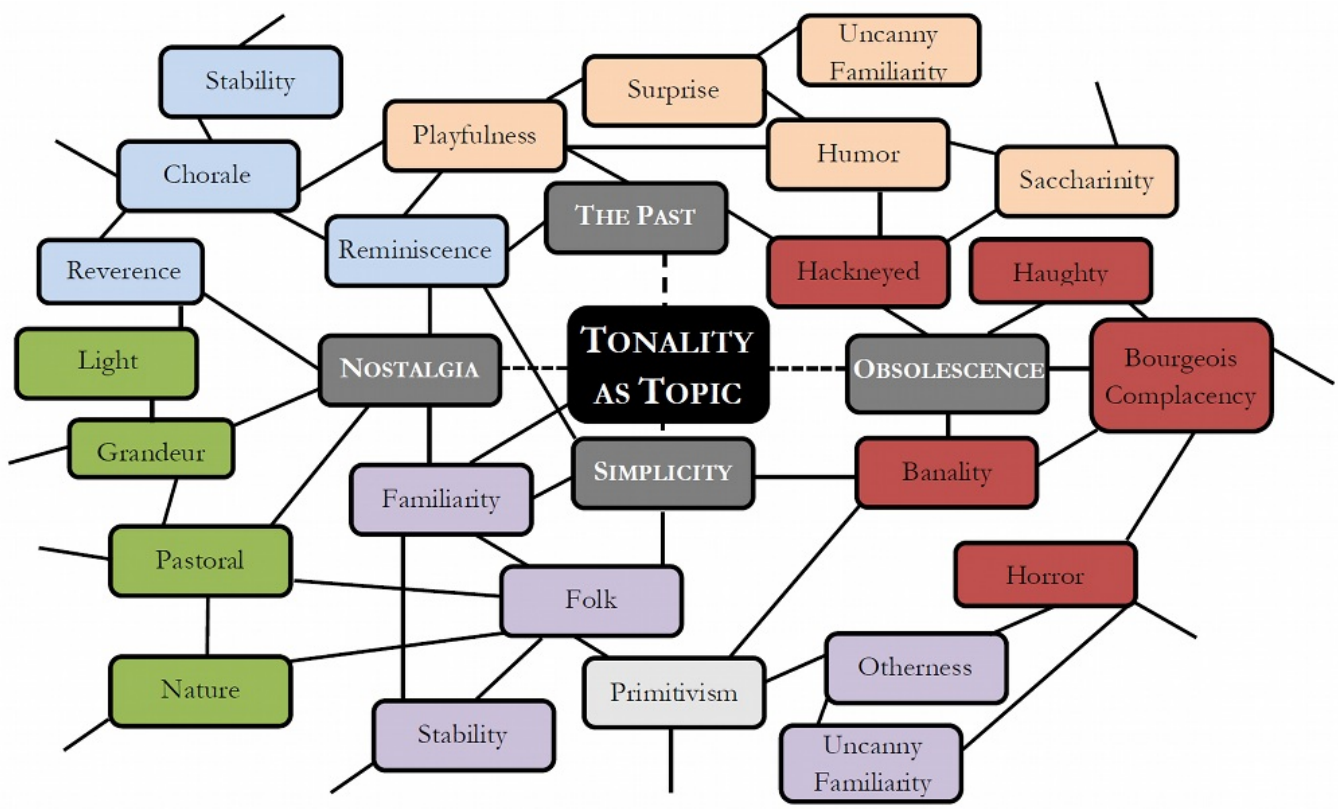


Example 7. Schoenberg's Op. 14/2, mm. 17–21 with successive potential tonal *figurae* locking together above the mostly /diatonic/ bass descent



