Kandinsky and Schoenberg: Abstraction and Atonality

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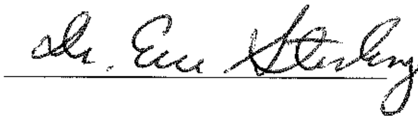

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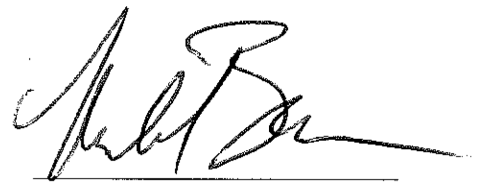

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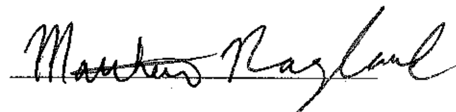

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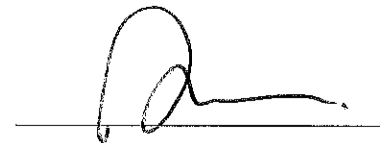

Professor Andrew Hairstans

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"And so the arts are encroaching one upon another, and from a proper use of this encroachment will rise the art that is truly monumental."

-Wassily Kandinsky

The purpose of this thesis is to show the power of correspondence between composers and visual artists. In the late 1800s, it became more common for creative artists to explore connections between their art and other media. One of the most significant correspondences and collaborations was that between visual artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) and composer Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951). These two artists were at the forefront of the modernist ideas in their media. Kandinsky was one of the first artists to use abstraction in his paintings, starting in 1910. Around the same time, Schoenberg was developing an atonal style of music.

Schoenberg's music instantly inspired Kandinsky at a concert in Munich, Germany on January 2, 1911. Kandinsky was so enthralled by his first impression that he immediately contacted Schoenberg to share his ideas, starting a significant correspondence. Their friendship came at a crucial time in their artistic development, and each artist emboldened the other to go forward with his direction of work. The resulting impact of Kandinsky and Schoenberg on art and music of the time was enormous, and it continues today. This thesis will focus upon the relationship between Kandinsky and Schoenberg, the artists' correspondence, and their collaboration in the group *Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider)*. Special attention will be given to artworks created during 1911-1914 that reflect synesthesia. There will be four parts to this thesis. Part one will discuss

the details of the two men's history, correspondence, points of contact, and common aims and philosophies.

Correspondence

Kandinsky and Schoenberg travelled very similar paths as forward thinking artists who tested the boundaries of their art. Both men were considered leaders in their respective media. Editor Jelena Hahl-Koch stated in her compilation *Letters, Pictures, and Documents*, "They actually always reached their most important breakthroughs at almost the same time and their paths ran parallel" (140). Kandinsky was born on December 4, 1866 in Moscow. In 1886 he started college at the University of Moscow where he studied law and political economy. Kandinsky broke from that career path in 1896 when he declined a position at the University of Dorpat and then departed for Munich to study art. Over the next several years, Kandinsky traveled extensively to study art techniques. The author of *The Expressionists,* Wolf-Dieter Dube*,* explains Kandinsky's traveling timeline, stating that Kandinsky had named Cezanne, Matisse, and Picasso as his primary influences (109). It quickly became evident that Kandinsky was approaching a new style. Washton Long's book, *German Expressionism*, includes several letters written to and from Kandinsky during 1910-1912. Several letters were from Alfred Kubin, a fellow artist who later became a member of *The Blue Rider* group. On May 5, 1910 Kubin wrote to Kandinsky, "… you have developed an entirely new possibility for art and stand unequaled and unique" (Long 42). By 1911 Kandinsky had attended art school, founded an art school, traveled with Gabriele Münter, created stage compositions, written *On the Spiritual in Art*, and painted his first abstract painting.

Schoenberg was born in Vienna, Austria on September 13, 1874. He came from a working-class background and was for the most part self-taught. He first started composing at the age of eight. Before switching career paths into music, he was a bank teller for four years in his early twenties. He began his musical career as a cellist, and theory teacher and later became a composition teacher. His first major composition, "Transfigured Night," was completed in 1899. By 1911, when Kandinsky made the initial point of contact, Schoenberg had established himself as a teacher of composition, composer, conductor, lecturer, and private instructor (in 1904 Alban Berg and Anton Webern became his students). He had been writing atonal music since "Transfigured Night."

As mentioned earlier, Kandinsky was inspired by Schoenberg the first time he heard his music on January 2, 1911 at a concert in Munich, Germany. Alex Ross, who wrote *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century,* explains the significance of the concert: "Kandinsky and Schoenberg knew each other, and shared common aims; *Impression III* [painting by Kandinsky] was inspired by one of Schoenberg's concerts" (56). Kandinsky initiated the correspondence with Schoenberg on January 18, expressing great excitement and joy to have found a like-minded composer: "In your works, you have realized what I, albeit in uncertain form, have so greatly longed for in music. The independent progress through their own destinies, the independent life of the individual voices in your compositions, is exactly what I am trying to find in my paintings" (Hahl-Koch 21). Schoenberg responded enthusiastically a few days later, "… I am particularly happy when it is an artist creating in another art from mine who finds point of contact with me. Certainly there are such unknown relationships and common ground among the

best artists who are striving today, and I dare say they are not accidental"(23). Schoenberg was inspired by artists and musicians (as was Kandinsky) around him and made large strides in freeing music from traditional tonality.

Schoenberg was famous for his use of atonality and dissonance. When he introduced the idea of atonality, he was not always praised for the new concept that many people could not understand. In his book, *Theory of Harmony*, within a chapter on Diatonic chords, he stated, "Today we do not yet stand far enough away from the events of our time to be able to apprehend the laws behind them" (Schoenberg 70). He was often harshly criticized for his new ideas, but he felt compelled by an "inner-need" to push forward. Hahl-Koch asserts that "…Kandinsky was among the first non-musicians to recognize Schoenberg's significance" (135). Their shared enthusiasm for new means of expression prompted their relationship to continue. Kandinsky wrote, "I have long felt that our period — which is after all a great one — will bring forth not one, but many possibilities" (Hahl-Koch 26). There are over 60 letters that remain from their correspondence, the majority being written from 1911-1914. They shared paintings, photographs, ideas, and writings/publications. They became friends, and it is evident that they developed great respect, and even admiration for one another. They talked freely about their art and writings and valued the other's opinion.

Kandinsky became a very busy artist, writing several articles, promoting his philosophies, teaching, exhibitions, and painting. In Kandinsky's article "Foreword," written in 1909, he wrote, "After music, painting will be the second art to be, to become unthinkable without structure, which is not the case today. Thus painting will reach the

higher level of pure art, upon which music has already stood for several centuries" (Long 41). Kandinsky realized how drastically his medium was changing and commented on how new innovations in the arts are often exaggerated. He reminds us, however, that, "What yesterday was rejected with derision today is deified" (Hahl-Koch 130). The visual arts were being pulled in many different directions in the early twentieth century. Kandinsky's art was a major contribution towards German Expressionism.

Kandinsky finished his book *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* in 1910. It was published by Piper in 1911. In his book, he explains why he often titled his pieces after musical processes:

> They represent three different sources of inspiration: (1) A direct impression of outward nature, expressed in purely artistic form. This I call an 'Impression.' (2) A largely unconscious, spontaneous expression of inner character, the non-material nature. This I call an 'Improvisation.' (3) An expression of a slowly formed inner feeling, which comes to utterance only after long maturing. This I call a 'Composition.' In this, reason, consciousness, purpose, play an overwhelming part. But of the calculation nothing appears, only the feeling. Which kind of construction, whether conscious or unconscious, really underlies my work the patient reader will readily understand. (57)

This passage shows that Kandinsky (just like Schoenberg) was more concerned with the inner thoughts and feelings of the artist, than the "outward nature" of the world. Schoenberg went even further, writing: "Art belongs to the unconscious! One must

express oneself! Express oneself directly! Not one's taste, or one's upbringing, or one's intelligence, knowledge, or skill" (Ross 57).

