

Survival Strategies: The Professional, Political, and Artistic Negotiations of Paul Hindemith,

1918–1934

By

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To my parents and Keith

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Introduction

In the narrative of German music history, Paul Hindemith stands as a textbook example of musical modernism.¹ Based on his eclectic array of styles and genres, scholars view his works as exemplifying the numerous artistic movements of the early twentieth century, such as romanticism, impressionism, expressionism, neoclassicism, and Neue Sachlichkeit. This narrative, which has remained largely intact since his death in 1963, starts with Hindemith in the early 1920s, an *enfant terrible* who indulges in “madcap experiments” while thumbing his nose at bourgeois audiences and prewar romantic subjectivity.² Sometime during the mid-twenties he settles down into the “neoclassical period of his maturity,” characterized by the Baroque features of his *Kammermusik* series, before turning to Gebrauchsmusik in the late 1920s, presumably out of a left-leaning impulse to bridge the gap between composer and audience.³ The start of the Nazi dictatorship in 1933, however, allegedly stops this musical progress and creativity in its tracks. The regime declares Hindemith a “musical Bolshevik,” his modernist music falls victim to a regressive Nazi aesthetic, and his work is banned and featured in the infamous *Degenerate Music* (*Entartete Musik*) exhibition of 1938. This supposedly leads to Hindemith’s withdrawal from public life and retreat into inner emigration, producing compositions that are either uninspired and subpar or contain hidden messages of resistance, such as *Mathis der Maler* or *Der Schwanendreher*.⁴ Finally, there is Hindemith the exile, who flees to America in 1940 only to

¹ For a summary of this narrative and how it arose, see David Neumeyer, *The Music of Paul Hindemith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 1–18.

² Stephen Hinton, “Germany, 1918–45,” in *Modern Times: From World War I to the Present*, ed. Robert P. Morgan (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), 87–88.

³ Ian Kemp, *Hindemith* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 13.

⁴ Ian Kemp, “Some Thoughts on Hindemith’s Viola Concertos,” *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 35 (2006): 105–117.

become a pedant after the war, clinging to an out-of-date tonality and whose music had “degenerated... into academic complacency.”⁵

This narrative attempts to accommodate Hindemith’s diverse activities and styles throughout his career, assigning terms such as “expressionism,” “Neue Sachlichkeit,” or “Gebrauchsmusik” to his works. However, there is little consensus on the musical characteristics of these “isms.”⁶ In addition, there is much inconsistency in assigning them to Hindemith’s works. For example, scholars point Hindemith’s use of Baroque forms and techniques in works such as *Cardillac*, *Das Marienleben*, and the *Kammermusik* series as exemplifying the clarity, objectivity, and emotional detachment of Neue Sachlichkeit, while others use the same language, stylistic features, and works to illustrate Hindemith’s neoclassical style.⁷ David Neumeyer notes further that “the various Hindemiths of music criticism over the years have been mostly cardboard figures—the Dadaist-for-a-day of the early twenties, the unreflective *Musikant* or *Spielmann*, the dogmatic natural theorist, the tonal reactionary, and the bitter and isolated retiree... All are too simple to be true.”⁸ These “cardboard figures” tell us little about the reasons or motivations behind his eclecticism; instead, Hindemith seems to merely serve as a blank slate on which to map the various modernist movements of the 1920s and as a case study for National Socialism’s campaign to halt artistic progress.

⁵ Richard Taruskin, “Back to Whom? Neoclassicism as Ideology,” *19th-Century Music* 16, no. 3 (Spring 1993): 300.

⁶ Many scholars define these terms by stylistic or formal features, such as Baroque forms, counterpoint, atonality, chordal writing, while others define them by the aims or purposes of such music, including accessibility, music for amateurs, objectivity, or autonomy.

⁷ See Giselher Schubert’s discussion of “New Objectivity” compared to Ian Kemp’s discussion of “Neoclassicism.” Kemp, *Hindemith*, 15; Schubert, “Paul Hindemith,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/13053>.

⁸ Neumeyer, 10.

The standard Hindemith narrative also reflects and reinforces many misconceptions about the Weimar Republic, especially Weimar-era Berlin, as a progressive, modernist, cultural haven that was completely wiped out by the Nazis in 1933. The abundance of stylistic terms applied to Hindemith's works of the 1920s, coupled with the figure of Hindemith the scandalous, young, jazz-composing *Bürgerschreck*, strengthen the impression of Weimar as "a time of intense cultural and intellectual ferment, a kind of blossoming of unfettered creativity following the constraints of rigid Wilhemine morality."⁹ Likewise, Hindemith's portrayal as a victim, inner emigrant, and exile, as well as descriptions of his works from the Nazi years as "boring," "simplistic," and even "morbidly languid," upholds stereotypes of the Third Reich as a musical wasteland, in which music was tightly controlled through a top-down, anti-modernist Nazi arts policy or "aesthetic." As Ian Kemp states, "In Hindemith's case it may be accepted that the Nazis precipitated a fundamental change in his music, the price to pay being less of vigour and adventurousness, more of melancholy and introspection, in short, a reversion to inclusiveness and a wider general appeal."¹⁰ As a result, Hindemith's works produced in Germany from 1933 on have received little scholarly attention.¹¹ Dividing his output into pre- and post-1933

⁹ Deborah Smail and Corey Ross, "New Berlins and New Germanies: History, Myth, and the German Capital in the 1920s and 1990s," in *Representing the German Nation: History and Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Mary Fulbrook and Martin Swales (New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 65. Smail and Ross have noted this "remarkably long-lived myth" of Berlin as a "center of artistic and architectural modernism; or 'rationalization' and commerce; of entertainment, mass culture, and sexual liberation."

¹⁰ Kemp, "Some Thoughts," 109.

¹¹ The Hindemith guide to research shows how heavily weighted scholarship is in favor of the works composed during the Weimar Republic, compared to those after 1933. Under the category "Studies of Periods and Artistic Movements," the section "Works through the Early 1930s" contains 32 items, "Music of the 1930s and 1940s" has 5, and "Late Works" includes 10. Furthermore, within the section "Works through the Early 1930s" are the following stylistic subsections (indicated with their number of articles): impressionism (1), expressionism (5), neoclassicism (8), Neue Sachlichkeit (6), and Gebrauchsmusik (8). Including these stylistic categories, music composed before the Nazi regime is the subject of 60 articles, versus 15

categories, however, ignores continuities in his style and activities and disguises the fact that, at least initially, the new regime had little effect on his career. Most importantly, it sidesteps Hindemith's repeated attempts to work with the Nazi regime.