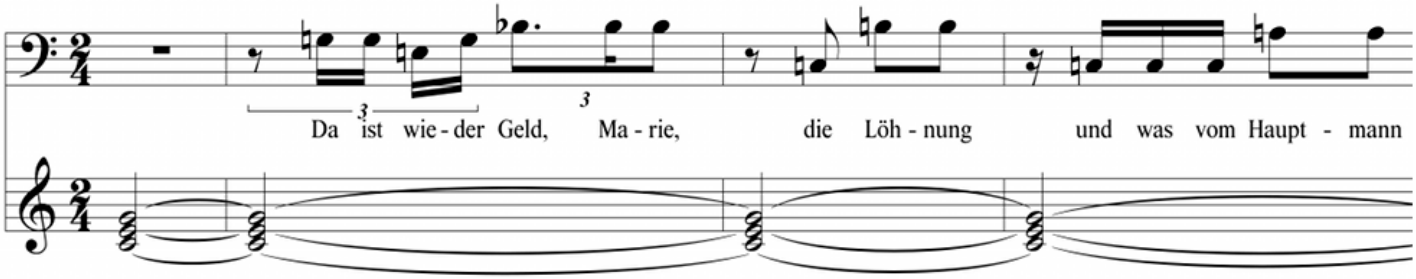
Example 8. Central section of the tonal-topic's network of signifieds for early twentieth-century music

Some items appear multiple times displaying the complex, rhizomatic structure of this portion of the semiotic code

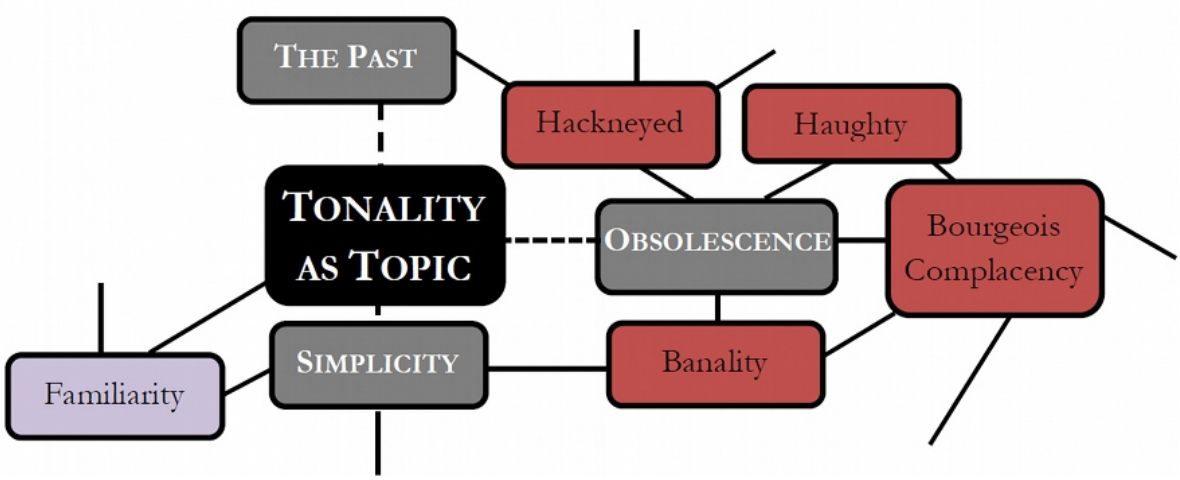


Example 9. *Wozzeck*, Act II, Scene 1, mm. 116– 119

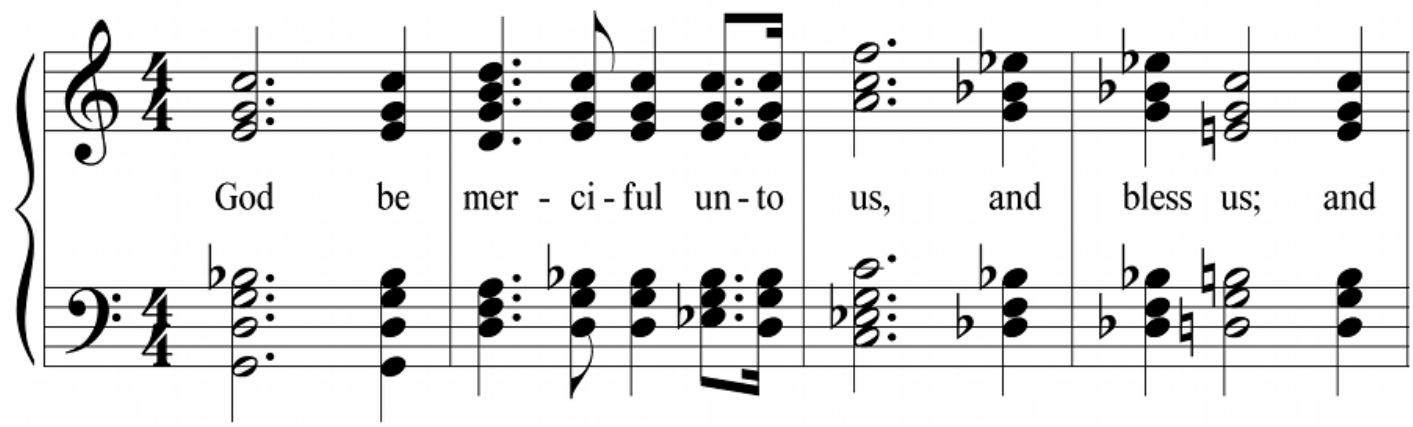
This reduction shows the plain /C-major triad/ beneath Wozzeck's slightly more chromatic recitative