William Thomson, author of *Schoenberg's Error,* explained the differences in the media from 1900-1920, which explains their dispute. While Schoenberg was trying to "control a demon," Kandinsky and other visual artists were trying to "unleash their art's demons." Upon review it has become very interesting how visual artists were trying to change into music's properties of non-objectiveness, while musicians were trying to change music's form to new rules and obstacles (10). Kandinsky strived towards this idea of music as art and continued to abandon normal perceptions and representations in his art. He continually reduced the objects in his paintings until they seem like an abbreviation of an object. You can see this in his progression of paintings from his works in 1903-1911. Pieces Kandinsky created in 1903-1909 were still objective, depicting people and landscapes, such as *Rapalloin* in 1906 and *Couple Riding* in 1907. In 1910 he became completely non-objective, which can be seen in any of his *Composition* or *Improvisation* works.

Through Kandinsky's very first letter, he demonstrated how much of a fan he had instantly become of Schoenberg. The poster from the concert in Munich that fateful night on January 2, 1911 had an excerpt of text on it. In his first letter, Kandinsky inquired about the text. Schoenberg told him the excerpt was from a chapter of his book, *Theory of Harmony*, which had been published serially in the music periodical, *Die Musik* (vol.X, no.2, October 1910, pp.96-105) (Hahl-Koch 129). Kandinsky immediately ordered this periodical, enjoyed it, translated specific passages himself into Russian, and

then submitted it to an International Art Exhibition in Odessa, Ukraine. Kandinsky's translation of Schoenberg's text along with Kandinsky's commentaries of the text appeared in the Odessa catalog. Consequently, Kandinsky is responsible for introducing Schoenberg's work to Russian scholars and introduced the text in high regard by saying, "Schoenberg is one of the most radical, consistent, gifted, and sincere creators of the 'new' music" (Hahl-Koch 129). Kandinsky was not alone in his high praise of Schoenberg's book, because it quickly became a highly regarded text for musicians.

In 1911, the same year as Kandinsky's book release, Schoenberg finished his book *Harmonielehre* (*Theory of Harmony)* and had it published by Universal Edition, Vienna. Although Schoenberg's book is largely about a different medium, the two publications are alike in some ways. Schoenberg sensed their like-mindedness while reading *Concerning the Spiritual in Art,* writing on December 14, 1911, "I have sent you my *Theory of Harmony*. You will be astonished at how much I say that is closely similar to you" (Hahl-Koch 40). Schoenberg knew that Kandinsky would agree with this statement due to their previous correspondences.

Heinrich Jalowetz had great admiration for Schoenberg's *Theory of Harmony,* stating, "…this textbook of harmony instruction has meaning not only for the musician but also anyone who considers artistic problems to be life's problems" (231). For example, in chapter four, *The Major Mode and the Diatonic Chords,* Schoenberg discusses the theory behind whether or not to use the root note in the bass of the chord, thus using chord inversions and whether this was the proper application or not. His philosophical approach to life, not just music, becomes evident when discussing such

musical concepts: "It is improbable that one would obey a necessity if it did not bring yet other advantages beyond those issuing merely from its minimal requirements; it is also improbable that one advantage would appear that is not attached to the fulfillment of certain necessities" (Schoenberg 53). Jalowetz goes on to explain, "…Schoenberg shuns all artistic dishonesty and wants to bring the pupil to the point of understanding that everything he does he must stem from an inner necessity" (236). Schoenberg made it clear that he wanted to teach his pupil the rules first, then the endless possibilities of what could be: "…I could easily say to a pupil: Any simultaneous combination of sounds, any progression is possible" (70). Even though he was broadening the possibilities for the world of modern music, he understood there were still conditions that swayed his choices. He greatly respected the past and rules of traditional music stating, "Precisely this former knowledge and experience will show, I hope, how correct is the path along which we are searching" (70).

Rudolf Stephan explains Schoenberg's significance to modern music in his introduction to a later edition of *Theory of Harmony. "*Schoenberg formulated for the first time the insight that was to be crucial for all later music: that tonality is merely an artificial means, albeit an extraordinarily versatile and powerful one" (127). In Schoenberg's text, it becomes evident that his inner artistic passion is propelling him forward. He goes on to explain how necessity and beauty sometimes fulfill each other when accomplishing one and how that reward, "…always appears of its own accord in true art and in true morality" (53). Thomson states that *Theory of Harmony* is still today a very significant text for any musician to study and learn about unique musical applications and organizations that they can apply (43). The musical rules that were

created in the Romantic period were not staying steadfast, and Schoenberg was a major contributor to creating new ones.

Schoenberg had great respect for traditional tonality. Atonality was not to be treated lightly, but must arise from an inner compulsion. In the early twentieth century, many artists and musicians were aware of the similarities of abstract painting and atonal music. Russian composer Thomas von Hartmann wrote an article in 1913 about Kandinsky, entitled "The Indecipherable Kandinsky." In the article Hartmann comments on Kandinsky's gradual progression away from common pictorial representation: "Painting is put on the same level as music which seeks only the purity and appropriateness of sound combinations" (Hahl-Koch 141). Kandinsky also understood that both arts were undergoing profound change. Thomson explains, "…the constant unifier of the time was the clangor for change itself. It is unlikely that any era has witnessed a more outspoken, a more sustained effort by humanity to wrench more profound change from each of its expressive arts" (11). These men were leaders for many artists during this time of great change.

Schoenberg and Kandinsky both seemed to have believed that the other's art was freer than his own, but still had boundaries that were being tested. Schoenberg painted and showed some of his artwork in *The Blue Rider's* exhibits. Kandinsky played the cello and piano. He even composed some music. This participation in different arts provided a liberating effect. Stefan George was an influential artist in Vienna who had direct influence early on for Schoenberg. "In George's view art is a far cry from fun and games with sounds and words and pictures. Art is life at its highest ontological peak, and

it is practiced exclusively by the supreme creatures of the universe" (Thomson 20). Schoenberg agreed with the Georgian idea of being a creator and the act of creation, whatever the medium (20). In one of Kandinsky's most famous quotations, his love for art, music, and collaboration becomes evident: "Colour is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand which plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul" (25). Hahl-Koch explains, "In an unaccustomed art they felt less responsibility, were not weighted down by acquired knowledge, did not drag centuries-old tradition around with them and could therefore experiment in a more unconstrained and playful way" (150).

The men kept in constant contact from 1911-1914. In 1914 they lost contact because World War I started; Kandinsky moved back to Moscow and Schoenberg joined the military. They did not correspond again until 1922. Kandinsky's last known letter to Schoenberg was in 1936.

The Blue Rider

Part two will discuss the connections of the two art forms and the artists' collaboration in the group called *Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider)*. In 1911 Kandinsky created this group of like-minded artists who both created artwork, and wrote theoretical articles. The artists in this group evolved and changed throughout the four years time (1911-1914) according to their environment. William Fleming, a well-respected scholar and noted music critic who wrote *Concerts of the Arts,* stated, "The arts always involve relationships with each other and with the civilizations from which they spring" (33). Artists are highly influenced by their surroundings, including what is happening in other media, specifically visual art, music, and poetry. H.W. Janson, an art scholar, and Joseph Kerman, a music scholar, collaborated on an informative book entitled *A History of Art and Music.* Kerman explains that beginning in the late 1800s, all Romantic period creative artists shared one broad goal: "the expression of human feeling and inner experience" (270). Throughout this time, musicians of the Romantic period could express emotion, convey their inspirations from the other arts, and change musical form. In the Romantic period, rules and boundaries were continually stretched in order to express intense emotions. Towards the end of the Romantic period, a style called Expressionism began to emerge.