The purpose of this dissertation is to offer an alternative narrative for Hindemith's work in Germany during the Weimar Republic and the early years of the Third Reich. Rather than adhering to the stylistic terms typically attached to his output from this period, this dissertation reevaluates Hindemith's musical works as responses to the economic, social, and political turbulence of those years. In particular, I examine five different areas of his compositional activity: his jazz-inspired works, experimentation with new technologies, works for youth and amateurs, works for the concert hall around 1930, and the opera *Mathis der Maler*. Ultimately, by considering Hindemith's works in the context of the rapid political, social, and technological changes of the 1920s and 1930s, this dissertation aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of his eclecticism as well as shed light on the conditions facing all composers during these decades.

The relatively few life-and-works studies of Hindemith, the most recent of which dates back to 1988, are generally organized by stylistic phases.¹² For example, Ian Kemp's monograph *Hindemith* (1970) contains the chapters "Developments towards Neoclassicism," "Neo-classicism and Gebrauchsmusik," and "*Mathis der Maler* and the Later Music."¹³ This lumping

articles focusing on works spanning over the three decades that follow. Placing these stylistic subsections under "Works through the Early 1930s" (which appears to stop at 1933) also reinforces the idea of Weimar growth and progressiveness. Stephen Luttmann, *Paul Hindemith: A Research and Information Guide*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009).

¹² Andres Briner's biography is an exception, as he bases the chapters on Hindemith's places of residence. Briner, *Paul Hindemith* (Zürich: Atlantis Verlag, 1971). A more recent work that looks critically at the composer's theoretical ideas is Simon Desbrulais's *The Music and Music Theory of Paul Hindemith* (Martlesham, UK: The Boydell Press, 2018).

¹³ Kemp, *Hindemith*, 41.

together of all music post-*Mathis* reflects the insistence on a strict division in Hindemith's career between the years of Weimar Republic and those of the Third Reich.¹⁴ For Hindemith's Weimar years, scholars highlight his activities as a composer and "mastery" of his craft, while after 1933, it is Hindemith the teacher, conductor, and author. This structure reflects the prevailing view of Hindemith today, which pits the "young-brash-atonal" Hindemith of the 1920s against his postwar "old-dull-tonal" self, demonstrated in one critic's statement that "early Hindemith is the best Hindemith. In his youth he was witty, bawdy, raunchy, daring. After that he was didactic and dull."¹⁵ Scholarship specifically addressing Hindemith's works of the Weimar period tends to classify them according to various stylistic phases labeled as expressionism, Neue Sachlichkeit, or Gebrauchsmusik, associating these designations with specific musical characteristics and compositions.¹⁶ Finding this approach problematic, scholars such as Stephen Hinton, Camilla Bork, and Nils Grosch have explored the broader ideological and artistic goals behind movements such as Neue Sachlichkeit and Gebrauchsmusik, while more recent studies

¹⁴ See Geoffrey Skelton, *Paul Hindemith: The Man Behind the Music* (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1975); Andres Briner, Dieter Rexroth, and Giseler Schubert, *Paul Hindemith: Leben und Werk in Bild und Text* (Mainz: Atlantis Musikbuch-Verlag, 1988). Taruskin also discusses Hindemith's life in two separate chapters: the Weimar Years are covered in the chapter "Lost and Rejected Illusions" and the 1930s in "Music and Totalitarian Society." Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 4, *Music in the Early Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹⁵ Timothy D. Taylor, "Guide to Records: Hindemith- Clarinet Quintet; Repertoire for Military Orchestra Minimax; Overture to the Flying Dutchman as Played by Sight by a Second-Rate Concert Orchestra at the Village Well at 7 o'clock in the Morning." *American Record Guide* 55 (July/August 1992): 150.

¹⁶ See Giseler Schubert, "Ausdruck und Ausdrücken. Neue Sachlichkeit and Biographie" in *Musik und Biographie. Festschrift für Rainer Cadenback*, ed. Cordula Heymann-Wentzel and Johannes Laas, 302–11 (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2004); Kurt Westphal, "Barock und neubarocke Musik" in *Hans Chemin-Petit. Betrachtungen einer Lebensleistung. Festschrift zum 75. Geburtstag am 24. Juli 1977*, ed. Marianne Buder and Dorette Gonschorek, 29–40 (Berlin: Stapp, 1977); Walter Bruno Hilse, "Hindemith and Debussy," *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 2 (1972): 48–90.

have avoided stylistic analysis altogether by interpreting works of the 1920s in the context of postwar disillusionment and trauma.¹⁷ For example, Joel Haney reads Hindemith's works of the early 1920s as distancing himself from the legacy of German *Kultur* and argues for the presence of several musical and aesthetic "strands" in Hindemith's music, influenced by composers such as Debussy, Stravinsky, and Bartók.¹⁸ Despite these contributions, however, few have looked to the practical, political, and economic factors behind his musical works and activities during these years, an approach that would lead to considering composers as entrepreneurs, musical works as products, and composition as a capitalistic venture.¹⁹

Studies that specifically focus on Hindemith's experience during the Third Reich veer away from style and dwell more on politics and his psychological state. Scholars such as Gisela Schubert, Ian Kemp, and Richard Taruskin demonstrate Hindemith's victimization by

¹⁷ Stephen Hinton, "Aspects of Hindemith's Neue Sachlichkeit," *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 14 (1985): 22–80; Hinton, *The Idea of Gebrauchsmusik: A Study of Musical Aesthetics in the Weimar Republic (1919–1933) with Particular Reference to the Works of Paul Hindemith* (New York: Garland, 1989); Hinton, "Defining Musical Expressionism: Schoenberg and Others," in *Expressionism Reassessed*, ed. Shulamith Behr, David Fanning, and Douglas Jarman, 121–129 (New York: Manchester University Press, 1993); Camilla Bork, *Im Zeichen des Expressionismus. Kompositionen Paul Hindemiths im Kontext des Frankfurter Kulturlebens um 1920*, Frankfurter Studien, vol. 11, (Mainz: Schott, 2006); and Nils Grosch, *Die Musik der Neuen Sachlichkeit* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler Verlag, 1999).

¹⁸ Joel Christian Haney, "The Emergence of a Postwar Musical Outlook: Hindemith's 'Hard-Edged Simplicity' 1919–1922" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2006), 286. Haney avoids using stylistic terms, instead describing Hindemith's works as containing a "hard-edged simplicity" characterized by the balancing of technical experimentation with clear aural accessibility, the attenuation of heightened expressiveness, and increased physicality. Other studies that contextualize Hindemith's works in light of the postwar environment include Susanne Schaal-Gotthardt, "Ausdruck ohne Emotion. Hindemiths Nachtstücke," *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 30 (2001): 103–25; and Christian Münch, "Anklänge des Grotesken im Werk von Paul Hindemith," *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 38 (2009): 32–48.