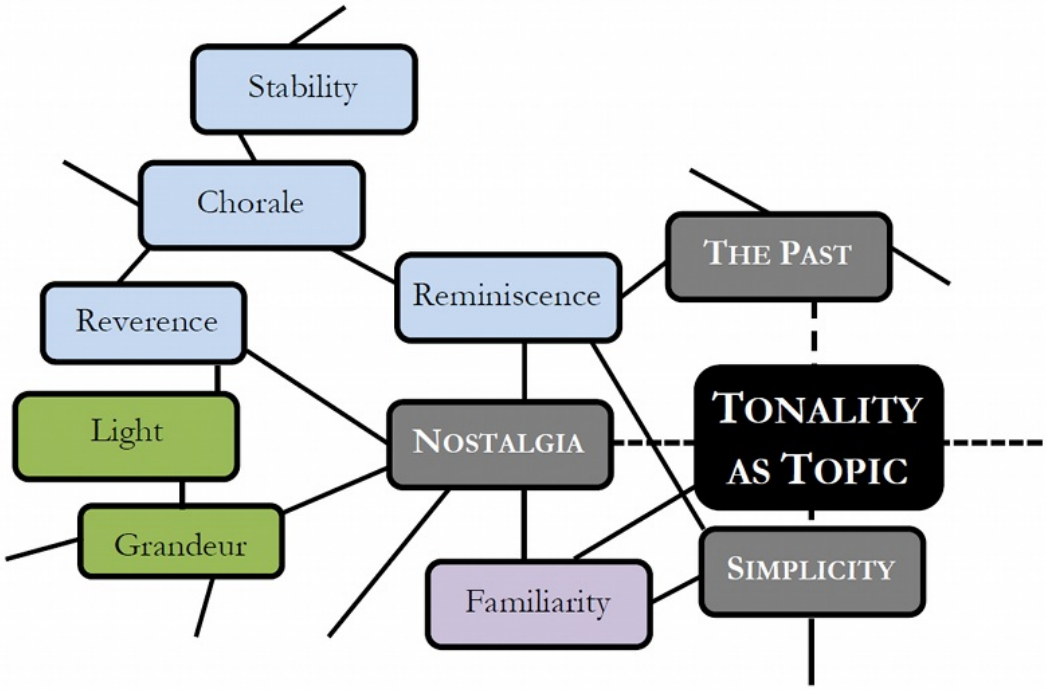
Example 10. Section of the tonal-topic code pointed towards in *Wozzeck* (Example 9)



Example 11. Ives's *Psalm 67*, beginning; The treble voices open with the /C-major triad/, helping to manifest the tonal topic within a "polytonal" framework of multiple /triads/