German Expressionism was a direct product of events taking place in Germany at the time. "From the very beginning, artists associated with Expressionism attacked not only the conventions of art but also the conventions of a society they found materialistic and dehumanizing" (Long xxi). Germany did not become a nation until 1871, but events

happened quickly when it did. As Long explains, "The rapid industrialization of Germany at the end of the nineteenth century, set up conditions that paved the way for art movements that questioned authority" (xxi). During this time Munich was considered a strong international art city, although modernist explorations did not have wide support in the existing artistic groups. Esther da Costa Meyer and Fred Wasserman edited the book, *Schoenberg, Kandinsky, and the Blue Rider*, which includes several essays in addition to exhibition notes. They explain, "Neither the tradition-bound Association of Pictoral Artist of Munich nor the nominally more progressive Munich Secession opened their exhibition to radical artistic innovations" (Meyer 64). Since established art groups did not provide much support for change, younger artists with new ideas and opinions started their own groups. Kandinsky was among the new leaders.

One of the first groups Kandinsky co-founded was the Phalanx Artists' Association 1901. The groups aim was to provide exhibition opportunities for younger, more radical modern artists that were excluded from the other more traditional art groups. At this time, Kandinsky had only studied art for five years. The Phalanx group lasted for the impressive length of three and a half years (Meyer 64). While teaching at the Phalanx school, he met Gabriele Münter, who later became his partner and biggest art supporter. For the next several years, Kandinsky stayed extremely busy painting, submitted pieces to shows, and traveled with Münter.

In 1909 Kandinsky started a new art group of about twenty-one participants called the New Association of Artist Munich (NKVM). "The NKVM called for a new recognition of subjective responses and experiences that would produce images

representing a fusion of "external objectivity" and "internal subjectivity" (Meyer 67). The NKVM's first exhibition in Munich 1909 was not received well because the artwork pushed the boundaries of the material world. The art displayed "provocative, radically intense colorism" and "drastically reduced simplifications" such as Münter's piece, *Girl with Doll* (Meyer 69). The majority of the public could not understand the new ideas of non-objectivity in art and viewed them as madness, anarchy, or just lack of talent. One result from the exhibit was that it positively influenced painter Franz Marc, who became a significant contributing artist and friend in Kandinsky's inner circle.

Controversy arose over Kandinsky's' *Composition II,* which was included in the second NKVM exhibit in 1910. Meyer says because of the nonrepresentational independence displayed in the painting, *Composition II*, "…seemed either to threaten the very tradition of painting itself or to promise a new future, filled with excitement and adventure…" (70). Due to differences in opinions with the majority of the NKVM's members, Kandinsky resigned in January 1911. Marc and Münter left the NKVM as well, following Kandinsky. At this time Franz Marc became his ally and Kandinsky attended Schoenberg's concert, later meeting the composer.

Kandinsky soon decided to start another group, which became *The Blue Rider.* Werner Haftmann, author of *Painting in the Twentieth Century,* feels that the most important artists in the *Blue Rider* group were Kandinsky, Marc, August Macke, Paul Klee, and Alexej von Jawlensky (117). For this group, Kandinsky envisioned an opportunity for artists in all media to unite with an exhibition and an almanac. Through the summer and fall of 1911, Marc and Kandinsky worked on the almanac. In

September, they named it *The Blue Rider* because, as Kandinsky recalled nearly two decades later, "we both loved blue, Marc- horses, I-riders"(Meyer 73). The almanac featured articles, artworks, and short compositions, by musicians, including Schoenberg. Franz Marc, as well as Kandinsky, viewed spirituality and the "inner- need" as an important part of art. In the almanac *The Blue Rider,* Marc felt that young artists should seek the goal, "[t]o create in their work symbols for their age, which will go on the altars of the coming spiritual religion" (Dube 125). During this time, Marc was as excited about the future in arts as Kandinsky. He wrote to his future wife, Maria Franck, about their time being a very significant moment in culture's history stating, "…we stand in the midst of the transformations themselves" (Meyer 71). He realized that the future was very unpredictable, because they were in the midst of the transformation.

Although the group was progressing towards its goals of writing disparate media, it was primarily made up of visual artists. Kandinsky, Münter, and Macke all wrote to Schoenberg in September-November of 1911, asking him to send in something musical to put in *The Blue Rider Almanac.* They all wanted him on board, especially Kandinsky. After Kandinsky had first met Schoenberg on August 31, 1911, he wrote to Marc excitedly: "Schoenberg has to write on German music…" (Simms 114). He knew instantly that he wanted Schoenberg to be a part of the *Blue Rider*. On November 16th, Kandinsky wrote to Schoenberg again, pleading for an article "First number without Schoenberg! No I won't have it….As I said, it must not be without Schoenberg" (Hahl-Koch 35). Schoenberg did not respond immediately because during this time he was very busy giving a series of lectures on *Aesthetics and the Theory of Compositions* at the Stern

Conservatory (Hahl-Koch 34). Although occupied with his work obligations, he did not let Kandinsky down.

Schoenberg wanted to be represented in *The Blue Rider* group because it could lead to possible future exhibitions and provide public exposure for him. He shared with Kandinsky several inspirations: modern developments in French literature, the work of Stefan George, and the writings of Maurice Maeterlinck. Schoenberg composed the song "Foliage of the Heart, Op.20" using Maeterlinck's poem "Foliage of the Heart" for the lyrics which was to be included in *The Blue Rider* almanac. He also sent his essay "The Relationship to the Text" and two of his paintings (Simms 114). His principle thesis of his essay "The Relationship to the Text" was that a poem and its proper music setting would "reflect each other on an abstract level of meaning, but not necessarily on the superficial level of expressivity that most listeners perceive" (Simms 117). In this essay Schoenberg discusses how the "musical setting of a poetic text could bypass the expressive relations between words and tones that normally exist in vocal music, provided that a deeper congruence is established between the sound or tone of the music and the comparable quality in the poem" (Simms 5). Schoenberg shared Kandinsky's belief of artists and musicians fulfilling the "inner-need" to attain a deep level of artistic expression. Schoenberg valued the progress Kandinsky was making in pushing boundaries. He wanted to be a part of Kandinsky's vision so he sent his articles, compositions, and paintings to Kandinsky to meet the almanac deadline. While the first *Blue Rider* exhibit was preparing to open, Kandinsky was running short on time for his almanac submissions. Schoenberg met the deadline for both the almanac and the exhibit. For the first *Blue Rider* exhibit, Schoenberg sent in a few of his paintings.

The first *Blue Rider* exhibit opened on December 18, 1911 with forty-eight works by fourteen artists. The artists included Albert Bloch, David Burliuk, Vladimir Burljuk, Heinrich Campendonk, Robert Delaunay, Elisabeth Epstein, Eugen von Kahler, Kandinsky, Macke, Marc, Münter, Jean Bloe Niestle, Henri Rousseau, and Schoenberg. A sentence in the brochure summarized the overall goal that Kandinsky had: "Through this small exhibition we do not wish to propagate a *single* precise and special form; rather we intend to demonstrate through the *diversity* of the represented forms how the *inner desire* of the artists manifests itself multifariously" (Meyer 74). In much of *The Blue Rider's* work, the aesthetics of music influencing art, and vice versa, becomes evident. "Kandinsky used color in a highly theoretical way, associating tone with timbre (the sound's character), hue with pitch, and saturation with the volume of sound" (Beckett 355). He is also credited as having created the first abstract artwork. Kandinsky's book *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* was published at the same time *The Blue Rider* exhibit was on display. Since the book discussed the same philosophies as in the exhibit, it was also available for purchase. In his book, Kandinsky states, "It is often said that admission of the possibility of one art helping another amounts to a denial of the necessary differences between the arts. This is, however, not the case. As has been said, an absolutely similar inner appeal cannot be achieved by two different arts" (42). Although Kandinsky created The *Blue Rider* with artists Franz Marc and August Macke, he was the only artist of the three to go into abstraction, which was evident in his painting *Composition V*.

Towards the end of 1911, several groups, especially *The Blue Rider*, were beginning to be referred to as Expressionists. "Critics committed to these new directions

wrote of the Expressionist artist's ability to convey the cosmic, the eternal, the heroic, and described the art's revolutionary forcefulness" (Long 3). Many artists were in one of the wars, while others were in exile. Their philosophy was that all works of art should portray the world as it truly exists. The artwork created during the German Expressionist period was very intense, diverse, and emotional. *The Blue Rider* group was one of the most active artistic groups in Germany during the Expressionist period. Long explains: "the conviction that each art form could utilize innovations from the other was enhanced by the concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*— the combining of all the arts to create a powerful monumental work" (xxi). Although the Expressionist period was in full bloom, Dube points out that the artists during this time avoided the term "Expressionism" (20).