¹⁹ This attitude can be seen in Arnold Whittall's statement that what is most distinctive about twentieth-century music is "its relevance to 'the laws of art', rather than to the imperatives of commerce or other even less worthy factors." Arnold Whittall, *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5.

citing the harassment from Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg's Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur, Hindemith's inclusion in the 1938 *Degenerate Music* exhibition, and sporadic performance bans of his music. Additionally, this scholarship speculates on his withdrawal from public life, leaving him to produce melancholy, uninspired works or smuggling hidden messages of resistance in works such as *Der Schwanendreher* and *Mathis der Maler*.²⁰ *Mathis* in particular is generally viewed as a sort of manifesto of his "inner emigration," largely owing to the opera's book-burning scene (supposedly critiquing the Nazi party), its central message of retreating to one's art in a time of crisis, and Hindemith's inability to stage the opera in Germany.²¹

While the notion of Hindemith as inner emigrant is fairly entrenched, a small number of scholars have challenged it. Claudia Maurer Zenck's landmark article from 1980 and Michael Kater's unflattering portrait of Hindemith in his *Composers of the Nazi Era* (2000) both detail his accommodations under the Nazis.²² In his 1995 edition of Hindemith's letters, Geoffrey Skelton also includes Hindemith's correspondence with his publishers, brothers Ludwig and Willy Strecker of Schott Publishing, that outline plans for working under the new regime, in contrast to Dieter Rexroth's 1982 edition, which almost completely omits any such potentially

²⁰ Ian Kemp considers *Der Schwanendreher* (1935) a "parable" about emigration, attributing Hindemith's use of sonata form as part of a "profound and universal urge to keep alight the flame of Western culture at a time of political menace." Ian Kemp, "Some Thoughts," 109.

²¹ Giselher Schubert interprets *Mathis der Maler* as an "antifascist confession" and Taruskin describes *Mathis* as "an allegory of the composer's own inner emigration." However, Taruskin does acknowledge Hindemith's attempts at accommodation, describing his position under the Nazis as "complicated." Taruskin, *Early Twentieth Century*, 766–767.

²² Claudia Maurer Zenck, "Zwischen Boykott und Anpassung an den Charakter der Zeit. Über die Schwierigkeiten eines deutschen Komponisten mit dem Dritten Reich," *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 9 (1980): 65–129; Michael Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era: Eight Portraits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

damning letters from the 1930s.²³ Skelton's biography also does not shy away from reporting Hindemith's attempts to ingratiate himself with the new regime, although Skelton interprets Hindemith's actions in the best possible light. More recently, Claire Taylor-Jay's 2004 examination of the opera *Mathis der Maler* and Karen Painter's 2007 discussion of the *Mathis* Symphony also disrupt the traditional interpretations of the antifascist ethos of that work.

Methodology

Revisiting and reinterpreting these critical years in Hindemith's life requires abandoning the labels attached to the works and the person. As a model for my approach, I refer to James Van Dyke's *Franz Radziwill and the Contradictions of German Art History, 1919–45* (2011), a critical biography of the German artist Radziwill (1895-1983), a contemporary of Hindemith.²⁴ Van Dyke examines the day-to-day realities and pressures Radziwill and other visual artists faced, providing a more comprehensive and nuanced view of artists pursuing careers during a time of “chronic economic duress, social crisis, political upheaval, and state repression.”²⁵ As contemporaries, Radziwill and Hindemith faced the same challenges in the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, although Radziwill was ultimately more successful than Hindemith by virtue of his personal connections, political prowess, and sheer luck and became a highly acclaimed painter in the Third Reich. My examination of Hindemith's own navigation of the political, economic, and professional uncertainties of the 1920s and 1930s will lead to a better understanding of the context in which composers were working, as well as dismantling

²³ Paul Hindemith, *Selected Letters of Paul Hindemith*, ed. and trans. Geoffrey Skelton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) and Hindemith, *Briefe*, ed. Dieter Rexroth (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982).

²⁴ James Van Dyke, *Franz Radziwill and the Contradictions of German Art History, 1919–45* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2011), 12–13.

²⁵ Van Dyke, 16.

assumptions about the state of artistic affairs in these decades. Likewise, examining the economic and political turmoil of his environment sheds new light on Hindemith's musical works and activities. Most importantly, like Van Dyke's study, I restore agency to Hindemith by emphasizing his actions and decisions, while also taking into account the factors that affected those choices, creating what Taruskin describes as a:

narrative that describes the mutually influential and mutually accommodating—in short, the truly dialectical—interaction of powerful agents and mediating factors: institutions and their gatekeepers, governments, ideologies, patterns of consumption and dissemination involving patrons, audiences, publishers and publicists, critics, chroniclers, commentators censors, and so on practically indefinitely until one chooses to draw the line.²⁶

Because Hindemith was such a prolific composer, it is not possible to cover all of his works from the period 1918–1934 in this dissertation. This unfortunately excludes any discussion of his three Expressionist operas (*Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen*; *Das Nusch-Nuschi*; and *Sancta Susanna*), the opera *Cardillac*, his *Kammermusik* series and string quartets, or any other chamber works composed between 1919 and 1930. Rather than a comprehensive life-and-works study, this dissertation focuses instead on the works that allowed Neumeyer to identify the “cardboard figures” of the 1920s and 1930s, specifically his jazz-influenced works, his experiments with technology, his works for amateurs, his return to the concert hall with the *Konzertmusik* series, and *Mathis der Maler*. In other words, my chapters coalesce around the “myths” that I wish to challenge. Challenging these myths, in turn, illuminates the larger themes of this dissertation: Hindemith's ambivalence towards modernity, the tension between romantic artistic ideals and the realities of the market, and his negotiations of a rapidly changing technological, political, and social landscape.

²⁶ Richard Taruskin, “Is There a Baby in the Bathwater? (Part II),” *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 63, vol. 4 (2006): 319.

My dissertation draws on the archival research conducted at the Hindemith Institute in Frankfurt and the Berlin University of the Arts. At the Hindemith Institute, I focused on the voluminous correspondence between Hindemith and his publishers, brothers Willy and Ludwig Strecker of Schott Publishing from 1919–1934. While the published correspondences by Dieter Rexroth and Geoffrey Skelton include several of Hindemith’s letters to the Streckers, primarily from the 1920s, they virtually ignore the Streckers’ responses as well as Gertrud Hindemith’s own extensive correspondence with the brothers. The collection in Frankfurt provides a wealth of material regarding his financial, political, and professional negotiations of the 1920s and 1930s, as well as his personal hopes and frustrations. Hindemith’s career moves during this period also brought him into the field of higher education, and the archive at the Berlin University of the Arts (formerly the Berliner Musikhochschule) contains material on Hindemith’s employment there from 1927–1937. Among the documents pertinent to my research are director Fritz Stein’s letters to various Nazi officials vouching for Hindemith’s character and teaching ability and the Hochschule’s annual reports (*Jahresberichte*), which document the activities of the school’s Radio Research Center (*Rundfunksversuchsstelle*) and its mission to train students to be proficient in new media.

