

# Composers of Great Band Works

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## Arnold Schoenberg (1874 - 1951)

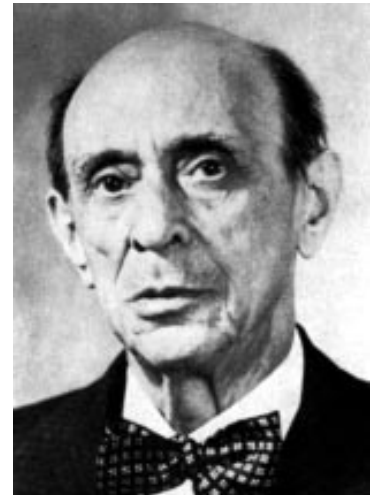
### Lifeline

- born in Vienna, Austria (September 13).
- began to play violin and compose at age 7.
- the first public performance of one of his works was at age 13.
- his father died when Arnold was 15 years old.
- at 16, began working at a bank to support the family.
- at 20 he began earning a living in music by scoring other composer's popular songs and operetta.
- married at age 27; his wife (Mathilde) was the sister of his closest friend.
- moved to Berlin (age 27) to accept a conducting position at a theater.
- first child (daughter Gertrude) was born the next year.
- with the help of Richard Strauss, secured a teaching position at a local conservatory (age 28).
- at 28, moved back to Vienna to teach composition classes.
- at 36, returned to Berlin to teach.
- was in military service during the First World War (age 41) after which he again moved back to Vienna.
- around age 47, began inventing his system of "twelve-tone" composition.
- at 49, his wife dies; ten months later he marries his second wife, fathers three children.
- at 50, was invited to return to Berlin to teach composition.
- at age 58 he was "dismissed" from his position at the music school by the Nazi regime.
- at 59, emigrated to the United States.
- taught at the University of California at Los Angeles from age 60 to 68.
- at 66, became a U.S. citizen.
- died at 76, with his wife beside him.



### Anecdotes and Trivia

- his father (Samuel) was the owner of a small shoe-shop in Vienna.
- some of his earliest exposure to music was from outdoor performances of military bands.
- could not play piano and except for a few lessons from a friend, was entirely self-taught in composition.
- famous students included Anton Webern and Alban Berg.
- his compositions were often disliked, the audience hissing loudly or leaving during the performance.
- founded a music society whose performances prohibited applause and did not allow music critics to attend.
- suffered from asthma.
- enjoyed painting, tennis, and ping-pong.
- his single work for wind band, *Theme and Variations, Op 43a* was composed in the summer of 1943 to "give a certain group of music lovers - in this case wind bands - something better to play."
- when living in Hollywood, he was asked by a student how to compose film music for an airplane scene; Schoenberg thought for a moment then said "Airplane music? - Just like music for big bees, only louder!"
- was superstitious, especially of the number 13 (died on Friday, July 13).
- considered by many to be one of the most influential composers of the twentieth century.



### Sources

*Arnold Schoenberg* by Charles Rosen (1975)  
*Schoenberg - a critical biography* by Willi Reich (1968)  
*Arnold Schoenberg* by H. H. Stuckenschmidt (1959)