The first *Blue Rider* exhibit toured all over Germany: Cologne, Bremen, Zurich, Hagen, and Frankfurt. While the exhibit was touring, Kandinsky and Marc were feverishly continuing to work for the almanac. In January of 1912, Kandinsky was definitely feeling the stress of running *The Blue Rider* exhibit and creating an almanac. In a letter to Schoenberg, he writes, "In two weeks I have written over eighty letters" (Hahl-Koch 42). Kandinsky expressed his lack of time to paint and his frustrations. Although still preparing for the almanac, the second (and last) *Blue Ride*r exhibition opened on February 12, 1912. It was a much larger exhibit, including three hundred fifteen prints, drawings, and watercolors. The exhibit toured through various cities in Germany, including Berlin.

In May 1912, the *Blue Rider* Almanac was finally published. It contained twelve theoretical essays, two musical scores, one drama, and over one hundred reproductions,

which indicated that the challenge to established ideas and conventions was occurring in all the arts (Long 37). Schoenberg was among several other musicians who contributed to the almanac, but he was who contributed the most. Russian composer Thomas von Hartmann included an essay "Anarchy in Music". Musical scores from Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and Anton Webern were reproduced. Studies of Alexander Scriabin's music were included. One significant study towards the power of inspirations was *Prometheus von Skryabin* by Russian musicologist and composer Leonid Sabaneyev. Kandinsky sent a copy of this study to Schoenberg before the almanac's publication so Schoenberg could help with the German translation and musical terminology. Schoenberg later said that his search for coherence in his piece *Die Jakobsleiter* (begun in 1914) was helped by studying other modern composers. An idea that he used came from the *Prometheus* study (Simms 176). Artists who are changing their field and breaking all of the rules go through a lot of frustration. Supporting and inspiring each other is how they make breakthroughs. Schoenberg wrote to Berg just two weeks after composing the piece to Maeterlinck's poem "Foliage of the Heart". In his letter, he admitted to having difficulty finding inspiration and motivation, which was about a year after writing his book *Theory in Harmony*. In December of 1911 he wrote Berg, "I've lost all interest in my works." He was struggling with which direction to push his atonal music compositions (Simms 113). This time for Schoenberg was crucial for the progress of his music. Although facing great frustrations and obstacles, he was on the cusp of moving into his next chapter: twelve-tone music.

The work of the *Blue Rider* group proved to be significant. Dube quotes Kandinsky's aim for the almanac: "the publication will unite in one place the efforts

which are making themselves noticed so forcibly in every sphere of the arts, and whose fundamental purpose is to push back the existing limits of artistic expansion" (105). The almanac helped propel Expressionism. By the summer of 1912, several art critics began to suggest Expressionisms' superiority to other manifestations of modernism such as French Cubism and Italian Futurism (Long 3). Unfortunately, the planned second Almanac never happened because WWI broke out. Even though the group did not continue, its influence lasted. Long explains that by 1914, Kandinsky was called in a Cologne exhibition groups' catalogue the "leader of German Expressionism known for uniting the new efforts in painting, literature, and music" (38). Both Kandinsky and Schoenberg influenced many artists in different media from their time up to the present.

Synesthesia and Stage Works

Part three will investigate the means by which Kandinsky and Schoenberg attempted to create synesthesia. Synesthesia is a neurological condition in which a person experiences more than one sense during an activity. There are many types of synesthesia, but this thesis will focus on chromesthesia, which occurs when people hear a sound or note, and it triggers colors and sometimes shapes in their head. Simon Shaw-Miller, author of *Visible Deeds of Music: Art and Music from Wagner to Cage,* explains that sound-color synesthesia has been mentioned in history as early as the ancient Greeks: "…nearly all of us form associations that might be described more accurately as cultural or contextual synesthesia" (54). He continues, "…it may also be due to the more elementary fact that music, as a nonverbal but formally complex 'object,' is hard to write about…" (54). Recent studies show that synesthetics have an extra connection in the brain when experiencing a particular sensation. Shaw explains that synesthesia (or the trans sensorial) at a certain level, "could be viewed as fundamental to our understanding of the world. Art then becomes an important factor in our categorization and conceptual experience of the different senses, so that division becomes a product of reflection through culture rather than a "naturally innocent," prior condition" (131). In one of Kandinsky's most famous quotes, in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art,* his love for art, music, and collaboration becomes evident: "Colour is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand which plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul" (25). He created many synesthetic artworks including the stage work *Der gelbe Klang (The Yellow Sound).*

Schoenberg did not share in the synesthetic beliefs to the extent of Kandinsky, but he did produce one such work in his opera *Die glückliche Hand (The Lucky Hand)*.

It is not known for sure if Kandinsky himself was synesthetic, but based on his philosophies and comments it appears he could have been. It is a highly debated topic among scholars. Kandinsky has indicated in several of his writings that he experiences music, as well as objects and events, in terms of color. Peter Selz, author of *German Expressionist Painting*, states, "…he did not conceive of color in its physical and material aspects, but rather in its emotional effect" (224). Kandinsky wrote about his experience the first time he heard Wagner's *Lohengrin* at the Court Theatre in Moscow:

> All my colours were conjured up before my eyes. Wild, almost mad lines drew themselves before me…it was quite clear to me that art in general is much more powerful than had appeared to me, and on the other hand that painting was capable of developing powers of exactly the same order as those that music possessed (Dube 106).

Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* provides an abundance of synesthetic philosophies. He wrote a chapter on "The Psychological Working of Colour" in which he discusses the effect color can have on our emotions. In this chapter Kandinsky states that we have several experiences when viewing color. First is superficial impressions, however fleeting; "Keen lemon-yellow hurts the eye in time as a prolonged and shrill trumpet-note the ear, and the gazer turns away to seek relief in blue or green" (Kandinsky 24). Kandinsky goes on to explain that the second effect of color on people involves their psychic effect. This is based on people and their past experiences or associations with a color, which can awaken emotional and physical experiences. Throughout history, artists

have associated colors with emotions. "Yellow, for example, signified the earth for Leonardo…meant friendliness to Kant…aggressiveness to Kandinsky. Yellow symbolizes jealousy in German usage, an emotion associated with green in English idiom" (Selz 231). This association of yellow in Germany might explain Kandinsky's underlying reaction to the color. "One might say that keen yellow looks sour, because it recalls the taste of a lemon" (Kandinsky 24). This "relative synesthesia" is something we all possess to a certain degree, based on our experiences.

Kandinsky refers to "inner need" throughout his writings, especially when discussing form and color. This phrase stands for the artists' impulse for expression. Shawn, discussed Kandinsky in his chapter "A New Form of Expressionism." He explains that Kandinsky, "referred to the nonnaturalistic painter as using colors 'according to their inner sound' rather than for their academically 'accurate' mimicry of appearances" (63). Kandinsky states this in his book, "The impossibility and, in art, the purposelessness of copying an object, the desire to make the object express itself, are the beginnings of leading the artist away from 'literal' color to artistic, i.e. pictorial aims" (Kandinsky 48). Matisse and Picasso had made strides in liberating painters from literal pictorialism. Kandinsky took it a step further and tried to make it nonrepresentational, like music. In part two of *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* Kandinsky discussed the abstract idea spreading into the art world, "Its gradual advance is natural enough, for in proportion as the organic form falls into the background, the abstract ideal achieves greater prominence" (31). Kandinsky concluded, "It is evident therefore that colour harmony must rest only on a corresponding vibration in the human soul; and this is one of the guiding principles of the inner need" (26). With Kandinsky's focus on expression

through color usage and form, rather nonobjective form, he led the way for the next generation of artists.