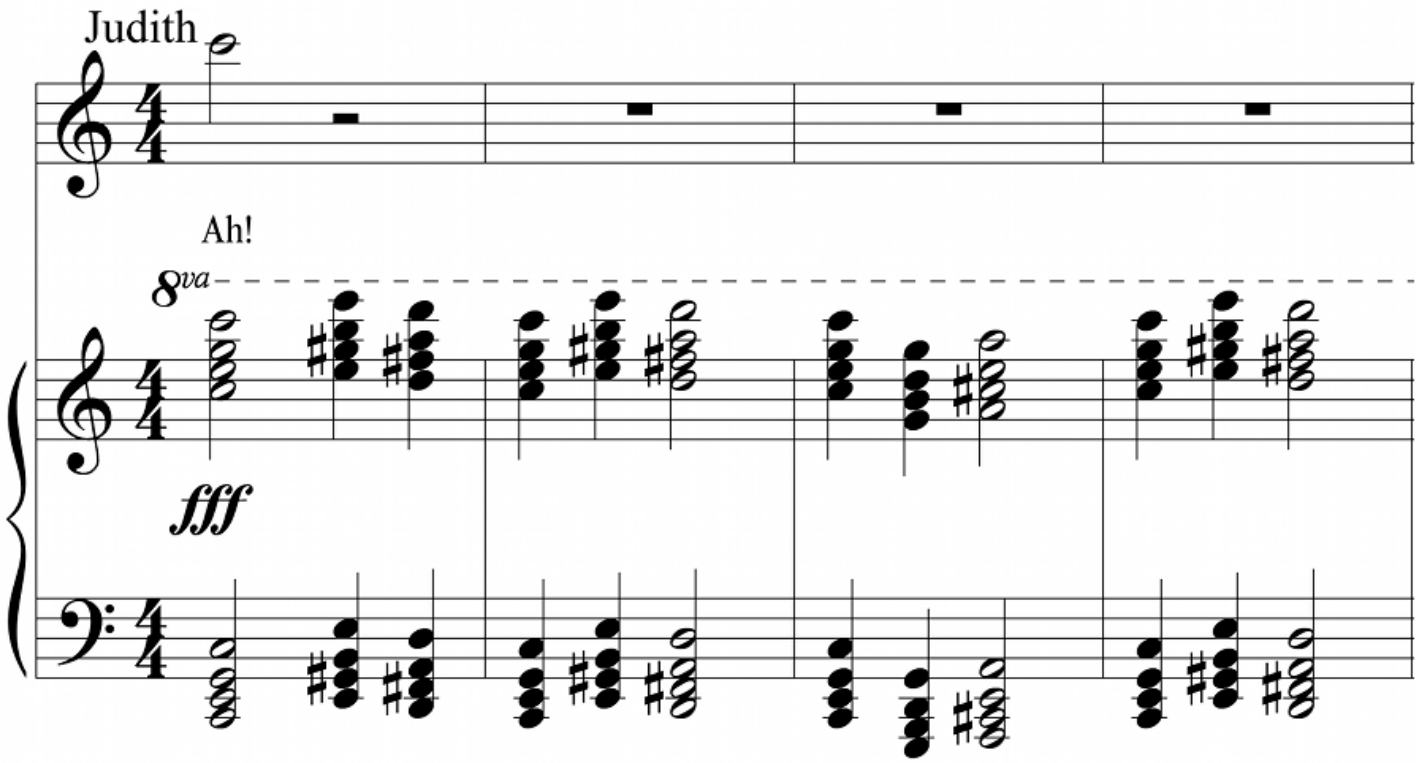


Example 12. Section of the tonal-topic code pointed towards in *Psalm 67* (Example 11)