Musical periodicals also figure heavily into my research. Contemporary music journals such as *Melos* and *Musikblätter des Anbruch* address the socio-economic challenges musicians faced in Germany and Austria after the First World War, as well as featuring numerous discussions on technology’s effect on music. In addition to these journals, I use others such as *Die Musik*, *Zeitschrift für Musik*, and contemporary newspapers across the political spectrum to examine the contemporary reception to Hindemith’s music. Hindemith’s own programs for the

Donaueschingen, Baden-Baden, and Berlin new music festivals also provide information regarding the motivations behind his experiments with technology and amateur music.²⁷

Chapter Outline

Chapter One addresses the grim situation in Germany after the First World War and its effect on musicians. After briefly outlining the political, economic, and social turmoil of the Weimar Republic, I show how this turmoil negatively impacted concert life, as musical organizations were forced to shorten their programs or disband altogether, and the programming of “safe” repertoire led to a diminishing demand for new music, a situation that was exacerbated by competition from mass media. I then examine how the economic depression affected Hindemith’s attempts to launch a career after the war, highlighting how his lofty ideals about being a *Tonkünstler* collided with the harsh realities of the postwar period. The last part of the chapter addresses how, for many musicians, National Socialism promised a renewal of artistic life, primarily through increased funding and the creation of the Reich Music Chamber. I detail how Hindemith himself entered into talks with government officials over taking charge of musical education, as well as his involvement with the Reich Music Chamber.

Chapter Two explores Hindemith’s ambivalence toward modernity by looking at his jazz-influenced works, particularly *Kammermusik Nr. 1* (1922) and *1922: Suite für Klavier*, op. 26 (1922). I examine how he drew on jazz’s extramusical associations to critique aspects of modern life, often in a manner similar to that of visual artists such as George Grosz and Otto Dix. Contemporary reviews of these pieces confirm that many critics did, indeed, understand the works as satiric depictions of current times and not as tributes to progress and cultural diversity.

²⁷ These programs have been published in the collection *Aufsätze, Vorträge, Reden*, ed. Giselher Schubert (Zurich: Atlantis Musikbuch-Verlag, 1994).

The chapter ends with an analysis of Hindemith's opera *Neues vom Tage* (*News of the Day*, 1929), a work that scholars often frame as a celebration of Weimar culture. I argue instead that while Hindemith used a contemporary setting to make the genre relevant to modern audiences, the work also reflected many of the anxieties about modern life, including the mechanization of everyday life, the "New Women," and the rise of tabloid culture.

Chapters Three and Four consider Hindemith's engagements with technology and amateur music, respectively, as responses to the perceived crisis in German musical life. Chapter Three focuses on the experiments with mechanical instruments, film, radio, and electronic instruments he carried out at the Donaueschingen and Baden-Baden summer festivals and at the Radio Research Center in the Berlin Hochschule. Although most accounts have credited Hindemith with engaging in this experimentation for its own sake, I suggest this work represented a larger concern among musicians about staying relevant and competitive by embracing mass media. Likewise, Chapter Four looks at his collaboration with the Youth Music Movement (*Jugendmusikbewegung*) on works that were also performed at the Baden-Baden summer festivals. His motives for writing these works for amateurs also seemed to be primarily to educate children and amateurs about contemporary music in order to secure audiences for his future creations.

Chapter Five details Hindemith's return to serious music and the concert hall in 1930, which coincided with his development of a more accessible style through clear formal designs, simpler tonality, and even the use of folksongs. Scholarship has generally viewed this change negatively, considering his works after 1933 as "losing much of the fresh and imaginative quality

so typical for his music in the 1920s.”²⁸ Among the common explanations for this change are the implementation of an anti-modernist “Nazi aesthetic,” Hindemith’s supposed despondency over the Nazi regime, his strict adherence to the dry academicism of his *Unterweisung im Tonsatz* (1935-37), or the unfortunate result of writing too much *Gebrauchsmusik*. Building on work by Michael Walter and Joan Evans, I argue that this change in style instead reflected Hindemith’s awareness of contemporary musical trends and his response to calls from critics asking him to drop his music festival experiments and return to art music.

The final chapter reevaluates Hindemith’s opera *Mathis der Maler* (1935), challenging interpretations that characterize it as a product of Hindemith’s of inner emigration and/or resistance against the Nazi regime. While *Mathis* fell in line with his new, accessible style, the choice of topic was in many ways an attempt to appeal to the new regime. I also examine the targeting of Hindemith by the Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg and his cultural organization, the Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur. Most accounts have painted this harassment as part of a unified, top-down smear campaign prompted by Hindemith’s supposed failure to “comply with National Socialist [musical] doctrines.”²⁹ However, a closer look at this harassment by Rosenberg shows that it was largely caused by political rivalries within the Nazi arts administration and had little to do with Hindemith personally or with his music. Moreover, the condemnation of Hindemith was not a unified response, as there were many in the Nazi party who viewed Hindemith as a representative of modern German music.³⁰ The last part of the chapter covers Hindemith’s struggles to secure a premiere for the opera. Looking at newspapers across the political spectrum,

²⁸ Michael Walter, “Music of Seriousness and Commitment: The 1930s and Beyond,” in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 295.

²⁹ Walter, 294.

³⁰ Kater, “Paul Hindemith: The Reluctant Emigré,” chapter 2 in *Composers*, 31–56.

I show that Hindemith's inability to stage the opera in Germany was not because of its "antifascist" content, nor because of its musical style, but rather was largely caused by political rivalries within the government arts administration. The chapter ends by re-examining *Der Fall Hindemith*, an article by conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler defending Hindemith's suitability as a composer in the Third Reich. While typically taken as a brave defense of the freedom of the artist against Nazi tyranny, I argue that the article was directed specifically at Alfred Rosenberg and his Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur and not at cultural politics in general. Furtwängler's critique only succeeded in uniting high-ranking Nazi officials, such as Joseph Goebbels and Hermann Göring, against both him and Hindemith. As a result, the Berlin premiere did not take place, and Willy Strecker and Hindemith were forced to find an alternate venue.