Several contemporary psychologists' research interested Kandinsky in relation to his color-sound theories. In *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, Kandinsky refers to chromotherapy, discussing how colors have been used in attempts to treat various nervous ailments. "They have shown that red light stimulates and excites the heart, while blue light can cause temporary paralysis" (25). The research that especially interested Kandinsky included Dr. Freudenberg's theories on smell-hearing, the theories of the scientist and composer Leonid Sabaneyeu, and Alexander Scriabin's color and music experiments. Mark Roskill, author of *Klee, Kandinsky, and Thought of Their Time*, believes that Kandinsky became acquainted with Scriabin's music-color experiments in 1911 through his Moscow weekly, *Music* (40). As noted above Kandinsky included some studies of Scriabin's music in *The Blue Rider* almanac.

In 1910 Scriabin composed one of his best known works, *Prometheus*. This piece was of interest to Kandinsky because it combined light and music. The score included a part for a "clavier à lumières", or color keyboard, which when played would project colors to accompany the harmonic progression in *Prometheus*. Unfortunately, the premiere performance of *Prometheus* in 1911 was not completely successful, due to the technological inability of the color organ to convey the correct impact. Still, Kandinsky was very interested in Scriabin's sound-color experiment, because it reinforced his ideas on the synthesis of the arts. As Selz summarizes Kandinsky's belief, "The reinforcement of one art form with another by means of synesthesia greatly increases the final esthetic effect upon the receptor" (231). Kandinsky sought to achieve this with his stage works.

Kandinsky and Schoenberg each created their major synaesthetic stage works around the same time, both striving towards the goal of an all inclusive synthesis of arts through a monumental work, *Gesamtkunstwerk.* This was during the most transitional part of both men's lives, their *Gesamtkunstwerk* period. The men's stage works are, "The most important artistic manifestations of the synesthetic interests of Kandinsky and Schoenberg…" (Hahl-Koch 152). Schoenberg began *The Lucky Hand* in 1910, finishing in 1913. Kandinsky wrote *The Yellow Sound* in 1909. Its text was printed in the *Blue Ride*r almanac in 1912. Schoenberg wrote to Kandinsky after reading the almanac on August 19, 1912, "…*Der gelbe Klang* pleases me extraordinarily. It is exactly the same as what I have striven for in my G*lückliche Hand*, only you go still further than I in the renunciation of any conscious thought, and conventional plot" (Hahl-Koch 54).

The two stage works share some dramatic similarities, although the storyline for each work differs tremendously. One similarity is that redemption was consciously left out for both conclusions. Kandinsky's plot is so unconventional that it remains unresolved. Schoenberg explains in his lecture on *The Lucky Hand*, that what you hold will slip away, "It is a certain pessimism which I was compelled to give form to…" (Hahl-Koch 107). In Schoenberg's letter to Kandinsky, it becomes clear that stage productions were not about the end goal, but about the journey: "It is important that our creation of such puzzles mirror the puzzles with which we are surrounded, so that our soul may endeavor—not to solve them—but to decipher them" (Hahl-Koch 54).

Another similarity is that both works use the application of colored lights in a new way. In scene 5 of *The Yellow Sound* and scene 3 of *The Lucky Hand*, there is a comparable crescendo of light. Kandinsky's stage directions for light were very detailed

throughout, especially in scene 5. The scene started with red light, which gradually changed to yellow light, then finally to pure white light. Following the progressive frantic movements of the different colored people in the scene, the light disappears as the main figure becomes still center-stage. As different colored light is directed towards groupings of figures, a bright yellow light is spotlighting the main figure. All colors disappear except an intense white light on the main figure and the yellow giants. From there, red light travels the stage and things excel again while figures leave the stage, with only yellow giants remaining. In *The Lucky Hand*, the light changes accompany a crescendo in the orchestra in scene 3, which coincides directly with the man's internal conflict of changing emotions. Scene 3 starts with a gradual build up of colored lights, dark-violet, gray-green, yellow, green, red, and then finally a citrus-yellow. Once the scene reaches its peak of emotion with the man almost being attacked, the stage goes black. The light crescendo starts again accompanied by the music, creating "wind". It starts as a dull red, to brown, dirty green, dark blue-gray, violet, red, orange, yellow, to finally a bright glaring yellow light. Hahl-Koch states that this connection of using light shows a last link with reality for Schoenberg's man (160). This link with reality was not present in Kandinsky's production since he pushed the boundaries into a more intangible realm.

Kandinsky also wrote an article entitled "On Stage Composition" to serve as an introduction to *The Yellow Sound* in the almanac. In the article, Kandinsky explains his whole purpose behind creating art. He starts the article acknowledging that every art indeed has its own language and characteristics, but within these boundaries the goal is to reveal the inner identity. "The progressive refinement of the soul by means of the accumulation of different complexes—the aim of art" (Hahl-Koch 111). Kandinsky goes

on to say that every person can receive art, explaining that the more knowledgeable or more experienced the individual, the more he or she could connect to the art because of having lived more connections. Kandinsky points out that in the nineteenth century; stage works were divided into three large divisions: Drama, Opera, and Ballet. Within each of these productions, artists only dealt with the external movements and emotions, but never dealt with the internal (spiritual) effects. Each art also has a primary purpose, Drama- Words, Opera- Words to Music, Ballet- Movement to Music, and a secondary art to support. The supporting art was only external and often literal, e.g. weeping motion for a broken heart, bowing down for praying, crescendo of music with heightened acting emotion. Kandinsky acknowledges Wagner for enriching and trying to expand Opera, but that he fell short, stating, "…he neglects the third element…color…" (Hahl-Koch 115). Richard Wagner's idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* differed from Kandinsky's in the fact that Wagner called for externalizing each of the arts, whereas Kandinsky's was internal.

In *The Yellow Sound*, Kandinsky combines color and sound, with a small amount of movement. As Kandinsky explained in his introduction essay "On Stage Composition", the goal of *The Yellow Sound* is for music, movement, and color in the most necessary form to present a work with "inner value." He concludes his essay, saying, "…the three elements [music, dance, visual] can take entirely individual, in external terms, completely independent paths" (Hahl-Koch 117). The stage work is made up of six scenes and runs about twenty minutes in performance time. Kandinsky wrote detailed stage directions for how the actors should move in and out of time with the music, the dynamics of the music for singers and orchestra, and the color usage of the stage lights. The plot is completely unconventional. It revolves around "non-humans"

and nature elements, such as large flowers, rocks, and a hill. There are five yellow enigmatic giants that begin and end the work in different degrees of light. The number of dancers varies from two to a large number of dancers, who are instructed to sometimes be in tempo with the music, and sometimes make random movements. The feeling conveyed is confusion, but with heightened emotion, brought on by all of the arts in collaboration. Thomas von Hartmann wrote the music for *The Yellow Sound*, but only partially. Hartmann explains that "…the final form and the orchestration would depend upon the nature of the theatre which accepted the piece" (Hahl- Koch 159).

The stage directions are very detailed for each scene. Kandinsky gave specific details for the stage lighting and backdrop colors, which changed constantly, creating the overall mood on stage. Music notation was commissioned to Hartman, although Kandinsky wrote specific instructions for when the music and choir should come in, and volume suggestions both for vocals and instrumental. Hahl-Koch writes that *The Yellow Sound* is definitely an avant-garde work which, as Kandinsky had predicted, would only be understood at least two generations later (159). The stage was thus as abstract as Kandinsky's paintings of that time.

In 1914, Hugo Ball, the producer for the Chamber Theater in Munich, wanted a full-scale production of Kandinsky's *Yellow Sound*. This production would have coincided with a book release, *The New Theater*, and *The Blue Rider* almanac's second volume (Roskill 54). Because of the theater's prior commitments, then the war, this production never happened. Kandinsky's *Yellow Sound* was not performed until 1956 in Paris. Kandinsky's work is so abstract and obscure that he received little positive criticism. Sergei Eisenstein, film theorist and author of *The Film Sense*, concluded of

The Yellow Sound, “We cannot deny that compositions of this kind evoke obscurely disturbing sensations-- but no more than this” (116). Selz points out that Kandinsky knew his stage composition was weak and admitted this, but “believed the principle to be valid.” However obscure or avant-garde *The Yellow Sound* was performed occasionally over the last century with each performance being uniquely different.