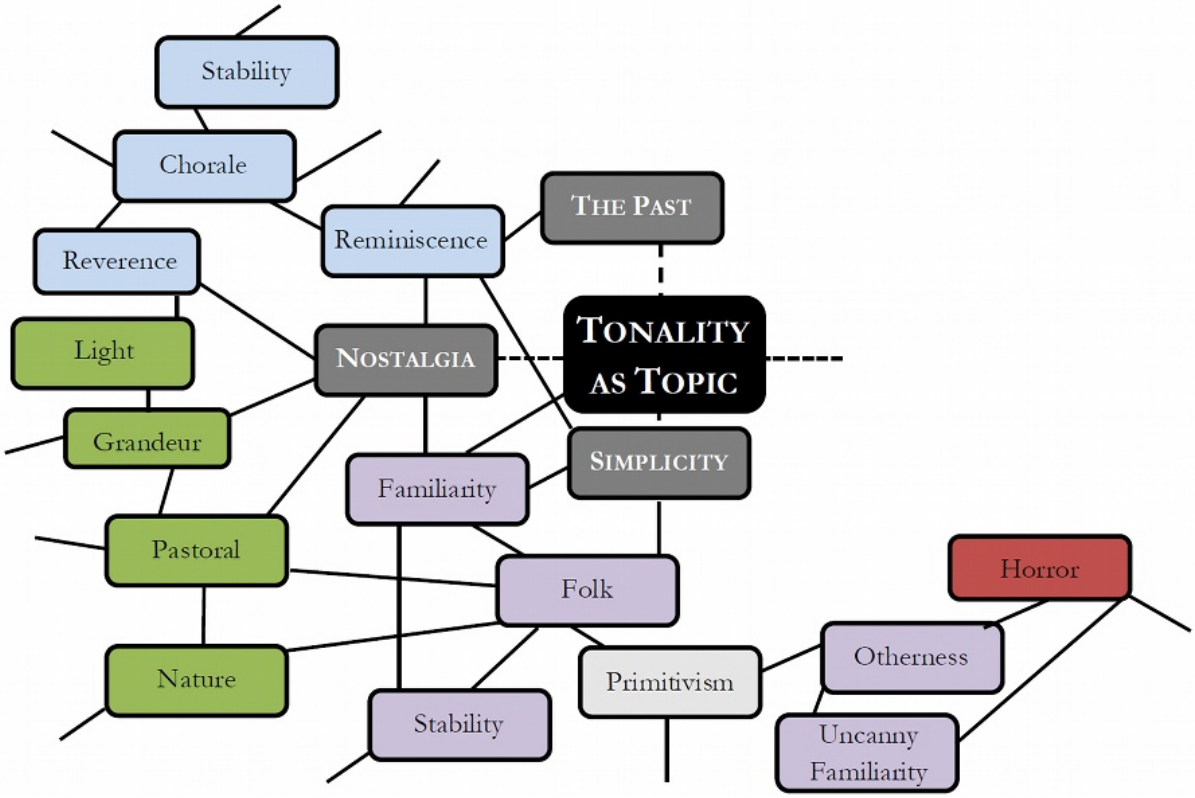


Example 13. *Bluebeard's Castle*, "Fifth Door" Scene, Rehearsal 73, reduction

In this case, /C-major triad/ combines with /homophony/, /pentatonicism/, and /wind instruments/ to give a huge pastorally inflected tonal topic

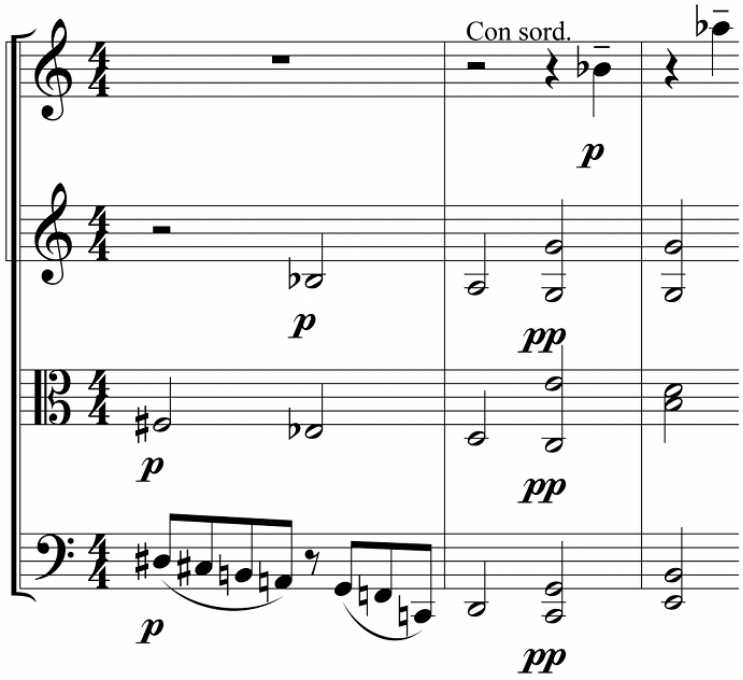


Example 14. Section of the tonal-topic code pointed towards in *Bluebeard's Castle* (Example 13)