Contributions to Scholarship

This dissertation provides a new interpretation of Hindemith's life and works from the 1920s and 1930s by connecting his variety of styles, genres, and activities with economic, political, and social influences and with the significant control wielded by his publishers.³¹ While Hindemith is described (and described himself) as the consummate practical musician, a craftsman *à la* Mozart or Bach who reacted against romantic subjectivity and the idea of a "masterpiece culture," it is perhaps ironic that scholarship still insists on casting him more nostalgically as an inspired composer who, while participating in various "isms" and ideologies, remained above market forces. Kim Kowalke has noted the reluctance to discuss art music as a commercial enterprise, identifying as an "axiom of modernist ideology... [the idea that] All good music since 1850 has renounced commercialism altogether. Within such an aesthetic, art music either floats, unsullied in its autonomy, above economics, politics, and commerce or resists its

³¹ Taruskin, "Is There a Baby in the Bathwater (Part II)," 319.

origins and contexts by its very existence.”³² My dissertation builds on the number of studies that consider the influence of these economic and other factors on the composition of music, such as Noel O’Regan’s article on Palestrina in the marketplace, Nicholas Vaszonyi’s monograph on Wagner’s self-merchandising, and Philip Ross Bullock’s examination of Chaikovsky and the economics of art music.³³

Looking at the creation of *Mathis der Maler* also helps “dismantle the dystopia[n]” view of culture during the Third Reich.³⁴ Rather than contributing to the notion that Nazi Germany was a totalitarian cultural wasteland, Hindemith’s experience shows the Nazis’ lack of control over music-making and music, uneven enforcement of existing policies, and the effect of petty rivalries and personal grudges among Nazi officials on artists’ lives. Furthermore, that Hindemith’s music was never under direct attack supports recent research showing that modernist styles and jazz continued to be heard during the twelve years of the Reich. Most importantly, it reminds us that people, and not musical or modernist styles, were the true victims of Nazi persecution and atrocities.³⁵ Looking at the grim, post-World War I economic situation under which musicians were working may help us understand why Hindemith and others

³² Kim Kowalke, “Music Publishing and the Nazis: Schott, Universal Edition, and their Composers,” in *Music and Nazism*, ed. Albrecht Riethmüller and Michael Kater (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 2003), 170–171.

³³ Nicholas Vaszonyi, *Richard Wagner: Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Noel O’Regan, “Palestrina, a Musician and Composer in the Market-place,” *Early Music* 22, no. 4 (November 1994): 551–572; Philip Ross Bullock, “Chaikovsky and the Economics of Art Music in Late Nineteenth-Century Russia,” *The Journal of Musicology* 36, no. 2 (Spring 2019): 195–227.

³⁴ Pamela Potter, “Dismantling a Dystopia: On the Historiography of Music in the Third Reich,” *Central European History* 40, no. 4 (December 2007): 623–651.

³⁵ Celia Applegate notes that “the Third Reich was a regime in which conformity to racial doctrine bought one a goodly amount of room to differ and diversify and complain on other, essentially insignificant matters.” Applegate, “The Past and Present of *Hausmusik* in the Third Reich,” in Riethmüller and Kater, *Music and Nazism*, 146.

tolerated or even welcomed the new regime in 1933, with its promises of jobs, the resurrection of musical institutions, and professionalization. This in turn leads away from the good and bad, or black and white, categories of composer based on their decision (or ability) to emigrate or claims of inner emigration. As Michael Kater states, “One and all—musicians and singers, composers and conductors, all of whom had to make a living as artists in the Third Reich—emerged in May 1945 severely tainted, with their professional ethos violated and their music often compromised: gray people against a landscape of gray.”³⁶

³⁶ Michael Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 6.

Chapter One:

Political, Economic, and Musical Turmoil of the Postwar Era

The Weimar Republic occupies a special place in the history of German music. Just as Germany threw off the monarchy in 1918, scholars view composers as throwing off the shackles of romanticism, plunging headlong into musical modernism. To be sure, the years between 1918 and 1933 experienced a dizzying array of styles and catchphrases, such as expressionism, neoclassicism, Neue Sachlichkeit, Jugendmusik, Gebrauchsmusik, and Gemeinschaftsmusik; musical innovations like the twelve-tone method, quarter tone composition, and mechanical and electronic instruments; and the expansion of mass media with film, radio, and recordings. Journals and festivals devoted to contemporary music also sprang up across Germany, providing composers, critics, and intellectuals with a platform for discussion and debate. Jazz added to the soundscape of this cultural ferment, calling up the popular images of Berlin nightlife in the so-called Golden Twenties: cabarets, jazz bands, Josephine Baker, Marlene Dietrich, and flappers.¹

Equally prevalent as this depiction of the Weimar Republic is the belief that its cultural flowering came to a halt when Adolf Hitler rose to power in 1933. As one writer observes:

In the first decade or so following the war Germany enjoyed a period of remarkable artistic and intellectual rejuvenation... The leading cultural center of postwar Germany was Berlin, which during the 1920s became a haven for all that was new and experimental in the arts, eventually rivaling Paris as a focus of avant-garde activity... All this came to a sudden end with the victory of the Nationalist Socialist party in the 1933 elections and the subsequent appointment of Adolf Hitler as chancellor... The anti-intellectual and anti-artistic attitudes of the National Socialists, along with their brutal suppression of the Jews, had a fatal impact upon the country's cultural life... Germany, for centuries at the forefront of important developments in European music, suddenly

¹ Nicholas Attfield has also addressed the perception of the Weimar Republic as “a golden era” in the introduction to his book *Challenging the Modern: Conservative Revolution in German Music 1918–33* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1–16.

became, at a single stroke, a cultural backwater, cut off from the main creative currents of the time.²

Historians typically depict the years of the Third Reich as an artistic wasteland, in which music was tightly controlled through a totalitarian, anti-modernist Nazi arts policy, resulting in subpar compositions. Musicologist Pamela Potter sums up the common perception of music-making during these years as “goose-stepping troops stomping to military marches, fight songs sung to torch-lit processions, Hitler kissing the hand of Winifred Wagner, or swastika-draped concert halls featuring the neo-Romantic kitsch of forgotten composers.”³

This chapter will provide a context for Hindemith’s career during the years 1918 to 1934, first with a brief overview of the social, political, and economic turmoil of the Weimar Republic that resulted in the rise of National Socialism.⁴ This turmoil negatively impacted musicians, as widespread unemployment and the collapse of musical institutions caused not only material hardship but psychological damage as well, with the loss of German musical prestige and devaluation of *Kultur*. Given this gloomy situation, many musicians welcomed the National Socialists’ promises to boost employment, provide pensions, increase spending on musical

² Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth Century Music: A History of Musical Style in Modern Europe and America* (New York: Norton, 1991), 220–221. For other examples for this narrative, see Eric Salzman, *Twentieth Century Music: An Introduction*, 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002); Donald Jay Grout, Claude V. Palisca and J. Peter Burkholder, *A History of Western Music*, 7th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006); Guy Rickards, *Hindemith, Hartmann and Henze* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1995); Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007); and the introduction to Wolfgang Rathert and Giseler Schubert, ed., *Musikkultur in der Weimarer Republik* (Mainz: Schott, 2001).

³ Pamela Potter, “What Is ‘Nazi Music’?” *The Musical Quarterly* 88, no. 3 (Autumn 2005): 428.