Schoenberg’s *Lucky Hand* was less obscure than *The Yellow Sound* because it had an actual understandable plot. Simms explains how the text of the stage work was directly influenced by his personal life (100). In 1909 Schoenberg discovered his wife having an affair. As Schoenberg summarizes the plot of *The Lucky Hand*, “A Man, a victim of misfortune, gathers himself up. Fortune again smiles upon him. He is able to complete his work as in the old days. But then again everything proves false, and the brickbats of fate again assail him” (Simms 102). As analyzed by Allen Shawn, author of *Arnold Schoenberg’s Journey*, Schoenberg’s music and his reoccurring theme of the unattainable: “That the representation of the unattainable is embodied in music that is itself dense and tangled is no accident.” He praises Schoenberg on the music of *The Lucky Hand*, calling it “precise and transparent in its intricacy, and the orchestration is lush and full of color” (158). Composing the work did not come easy, and Schoenberg expressed his frustrations to Kandinsky in the same August letter about having trouble completing it. His progress was hampered by demands to finish his book *Hamonielehre* (Hahl-Koch 54). Schoenberg created everything for his stage work: text, music, designs for sets/costumes, detailed stage directions, and a detailed outline for stage lighting coordinated with the music (Shawn 161). Schoenberg finally finished *The Lucky Hand* in 1913.

In November of 1913, Schoenberg was approached by Emil Hertzka, the managing director of Universal Edition music publisher in Vienna, to have *The Lucky Hand* produced cinematographically. Schoenberg seemed open to the idea, and in a letter to Hertzka, he explained, his attempt at synesthasia in the piece. "The whole thing should have the effect (not of a dream) but of chords. Of music….this should simply be like sounds for the eye…" (Stein 44). The making of the film never happened, and perhaps this was a wise decision since this was still the era of the silent film. The debut of *The Lucky Hand* was not for another eleven years because of the war and the work's demand for over one hundred musicians. The first performance took place in 1924 in Vienna.

Although some critics disliked the work, *The Lucky Hand* received praise for the stage directions: "…the constant lighting changes marked in the score, all this seems to me to show clearly that in this case no 'stage work', but something new…. Where the opera demands plot, Schoenberg provides light as a part of the music, as part of the emotional experience" (Hahl-Koch 156). Since Schoenberg received a significant amount of negative criticism about the text of *The Lucky Hand*, when it was performed again in 1928 in Poland, Schoenberg had a lecture prepared to go with it. *The Lucky Hand* was performed, Schoenberg gave his lecture, and then *The Lucky Hand* was performed again. This performance received a standing ovation and better reviews than in Venice. Like *The Yellow Sound*, *The Lucky Hand* has been performed numerous times since its debut.

These two stage works have been analyzed and compared numerous times over the last century. This is because both works are similar in many ways during the same

period. Both stage works use color in a new way and pushed the current theater boundaries, creating modernism.

Influence on Other Artists

Section 4 discusses artists that Kandinsky and Schoenberg directly influenced, such as members of the *Blue Rider* group, and their students. The number of people who these two men influenced signifies their important contributions to their discipline. They both influenced other artists not only in their own field, but in other media as well. Both men were lifelong educators, so the depth of their influence was tremendous.

Kandinsky

Kandinsky's closest painter friend was Paul Klee (Hahl-Koch 138). They first met in 1900 in Franz Stuck's painting class at the Munich Academy. They did not meet again until 1911, when they were neighbors living on the same street. In fact the two men lived close to each other several times during their lives. G.Di San. Lazzaro, author of the book *Klee*, wrote that by 1912, after the first *Blue Rider* exhibit, Klee knew that Kandinsky would have tremendous influence on him both through his artwork and his theoretical writings (64). Klee, writing in a Swiss paper about the *Blue Rider* exhibit proclaimed, "Kandinsky is the most audacious of them all, because he tries to convince us with words as well" (Lazzaro 64). Kandinsky sensed that Klee would make an "admirable further recruit" and invited him to participate in the Blue Rider almanac, to which Klee submitted one drawing. Klee then exhibited seventeen engravings in the second *Blue Rider* exhibition (Roskill 32). After the war broke out, Kandinsky and Klee did not see each other for several years. When they did meet again, they were colleagues, both teaching at the Bauhaus from 1922-1932. During this time they saw each other every day, with their offices being next door. In the evenings, they would often spend time together, with their wives, usually at the Klee house. In 1928, when the Bauhaus

moved to Dessau, the two artists and families shared a house. During this Bauhaus period, Klee wrote *Pedagogical Sketchbook.* Carola Giedion-Welcker believes that Kandinsky and Klee's theoretical writings are "among the most instructive on modern art" (Lazzaro 217). Although they were full-time professors, both men continued to produce writings and art. While teaching at the Bauhaus, both men occasionally wrote articles for the Bauhaus publications. They also gave each other paintings, especially on birthdays (115). The significance of their friendship was also apparent in their writings about one another. In 1926, Klee contributed a statement to the catalogue for Kandinsky's sixtieth birthday jubilee exhibition, saying that Kandinsky "managed beneficently and confirmingly to illuminate my quest" and that he was not only inspired by his words, but also his pieces, specifically his earlier compositions (Roskill 115). When Kandinsky decided to leave Germany in 1932, it was a difficult departure for the two families since they had lived together for so long. Kandinsky last visited Klee in 1938, and they remained friends until Klee's death in 1940.

Kandinsky had a great influence on Gabriele Münter. She became his student in 1902 at the Phalanx in Munich. From 1904-1914 they were companions, who lived and traveled extensively together. Münter looked up to Kandinsky in many ways, saying later in life, "He loved and understood my talent, protected it and fostered it" (Dube 124). Münter was a strong painter who formulated solutions in her art, thus earning her a place in the *Blue Rider* group. Her work was well regarded by others in the group, including Schoenberg, who wrote to Kandinsky that her works were 'really extremely original and of salutary simplicity….I enjoyed the pictures very much" (Hahl-Koch 39). Münter played a significant role in Kandinsky's life, especially during the *Blue Rider* period. She

wrote to Schoenberg and others in the group often. Münter helped fulfill Kandinsky's correspondences, occasionally writing for Kandinsky when he was very busy or sick. The extent of his influence and significance on her was made evident after their separation, when she did not complete a painting for over ten years in the late 1920s.

Alfred Kubin was a fellow artist who participated in the last Phalanx exhibition that Kandinsky organized in 1904. He was also a member of both the NKV and *The Blue Rider* group. The two men had many similar interests and discussed philosophies, goals, and struggles. Kubin wrote the novel *The Other Side* in 1909. In his book, his similar synesthetic ideas on art and music become obvious, "I saw the world as a tapestry-like marvel of colours….and in it tenderly moving natural tones joined to form understandable chords" (Haftmann 92). Although Kubin had similar ideas, he did not apply Kandinsky's idea of inner yearning into his artwork. At the beginning of Kandinsky's abstract works, Kubin was already inspired by Kandinsky, writing to him in 1910, "Your way is mad and sensually enticing….[Y]our art remains illusionistic" (Long 42). Kubin stayed in Kandinsky's circle for several years participating in the *Blue Rider* group and its exhibits.

Russian composer Thomas von Hartmann met Kandinsky in 1908. He worked closely with Kandinsky for several years on many projects, and he contributed his article "Anarchy" to the *Blue Rider* almanac. In it, he discussed the changing currents of the art world and claimed that anarchy as well as inner necessity is essential to arts progression. Hartmann composed the music for Kandinsky's *The Yellow Sound*. In a 1913 article, entitled "The Indecipherable Kandinsky," he comments on Kandinsky's progress in art: "I can confidently assert that Kandinsky is the founder and chief representative of this

direction in painting" (Hahl-Koch 141). They not only shared similar views in the regard to the arts, but also mystical and theosophical interests. He remained close to Kandinsky until his death in 1944. Hartmann later moved to Princeton.