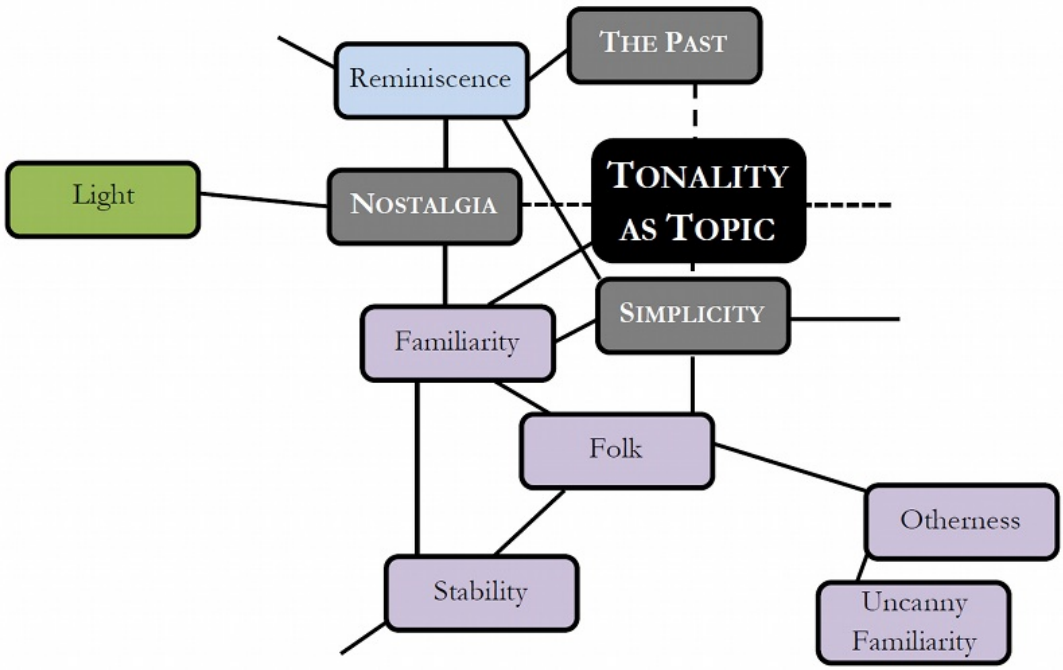


Example 15. Bartók's String Quartet no. 5, *II*, mm. 45–47

The /C-major triad/ is boxed. Note the stratification in texture, with the first violin as a solo instrument, much like the *Wozzeck* example