⁴ For detailed accounts of this time period, see Colin Storer, *A Short History of the Weimar Republic* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2013) and Eric D. Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

organizations, and most importantly, to re-establish the high esteem of German music and musicians.

The chapter also examines how Hindemith himself responded to the economic challenges of the 1920s and early 1930s, as well as his efforts to maintain his position in the initial years of the Third Reich. In contrast to the image of Hindemith the craftsman, matter-of-factly manufacturing music for a specific purpose, I show how he still held tenaciously to romantic ideals as he launched his compositional career after the war.⁵ This art-for-art's sake ideology, however, soon collided with economic realities, forcing him to take a more practical approach. Likewise, I argue that he took on a frenetic performing and composing schedule largely out of financial necessity, disrupting the impression of Hindemith the "practical, efficient, down-to-earth" musician.⁶ The last part of the chapter challenges the prevailing notion of his inner emigration by detailing how, despite some reticence, he also saw some promise for the renewal of musical life under the National Socialist regime and was willing to work with it.

The Golden Twenties?

The birth of the Weimar Republic after the First World War signaled the end of the German Empire under Kaiser Wilhelm II and the transformation of Germany into a parliamentary democracy. The constitution, adopted on 11 August 1919, was quite progressive, protecting basic liberties like freedom of speech, assembly, religion, and press; declaring equality between men and women; and giving the vote to everyone over age twenty-one. It also

⁵ Morgan, for example, speaks of Hindemith's "view of composition as a craft to be practiced faithfully, with the mastery and dedication one brings to any respectable occupation but unburdened by grandiose thoughts of self-expression." Morgan, 225.

⁶ Ross, 183.

recognized collective bargaining as legally binding and called for social welfare programs.⁷ Unfortunately, the constitution partly contributed to the republic's constant political instability by establishing a system of proportional representation, meaning that the percentages of votes cast for different political parties determined the parties' representation in the national parliament (the *Reichstag*).⁸ This system allowed for the representation of numerous parties with radically different opinions, and contentious party politics made it difficult to form any sort of stable coalition government with majority support. Violence frequently accompanied this political instability, especially in the first years of the republic. Over three hundred politicians were assassinated before 1922, and there were attempts by both left- and right-wing groups to overthrow the government.⁹ Ultimately, as historian Eric D. Weitz observes, "Germany remained deeply divided politically. No individual party or movement, no single set of ideas or commonly held beliefs, prevailed in Germany in the years after World War I. No one, no thing, exercised hegemony. No party until the Nazis in the end phase of the republic proved able to attract support beyond a limited base."¹⁰

⁷ "The Constitution of the German Republic," in Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 46–51.

⁸ Historians have noted that it was not the system *per se* that was the problem, but rather the difficulty the larger parties had in forming stable coalitions. Mary Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918–2014: The Divided Nation*, 4th ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 25; Eberhard Kolb, *The Weimar Republic*, trans. P. S. Falla (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 165.

⁹ Fulbrook, 32. These included an armed revolt by the Communist Party (the Spartacist Uprising) that took place in Berlin in January 1919, bringing fighting and barricades to city streets and put down by right-wing paramilitary units (the *Freikorps*). In 1922, Wolfgang Kapp and Walther von Lüttwitz attempted to overthrow the republic and establish a right-wing government (the Kapp Putsch). The following year, left-wing revolts occurred in Saxony, Thuringia, and Hamburg, while Adolf Hitler tried to seize power in Bavaria that November in the so-called Beer Hall Putsch in Munich.

¹⁰ Weitz, 83.

Along with political instability came economic instability, characterized above all by severe inflation. Inflation had already started during the war years when the government, assuming a victorious Germany, financed the war through loans and bonds, rather than by raising taxes.¹¹ It was after the war, however, when inflation began to skyrocket. Initially, rising prices for goods stimulated investment and helped reinvigorate manufacturing and industry.¹² Yet rising prices also prompted calls for wage increases, which in turn led to a wave of strikes in the summer and fall of 1921, ranging from industrial workers to coal miners to civil servants. Government and businesses conceded to these strikes, paying workers with the depreciated currency, while raising prices to pay for these wages. Making matters worse, the government printed additional money in order to increase the supply of cash, driving up inflation even more.

Economic instability was also entwined with the Treaty of Versailles, signed on 28 June 1919, which outlined the terms of peace after the Great War. Article 231 of the treaty made Germany and its allies assume full responsibility for the war's outbreak and established the basis for war reparations.¹³ Despite the German government's protestations that it could not pay because of the dire economic situation, the Allies believed that Germany was deliberately undermining the payment process, and on 11 January 1923, Allied troops occupied the Ruhr Valley, Germany's industrial region. In protest, the German government took a stance of passive resistance and halted production. This only exacerbated the problem: with no production, there

¹¹ Fulbrook, 33; Theo Balderston, *Economics and Politics in the Weimar Republic*, New Studies in Economic and Social History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 34.

¹² Weitz, 132.

¹³ Balderston, 10–13. In addition to reparations, the treaty redrew borders (with Germany losing Alsace and other territory), put the Saar Valley and its coal mines under French control, took away Germany's colonies, drastically reduced the size of the army (limiting it to border control and domestic order), took away the air force; and forced Germany had to surrender its merchant fleet, make deliveries of livestock to help areas decimated by war, and accept tariffs favorable to Allied goods.

was no tax revenue and now the government was responsible for workers' unemployment payments. On top of this, the government also had to make payments to companies in the Ruhr Valley in order to maintain support for the shutdown of production. To keep up with these payments, the government printed off even more money, resulting in higher prices. By the end of November 1923, one dollar was worth 4.2 trillion marks.¹⁴

Relief came under newly appointed chancellor Gustav Stresemann in fall of 1923. Stresemann ended the strategy of passive resistance in the Ruhr Valley, putting people back to work and easing the strain of unemployment payments. To help promote economic growth, the government also revoked the eight-hour workday, curtailed the public payroll, and made reductions to social welfare programs. A new currency, the Rentenmark, was introduced in November 1923, which paved the way for currency stabilization; this was followed by the Reichsmark in September 1924, based on the gold standard. The Dawes Plan of 1924, named for American financier Charles G. Dawes, also helped tame inflation by making Germany's reparation payments smaller and staggering them out over five years. Moreover, it allowed the United States to make short-term loans to Germany to help pay the reparations, which, as Mary Fulbrook notes, "aided both German economic recovery and American expansionist economic policies."¹⁵ Germany also seemed to be re-entering the world community: the Locarno Pact (October 1925) secured its borders with France and Belgium, the Berlin Treaty of 1926 ensured peace and neutrality with Russia in case of future wars, and Germany entered the League of Nations in September 1926.¹⁶

¹⁴ Weitz, 135.