Franz Marc was the co-founder of *The Blue Rider* group. He met Kandinsky right before Schoenberg's 1911 concert. They attended the concert together and quickly realized that they shared a similar view on the art of the future. Marc wrote to his wife, Maria Franck, "…What kind of new culture we are approaching, no one is able to say today, simply because we stand in the midst of the transformations themselves" (Meyer 71). They had a few differences of opinion about the spiritual and material concepts, but what they did share was a commitment to the process of creating abstractions, "especially simplification or reduction to essentials and the play of volume against flatness" (Roskill 34). Kandinsky and Marc supported each other consistently throughout their friendship. The men worked diligently and closely together for years to produce the *Blue Rider* exhibits and the almanac. Kandinsky's paintings reawakened Marc's interest in color usage and symbolism. In a 1911 letter to Publisher Reinhard Piper, Marc credits Kandinsky with inspiring his new direction, stating Kandinsky was "the only true prophetic voice" (Long 48). Franz Marc also influenced Kandinsky. He opened up the German art world to Kandinsky by introducing artists such as August Macke, as well as publisher Reinhard Piper, who published several of Kandinsky's writings, including *The Blue Rider Almanac* and *On the Spiritual in Art*. Many people, including Kandinsky, admired Marc's work in the *Blue Rider* exhibit. Schoenberg wrote to Kandinsky that Marc's pictures in the exhibit, "…pleased me very much. There is a curious gentleness

in this 'giant' " (Hahl-Koch 39). Franz Marc did not have the opportunity to continue his artistic journey as he was killed in 1916 at the Battle of Verdun in WWI.

The five people mentioned above were extremely close to Kandinsky during a point in his life and in some way benefited from their relationship. Kandinsky's extent of influence was far-reaching, affecting many other people, such as the Russian artist Alexej von Jawlensky. He was also a member of the *Blue Rider* group, and he admired Kandinsky for his clear mind (Haftmann 92). Jawlensky continued to exhibit work together with Kandinsky, Klee, and Feininger in the group the *Blue Four* starting in 1923. Kandinsky's influence spread into other media, as in the case of Alexander Sakharoff, a Russian dancer. Sakharoff was greatly influenced by Kandinsky when the two collaborated on *The Yellow Sound*. Sakharoff was to dance the principal role for Kandinsky and for this; he developed his own style of minimalistic expressive dance, since ballet had no possibility for fitting in context (Hahl-Koch 198). Kandinsky's *The Yellow Sound* also had a strong influence on theater innovator, Lothar Schreyer, who wrote the most detailed interpretation of the stage work. He had similar concepts in his own works and perfected the rhythmic chanting that Kandinsky had occasionally used in his stage works (Hahl-Koch 163). Kandinsky's influence even reached Expressionist Architecture. An early example of this was Bruno Taut's Glass House, which was designed for the 1914 German Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne. Taut was particularly inspired by Kandinsky's abstract paintings. The hypothetical building which he designed was for the arts and spirituality. He wanted stylistic open-endedness of the type he felt in Kandinsky's "spirited compositions" (Long 124).

Schoenberg

Schoenberg's profound impact on modern music can be measured in the sheer volume of books, articles, or periodicals that paid tribute to his life and work. One significant early publication was *Arnold Schoenberg,* written and published in 1912, when Schoenberg was only thirty-seven years old. *Arnold Schoenberg* is part two of the documentary section in the book Walter Frisch edited, *Schoenberg and His World*. Frisch points out that Schoenberg was greatly moved by this book, but also shocked, since it was so early in his career (197). The book *Arnold Schoenberg* consists of two sections: six essays in section one and five essays in section two. In section two, there are five essays concerning Schoenberg's career: "Schoenberg's Music" by Anton von Webern, "*Theory of Harmony"* by Heinrich Jalowetz, "The Paintings" by Kandinsky, "Schoenberg the Painter" by Paris von Gutersloth and "The Teacher", which consisted of contributions from nine students.

In 1904 Alban Berg and Anton von Webern became Schoenberg's pupils. Alban Berg was his student until 1910, and then transitioned from pupil to lifelong faithful friend. Berg contributed to the 1912 *Arnold Schoenberg* book. Berg obviously held his former teacher in the highest regard, writing, "His words are instruction, his conduct is a model, his works are revelations. Hidden within him is the teacher, the prophet, the Messiah" (Frisch 259). Hahl-Koch points out that Schoenberg's *Lucky Hand* influenced Alan Berg tremendously, especially in relation to Berg's opera *Lulu* (163). Although he followed Schoenberg continually as his student, then later disciple, his music was less atonal and had a more traditional style than that of Webern and Schoenberg. However, Berg did become a very successful and popular composer.

Schoenberg also held his students in high regard, often trying to get them exposure. One example of this can be seen in Schoenberg's letter to Josef Stransky, the conductor of the Philharmonic Orchestra in 1922, writing, "Would you like to look at scores of works by Dr. Anton von Webern and Alban Berg, two real musicians….men with a musically educated ear" (Stein 75)! During his 1933 radio interview on NBC with William Lundell, Schoenberg was asked what the greatest need in contemporary music is. Schoenberg's response was to have men of character like Berg and Webern, who can express their feelings: "The chief thing I demand of my pupils….is the courage to express what they have to say" (Frisch 296). Berg, alongside Schoenberg, is considered to have made significant contributions to atonal and twelve-tone music. Malcolm MacDonald, author of the book *Schoenberg*, states that Berg and Schoenberg remained close friends and colleagues until Berg's death in 1935 (76). Schoenberg was greatly saddened by Berg's sudden death and composed a Canon for his dear friend.

Anton von Webern also contributed to the publication *Arnold Schoenberg.* Webern wrote the article "Schoenberg's Music" as well as a small essay from his viewpoint as a student. His article "Schoenberg's Music" analyzes and defends Schoenberg's compositions up to 1912, stating that although he has been called a theoretician, one must "put theory and philosophy aside" (Frisch 210). Webern goes on to explain that this music requires an open mind and concludes his essay commending Schoenberg's music: "…it is beyond the realm of time" (Frisch 230). Webern's student article defended his former teacher, claiming that he "teaches no style" but rather guides the student through the creative process using what the student has composed and reflects

that student's journey. Webern explains, "…one experiences more than artistic rules with Schoenberg" (Frisch 258).

Music theorists have analyzed Webern's work and his reliance upon Schoenberg. In the book *Schoenberg's Chamber Music, Schoenberg's Work,* edited by James Wright and Alan Gillmor, an article by Allen Forte discusses Webern. In this article, Forte points out that both, Webern and Berg became disciples, and paid homage to their teacher by using a musical cipher of his name in their compositions. Berg included a hidden musical tribute to Schoenberg in *Wozzeck* (Wright 60). Schoenberg and Webern remained friends until Webern's death in 1945.

Heinrich Jalowetz also contributed to the 1912 *Arnold Schoenberg*. His article "The *Harmonielehre,*" is a six page review of Schoenberg's book (*Theory of Harmony).* He opens his review by saying that Schoenberg, "…had an absolute calling to write the musical textbook" (Frisch 231), and concludes by saying *Theory of Harmony* can serve as an "artistic gospel" to young musicians (Frisch 236). In his student essay, he praised Schoenberg, "For anyone who was his pupil, his name is more than a mere recollection of student days; it is an artistic and personal conscience" (Frisch 256).

Erwin Stein was also among Schoenberg's first students in 1904. Joan Allen Smith, author of *Schoenberg and His Circle: A Viennese Portrait*, wrote on Stein and Schoenberg's relationship. Stein admired his teacher because, "Schoenberg teaches one to think….what matters is not absolute truth, but the search for truth" (130). Stein was close to Schoenberg for many years. During 1918-1921, within the *Society for Private Musical Performances*, Schoenberg appointed Stein as director of the group that performed several of Schoenberg's works, including *Pierrot Lunaire* (Smith 86). Stein

edited and compiled information for the book *Arnold Schoenberg Letters*. In the introduction, he explains that he sorted through 3,000 letters and that his main goal was to form a picture of the composer "as portrayed by himself" (8). Stein remained friends with Schoenberg for the rest of his life. In 1958, seven years later after Schoenberg died, Stein's book was published. Stein died later that year.

