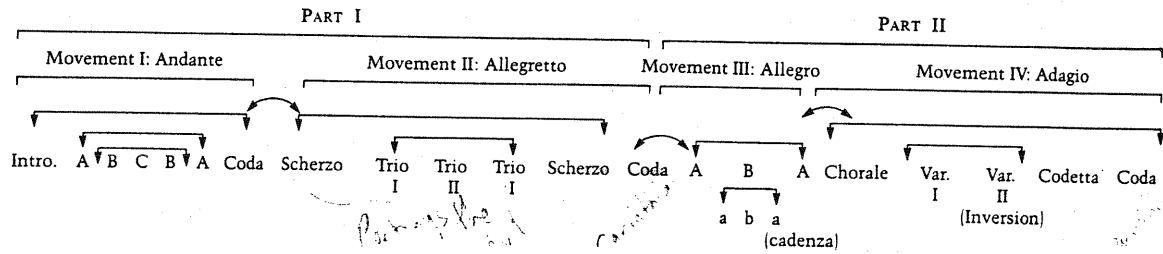


SYNOPSIS of Alban Berg's Opera WOZZECK
text by Gustav Rudolf Sellner
from Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft 18991/18992 record jacket

Scene	Time and Place of Action	Characters	Synopsis	Musical Forms
ACT I			WOZZECK AND THE SURROUNDING WORLD (EXPOSITION)	5 CHARACTER STUDIES
Scene 1	The Captain's Room Early Morning	Wozzeck and the Captain	A few things are learned about Wozzeck. He is a soldier; he is poor. He lives with Marie. They have a child. He has to earn his living. Every morning, including this one, he gives his Captain a shave.	"The Captain" Suite; Prelude, Pavane, Cadenza, Gigue, Cadenza, Gavotte Double I/II, Air, Prelude in form of retrogression
SCENE CHANGE				
Scene 2	An open field, the town in the distance Late afternoon	Wozzeck and Andres	Wozzeck is cutting sticks for the Captain. Andres helps him. More is learned about Wozzeck; he sees visions. He has fixed ideas. He must be ill.	"Andres" Rhapsody on a sequence of three chords and the three-verse hunting song of Andres
SCENE CHANGE				
Scene 3	Marie's room Evening	Marie, Margret and the child; later Wozzeck	Marie stands at the window in her room, her neighbour Margret is outside. The "music" comes. Marie sees the Drum Major for the first time.	"Marie" Military march. Lullaby
SCENE CHANGE				
Scene 4	The Doctor's study Sunny afternoon	Wozzeck and the Doctor	We see why Wozzeck is ill. In his free time he doesn't go to see Marie and the child; he goes to the doctor and allows himself to be experimented on for threepence a day.	"The Doctor" Passacaglia (Chaconne); twelve-tone theme with 21 variations
SCENE CHANGE				
Scene 5	Street before Marie's door Evening twilight	Marie and the Drum Major	Marie is very often alone. The Drum Major stands at her door. The drama begins.	"The Drum Major" Andante affettuoso (Rondo)
ACT II			DRAMATIC DEVELOPMENT (DÉNOUEMENT)	SYMPHONY IN 5 MOVEMENTS
Scene 1	Marie's room Morning, Sunshine	Marie and the child; later Wozzeck	Wozzeck comes to Marie and the child. He gives her his money. He sees the earrings.—She can still invent excuses.	Sonata movement: Exposition (Main, subsidiary and final themes), 1st reprise, development, 2nd reprise
SCENE CHANGE				
Scene 2	Street in Town Daytime	The Captain and the Doctor; later Wozzeck	The world of the townfolk; the captain and the doctor. Wozzeck goes past. The Captain mocks at him, talks of his beard's hair in his soup. He talks of the Drum Major. The little world that Wozzeck thinks he owns falls about his ears.	Fantasy and fugue on 3 themes
SCENE CHANGE				
Scene 3	Street before Marie's door A dull day	Marie and Wozzeck	Wozzeck acts. He goes to Marie. She lies to him. But she will no longer allow him to touch her.	Largo (a chamber orchestra in the instrumentation of Arnold Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony)
SCENE CHANGE				
Scene 4	Tavern garden Late evening	Apprentices, soldiers and girls, 1st and 2nd apprentices, Andres, the Drum Major and Marie; a little later Wozzeck; finally the madman	Wozzeck acts further, as well as he can. He can't do very much. He can only run after her. He lies in wait for her at the dance. An idiot looks at him and smells blood.	Scherzo: Scherzo I (Ländler), Trio I (Song of the 2nd apprentice), Scherzo II (Waltz), Trio II (Huntsmen's chorus of the apprentices and Andres's song), Scherzo I (Ländler in a varied form), Trio I (Song in a varied form upon the prayer of the 2nd apprentice), Scherzo II (Waltz with development)
SCENE CHANGE				
Scene 5	Guardroom in the barracks Night	Soldiers, Wozzeck and Andres; later the Drum Major	Wozzeck has a fight with the Drum Major in the guardroom of the barracks. Wozzeck loses. The other beat him up. "One after the other" says Wozzeck.	Rondo martiale con Introduzione
ACT III			CATASTROPHE	6 INVENTIONS
Scene 1	Marie's room Night. Candlelight	Marie and the child	Marie reads in the Bible the story of Mary Magdalen, the sinner.	Invention on a theme: Theme; 7 variations and fugue
SCENE CHANGE				
Scene 2	Forest path by a pool Dusk is falling	Wozzeck and Marie	There is no way out. Wozzeck must act. He kills Marie with the knife.	Invention on one tone (B)
SCENE CHANGE				
Scene 3	A low tavern Night, Badly lit	Apprentices, girls, Wozzeck and Margret	Wozzeck is in the public house. Blood on his arm betrays him. He thinks about the knife. He runs out to look for it.	Invention on a rhythm
SCENE CHANGE				
Scene 4	Forest path by a pool Moonlit night	Wozzeck; later the Captain and the Doctor	Wozzeck throws the knife into the lake, then goes after it into the water. He sinks. The Captain and the doctor come walking by.	Invention on a sixth chord
SCENE CHANGE				
Scene 5	Street before Marie's door Bright morning, Sunshine	Marie's child, other children	The children are playing in front of Marie's house; her little boy plays with them. They call to each other. "Here you, your mother's dead." This is a sensation for them. They have to rush away for a look. Marie's little boy goes on playing: "Hop, hop — hop, hop".	INVENTION ON A KEY Invention on a quaver rhythm