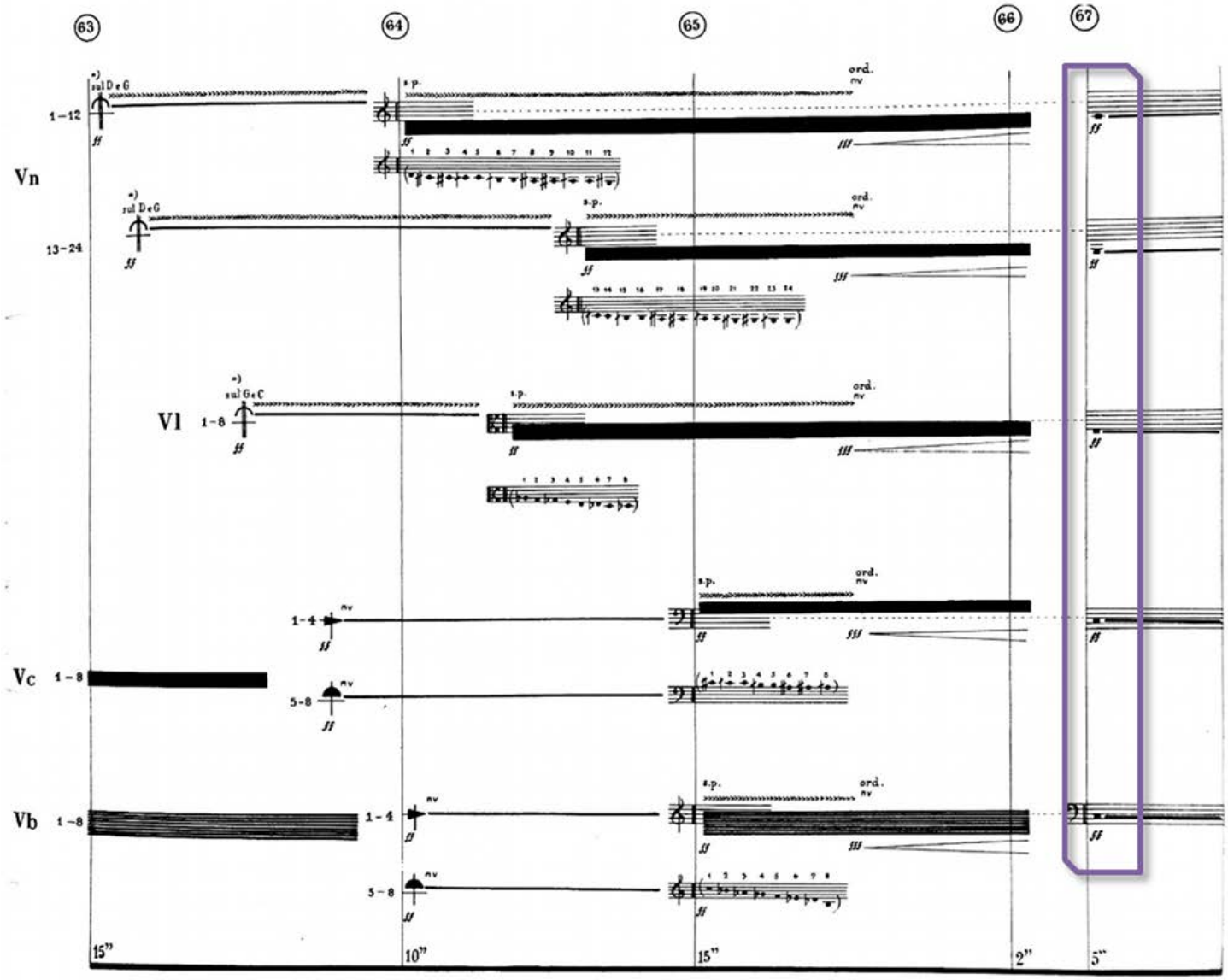


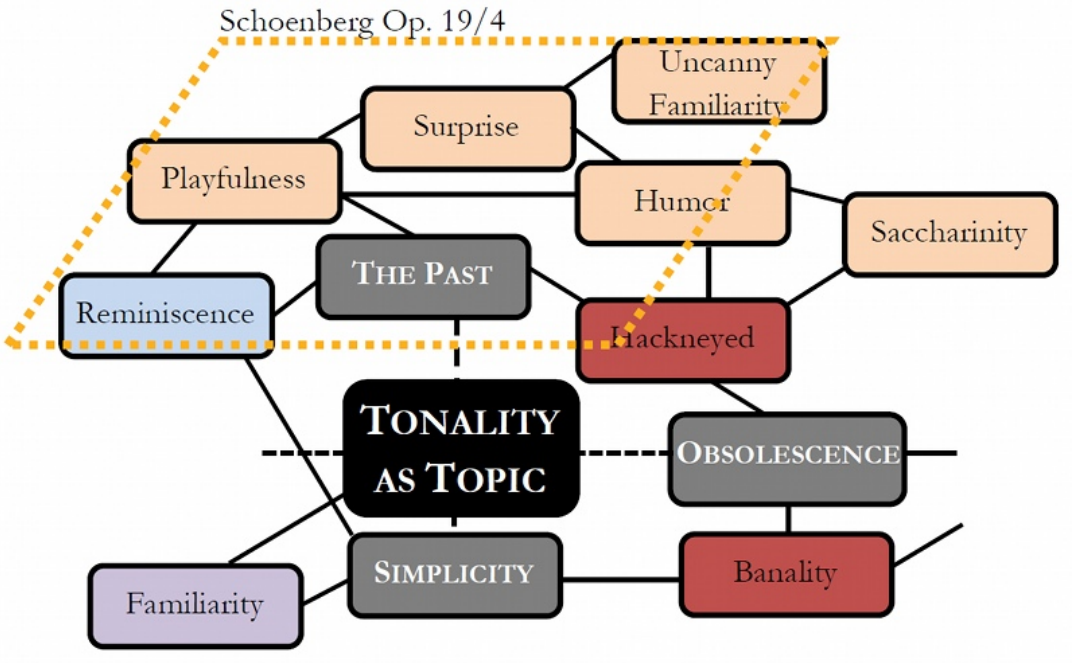
Example 16. Section of the tonal-topic code pointed towards in Bartók's fifth String Quartet (example 15)



Example 17. *Polymorphia*, Ending, mm. 63–67

The indeterminate clusters and graphic score notation give way to a *fortissimo* /C major/ cluster in the final measure, closing the piece on a humorous and uncanny note



Example 18. Section of the tonal-topic code pointed towards in *Polymorphia* (Example 17)

The dotted orange box suggests the signifieds I analyze in Schoenberg's Op. 19/4