¹⁵ Fulbrook, 31. In early payments, Germany paid only one-fifth of the amount while the remaining four-fifths came from international loans.

¹⁶ Fulbrook, 31–32. The Berlin treaty also contained a secret military agreement that allowed German remilitarization in USSR territory.

The period of (apparent) economic stabilization that followed has given rise to the image of “The Golden Twenties” in Germany. Between 1924 and 1929, wages increased while working hours decreased, leading to fewer uprisings and strikes. The influx of American capital spurred businesses to invest in plants and equipment and municipalities to build housing and clinics. The gross national product grew significantly, and by 1927, industrial production finally reached its prewar level.¹⁷ In contrast to the outward appearance of stability, however, the foundations of the republic were shaky. Its economic success mainly came from foreign (mostly US) loans, rather than from true economic growth.¹⁸ This façade of stability came tumbling down with the Wall Street Crash in October 1929, which prompted US banks to call in their loans from Germany. As a result, government spending on infrastructure and in other areas sharply decreased. At the same time, prices fell while wages remained the same, causing soaring unemployment as firms had to lay off workers.¹⁹ Hoping to avoid the mistakes that had led to hyperinflation in the early 1920s, Chancellor Heinrich Brüning adopted severe deflationary measures that included cutting unemployment benefits, welfare, and other social programs, reducing the number of people who were eligible for these benefits, raising taxes, and rolling back wage increases.²⁰ The number of

¹⁷ Weitz, 104, 146–147.

¹⁸ Since the 1960s, economic historians such as Harold James and Knut Borchard have argued that the period was one of stagnancy, as investment was lower and wage growth outpaced that of productivity. Additionally, greater efficiency through time-management practices led to higher unemployment, as more production was yielded (and also expected) from fewer workers. Finally, the state simply couldn’t afford the benefits (wage and salary increases, unemployment, welfare) that it promised to citizens. Balderston, 68–75; Fulbrook, 47; Weitz, 152.

¹⁹ Balderston, 85. Unemployment was so high that there wasn’t enough money to cover the promised amount of unemployment insurance.

²⁰ Weitz, 162–164; Fulbrook, 48; Balderston, 88–98. Brüning took office on 30 March 1930. Although the Reichstag rejected his austerity proposals, he implemented them through presidential decrees, using Article 48 of the constitution, which allowed the president to take emergency measures without the prior consent of the Reichstag.

unemployed rose from 1.3 million in September 1929, to over three million by September 1930, and to over six million by the beginning of 1933, roughly one-third of the working population.²¹

By 1932, German citizens had suffered over a decade of near-constant economic insecurity. During the period of hyperinflation in the early 1920s, savings had become completely worthless; those on fixed incomes or dependent on savings, such as pensioners, were hit hardest.²² Standing in bread lines, ransacking markets for food, and carrying around baskets of worthless currency had been a reality for many.²³ Middle-class intellectuals such as writers, professors, artists, and scientists, who were often unprotected by trade unions, also saw their economic position drastically deteriorate.²⁴ The loss of status characterized by stories of professors selling off their libraries or families selling off pianos and family heirlooms was almost as damaging as the loss of savings; many feared of the “proletarianization” of the middle class.²⁵ These memories must have been fresh in the minds of Germans when only six years later, their country once again plunged into economic chaos. Thus, for many, economic instability helped fuel a dislike and distrust of democracy.

Equally damaging to democracy was the association of the Weimar Republic with national disillusionment and shame.²⁶ The republic had, after all, been born out of Germany’s

²¹ Fulbrook, 51. Another estimate suggests that roughly forty percent of the workforce was unemployed—a figure even higher than in the US. Balderston, 77–79.

²² Joseph Auner, *Music in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*, Western Music in Context: A Norton History (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2013), 87; Fulbrook, 34.

²³ Weitz, 136. Deteriorating living conditions during inflation led to a rise in infant mortality, a decrease in life expectancy, and the spread of communicable diseases.

²⁴ Bernd Widdig, *Culture and Inflation in Weimar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 169.

²⁵ Weitz, 138. As Weitz notes, “By one calculation, upper-level civil servants had an income in 1922 on average only 1.35 percent higher than unskilled workers—a sad situation indeed for a group that considered itself the bearer of German culture.”

²⁶ Pamela Potter, *Art of Suppression: Confronting the Nazi Past in Histories of the Visual and Performing Arts* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016), 236.

defeat in the First World War. Of the thirteen million men who had served in the military, roughly two million had been killed and four million more wounded.²⁷ A loss of faith often accompanied this loss of life: faith in German cultural supremacy and in traditional institutions such as the church, government, and military. The punitive terms of the Versailles Treaty and the occupation by Allied troops after the war also fueled a sense of humiliation and resentment.²⁸ Finally, the widespread public perception of disorder and lawlessness, reinforced by rising criminal conviction, as well as by the increased visibility of sex workers in urban space, contributed to the feeling of Germany's decline or even ruin.²⁹

It was in this pessimistic atmosphere that the National Socialism experienced significant growth. Although the Nazi party had existed since the early 1920s, the Depression proved fertile ground for its transformation into a mass movement.³⁰ Using utopic rhetoric of a national community (*Volksgemeinschaft*), the party promised, in the words of historian Mary Fulbrook, to “transcend the divisions and heal the wounds of capitalist society, and to present a new way forwards to a great future, presenting a genuine alternative to both the discredited authoritarianism of the Imperial past and the ‘despicable’ democracy of the Weimar present.”³¹ Voters responded to this message; after the elections on 31 July 1932, the Nazi party won 37.8 percent of the vote (the largest percentage they would win before January 1933), making it the largest party in the parliament. On 30 January 1933, President Paul von Hindenburg reluctantly offered Hitler the chancellorship, believing that the coalition government would benefit from

²⁷ Weitz, 8–9.

²⁸ Fulbrook, 27. Although scholars have since argued over how bad the reparations really were and how much they actually affected Germany's economy, the Versailles Treaty did cause outrage and distrust of the new democracy.

²⁹ Storer, 160–162.

³⁰ Fulbrook, 46

³¹ Fulbrook, 46.

Hitler's and the National Socialists' popular support.³² Hitler accepted and spent the next year consolidating his party's power and dismantling parliamentary democracy.³³ Following the death of Hindenburg on 2 August 1934, Hitler merged the offices of chancellor and president, becoming commander of the military and adopting the title of "Führer and Reich Chancellor."³⁴

The Impact on Musical Life

Musicians were not immune to these social, political, and—most of all—economic upheavals of the 1920s and early 1930s. Despite its considerable artistic achievements and innovations, the Weimar Republic, according to historian Alan Steinweis, was a time of diminished professional opportunities for artists.³⁵ A significant factor behind musicians' troubles was the loss of financial support from the educated middle class (*Bildungsbürgertum*), the traditional patrons of the arts before the war. Severely affected by the economic crises of the 1920s, bourgeois audiences could no longer afford to go to concerts or provide patronage for musical institutions and/or individuals. For example, Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performances (Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen), founded in November 1918 and

³² Fulbrook, 55.