Like Kandinsky, Schoenberg's reach was expansive. He also inspired other musicians, as well as artists in other media. One artist, Felix Müller, was so inspired by Schoenberg's music that he created ten woodcuts after hearing *Pierrot Lunaire* in 1912 (Hahl-Koch 195). Paul Klee, a member of *The Blue Rider*, and close friend of Kandinsky, created paintings that contained a visual analogy of Schoenberg's twelve-tone theory. Music was also apparent in his early work that emphasized line, such as his 1936 oil painting *New Harmony*. Whether this relationship was intentional or not, Klee was influenced by music throughout his life. Theodor Adorno, philosopher and composer, greatly admired Schoenberg and therefore apprenticed himself to Alban Berg, a student of Schoenberg. Adorno called *The Lucky Hand's* text coarse, but explained that "…the criticism of just this coarseness of the text leads to the very core of Expressionistic music" (Hahl-Koch 153). He also wrote in defense of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern's compositions for many years (Roskill 137). The evidence of Schoenberg's influence continues to the present day. The frequency of how often his compositions are performed signifies his importance to the classical music world.

Conclusion

Since Kandinsky and Schoenberg's meeting in 1911, work from their *Gesamtkunstwerk* period has continued to make an impact today. As Schoenberg explained in his lecture on *The Lucky Hand* that he presented before the Breslau production in 1928, he thought of his *Gesamtkunstwerk* work not as expressionist, but that, "…it is the art of the representation of inner processes"(Hahl-Koch 105). These two men broke boundaries in their fields, in part, because they had another medium, and another artist to support them. They were constantly bombarded with art and music critics because they were pushing boundaries, always striving and compelled to meet the "inner-need" of creating. In Kandinsky's case more so than Schoenberg's, his "inner-need" of creating the *Gesamtkunstwerk* art also was met with a goal towards synesthesia. His art revolved around the influence of music speaking to the "inner-need" throughout color and non-objective form. It is obvious today, by the numerous organizations that have exhibited or performed Kandinsky and Schoenberg's works, that those broken boundaries created a significant place in history. Their constant recognition confirms their place of great importance in the arts world creating modernism.

Kandinsky's artwork is owned by many museums all over the world. Several exhibits have been held within the last decade. The Neue Galerie in New York recently held an exhibit from October 3, 2013-February 10, 2014 of Kandinsky's work, *Vasily Kandinsky: From Blaue Reiter to the Bauhaus, 1910-1925.* This exhibit consisted of over eighty works by Kandinsky and his peers in *The Blue Rider* (www.neuegalerie.org).

The Guggenheim Museum in New York has had Kandinsky's art on display for decades. Mario Naves explained that Solomon R. Guggenheim initially collected over

one hundred and fifty of Kandinsky's pieces. He did so because the museum was first known as The Museum of Non-Objective Painting and was "founded on the spiritualist aspirations exemplified by Kandinsky's paintings" (Naves). As stated on the Guggenheim website, the 2009 exhibit *Kandinsky* consisted of nearly one-hundred pieces of work. The Guggenheim is among the three largest public holdings of Kandinsky's work. The Centre Pompidou in Paris and the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus in Munich are the two other venues with large collections, and both lent artwork for this exhibit. The Guggenheim presented another Kandinsky exhibit in July 2015. As the website explains, seven of his paintings from the museum's collection will be displayed until spring 2016 (www.guggenheim.org).

Sometimes different groups have experimented with Kandinsky's artwork to create *Gesamtkunstwerk* in new combinations. In 1996 a production of Alexander Scriabin's *Prometheus* was performed at a jubilee concert in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the Kazan Conservatory in Russia. As I.L. Vanechkina explained in his article, "'Prometheus': Scriabin + Kandinksy," the group performed a radical experiment by projecting Kandinsky's artwork during the performance of *Prometheus,* replacing the color keyboard. Vanechkina adds that the selected Kandinsky works were based on qualities similar on themes to run parallel with the music. The titles, appearance, and emotional influence were all considered to best match the feelings conveyed in *Prometheus*.

Kandinsky's *The Yellow Sound* was performed three times in the 1970s: New York in 1972, Baume, southern France in 1975, and Paris in 1976. As Hahl-Koch points out, all of these productions loosely interpreted *The Yellow Sound* and did not necessarily

adhere to Kandinsky's directions (159). In 1982, seventy years after its conception, the Guggenheim Museum presented *The Yellow Sound* at the Marymount Manhattan Theater in correlation with the exhibit "Kandinsky in Munich, 1896-1914." On February 7, 1982, Janet Tassel wrote an article, "Staging a Kandinsky Dream," for *The New York Times* about the upcoming performance. Twenty-nine years later, on November 26, 2011, the Tate Modern in London performed *The Yellow Sound* in correlation with their exhibit of the "Blue Rider Centenary Symposium," which celebrated the work of the artists involved in *The Blue Rider* group of 1911. As stated on their website, www.drama.research.southwales.ac.uk, the theatre and media drama research unit at the University of South Wales was commissioned by the Tate Modern to perform *The Yellow Sound.* Staff and students from the University participated in the production.

Since Schoenberg's death in 1951, his pieces have been performed all over the world. Simms credits Schoenberg for helping the transition from the romantic period to the modern period in the twentieth century and even into the twentieth-first century. He believes that Schoenberg's breakthrough to atonality in music made possible the work of Webern, Berg, Pierre Boulez, Milton Babbitt, Olivier Messiaen, Elliott Carter, and Wolfgang Rihm(6).

The pianist Glenn Gould was greatly influenced by Schoenberg. He loved Schoenberg's difficult music, admiring the rigor and rationality (Wright 237). In 1952 Gould formed a group called the New Music Associates. This group's focus was to perform new modern music, primarily of works by Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern. Gould is credited with performing Schoenberg more than any other musician of his stature. In the 1960s and 1970s, Gould turned to social media and created several radio

and television programs on Schoenberg. Gould created the "Schoenberg Series" in 1974, which consisted of ten episodes (246). In his book *Arnold Schoenberg: A Perspective,* Glenn Gould claimed that one of Schoenberg's achievements was to have effectively simplified compositional language after the chromatic excesses of the late nineteenth century (3). Gould would go on to have great influence himself. After having a long, prosperous and eccentric performing career, his numerous lectures and recordings made Gould become significant in the music world. Several lectures and articles have been written on him as well.

A symposium held in 1993 at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, featured lecturers from several countries discussing the significance of the artists' collaboration. Konrad Boehmer edited the book *Schoenberg and Kandinsky: An Historic Encounter*, which compiles the lectures that were presented at the symposium. Ten years later, in 2003-2004, the Jewish Museum in New York held the exhibit "Schoenberg, Kandinsky, and the Blue Rider." The book that Esther da Costa Meyer and Fred Wasserman edited, *Schoenberg, Kandinsky, and the Blue Rider*, was published in association with the exhibit. The book and the exhibit were based on the exhibit in the Arnold Schoenberg Center in Vienna, which was opened to the public in March 1998. The Center's website, www.schoenberg.at, states the center's purpose is to provide education to the public in regards to Schoenberg's artistic influence and to make Schoenberg's legacy "accessible and available for scholarly study." The website has a multitude of articles on publications and performances of Schoenberg's music. A recent homage to Schoenberg was the Music Festival in September 2015 in Berlin. This consisted of nineteen days of music performance; almost every day there was a performance of at least one piece from

Schoenberg. On Saturday, September 19, 2015, Schoenberg's *The Lucky Hand* was performed.

In 2013-March 2014, the exhibit entitled "Schoenberg and Kandinsky, Artistic Revolutionaries" was shown at the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam. This continuation of celebrating these two artists confirms their significance in the art world. Hundreds of articles, exhibits, and performances have been presented on their work. They both have schools, centers, and foundations named after them. The fact that exhibits also continually acknowledge their relationship and influence on each other reiterates the fact that they helped propel and shape each other's futures.

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