DRAMATIC

MUSICAL

ACT I

Exposition

Wozzeck and his relation to his environment.

Five Character Sketches..

Scene

1. The Captain
2. Andres
3. Marie
4. The Physician
5. The Drum Major

Scene

1. Suite
2. Rhapsody
3. Military March and Cradle Song
4. Passacaglia
5. Andante affetuoso (quasi Rondo)

ACT II

Denouement

Wozzeck is gradually convinced of Marie's infidelity.

Symphony in five movements.

Scene

1. Wozzeck's first suspicion
2. Wozzeck is mocked
3. Wozzeck accuses Marie
4. Marie and Drum Major dance
5. The Drum Major trounces Wozzeck

Scene

1. Sonata form
2. Fantasie and Fugue
3. Largo
4. Scherzo
5. Rondo marziale

ACT III

Catastrophe

Wozzeck murders Marie and atones through suicide.

Six Inventions

Scene

1. Marie's remorse
2. Death of Marie
3. Wozzeck tries to forget
4. Wozzeck drowns in the pond (Instrumental interlude with closed curtain)
5. Marie's son plays unconcerned

Scene

1. Invention on a Theme
2. Invention on a Tone
3. Invention on a Rhythm
4. Invention on a 6-note chord (Invention on a Key)
5. Invention on a Persistent Rhythm (Perpetuum mobile)