³³ On 27 February 1933 a fire burned down the Reichstag, allegedly set by a Dutch bricklayer and communist, Marius van der Lubbe. Whether the arson was committed by Lubbe alone, or was contrived by the National Socialists, is still under debate by historians. What is undisputed, however, is that the Nazis used the incident as a pretext for emergency decrees that suspended civil liberties, as well as for the mass arrests of communists and Social Democrats. The consolidation of power continued that spring and summer: the "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service" (7 April 1933) purged Jews and political opponents from the civil service, while the "Law Against the Formation of New Parties" (14 July 1933) outlawed rival political parties, ensuring that Germany was now a one-party state. Hitler also secured his own grip on power by having potential rival Ernst Röhm (head of the Sturmabteilung, SA or "brownshirts") killed, along with hundreds of other perceived opponents on the "Night of Long Knives" on 30 June 1934. Fulbrook, 59–61.

³⁴ Fulbrook, 60.

³⁵ Alan E. Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 8.

subsidized by subscriptions and occasional donations from wealthy patrons, fell victim to postwar inflation in Austria in 1921.³⁶ In 1924, musicologist Alfred Einstein lamented the absence of the traditional educated (*gebildete*) audience in concerts, noting that even those (presumably less educated) audiences who just came to concerts to be entertained were disappearing:

“The Public”—it doesn’t exist anymore. The war has already decimated the community of listeners, for whom good chamber or orchestral music was a necessity of life. A new class of “aficionados” has been raised, or rather attracted or pulled down, mainly by our opera singers. The best of that community, who never sat in the best seats anyway, are gradually being squeezed into the standing room, and finally out of the concert hall and the opera house altogether. They sit at home and brood about the procurement of necessities for the next day; their life has become devoid of art.³⁷

An article in the 1930 edition of *Melos*, a journal devoted to contemporary music, also attributed the decline of concert life to the decline of the middle class: “The crumbling away of the middle class and the social restructuring associated with it has, above all, undermined the old forms of musical life. The latter was based on the secure structure of a large-scale, bourgeois society... In

³⁶ Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 9; Gerald D. Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914–1924* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 535; and Karl Christian Führer, “German Cultural Life and the Crisis of National Identity during the Depression, 1929–1933,” *German Studies Review* 24, no. 3 (October 2001): 466. According to Storer, after the war the Austrian krone “depreciated even more rapidly than the German mark.” Storer, 102.

³⁷ All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. Alfred Einstein, “Die Not der deutschen Musiker und deutscher Musik,” *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 6, no. 1 (January 1924): 24–25: “‘Das Publikum’—es existiert nicht mehr. Schon der Krieg hat die Gemeinschaft der Zuhörer, denen gute Kammer- oder Orchestermusik Lebensbedürfnis war, dezimiert: eine neue Schicht von ‘Genießern’ ist hauptsächlich durch unsere Opernsänger und –sängerinnen heran- oder vielmehr herbei-, heruntergezogen worden. Die besten jener Gemeinschaft, die ohnedies nie auf den besten Sitzen saßen, sind allmählich auf die Stehplätze und endlich aus dem Konzertsaal, aus dem Opernhaus ganz hinausgedrängt worden, sie sitzen zuhause und brüten über der Beschaffung des Notwendigsten für den kommenden Tag, ihr Leben ist kunstleer geworden.”

general, the number of concerts has shrunk to a fraction of its earlier figures.”³⁸ Another article from the same year observed that “world-historical and economic catastrophes have caused a decided crisis in concert activities. The bourgeoisie as an ideological element was shattered.”³⁹

Along with the loss of support from bourgeois audiences, the establishment of the republic raised questions about the funding of musical institutions. The abolition of the monarchy had ended traditional court patronage; in Berlin, for example, the court opera became the state opera.⁴⁰ Ernst Roth, a music publisher at Universal Edition in Vienna, wrote of the effect of this switch from aristocratic to government (and thus taxpayer) support in his memoirs, noting that after “court operas became state or municipal undertakings” they soon became “the victim of the growing annual losses.”⁴¹ While the Reich Ministry of the Interior had a small portion of funds earmarked for musical institutions, the majority of funding for these groups fell under the jurisdiction of the different cities and states. The amount of funding thus varied widely across Germany, based on whether local and state officials were willing and/or able to support

³⁸ Hans Mersmann, Hans Schultze-Ritter, and Heinrich Strobel, “Die Situation in Deutschland,” *Melos* 9, no. 8/9 (August/September 1930): 348. “Die Abbröckelung des Mittelstandes und die damit verbundene soziale Umschichtung haben vor allem die alten Formen des Musiklebens untergraben. Diese beruhten auf der gesicherten Struktur einer breiten bürgerlichen Gesellschaft... In allgemeinen ist die Zahl der Konzerte auf einen Bruchteil des früheren Bestandes zusammengeschrumpft.”

³⁹ Walter Gronostay, “Neue Programmgestaltung oder Konzertbetrieb?” *Melos* 9, no. 4 (April 1930): 177. “Weltgeschichtliche und wirtschaftliche Katastrophen verursachten eine entscheidende Krise des Konzertbetriebes. Das Bürgertum als ideologischer Faktor wurde zertrümmert.”

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Janik, *Recomposing German Music: Politics and Musical Tradition in Cold War Berlin*, Studies in Central European Histories (Boston: Brill, 2005), 31. Gerald Feldman also notes that, “Both the opera and, to a very significant extent, the theater in prewar Germany had prospered thanks to the support of the royal and princely courts.” Feldman, 533.

⁴¹ Ernst Roth, *The Business of Music: Reflections of a Music Publisher* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 116.

musical organizations and theaters.⁴² Even with the desire to support cultural enterprises, inflation during the early 1920s often outstripped what little subsidies arts organizations did receive from the federal or local governments. For example, the Berlin Philharmonic received a 60,000 Mark subsidy for putting on a series of popular concerts with low ticket prices, but hyperinflation so negatively affected the orchestra's finances that a further 700,000 Mark subsidy had to be paid in November 1922.⁴³ The costs of maintaining new social welfare programs also forced cuts in subsidies for cultural institutions.⁴⁴ Moreover, it was hard to justify funding arts organizations when people were unemployed or starving. Music critic Paul Bekker specifically referred to this problem in his 1918 article "Art Comes After Bread":

Is it not obvious that, when cuts are made, when we have to think about regulating the provisions for invalids and surviving dependents and the payment of our present debts and of the reparations still to be imposed on us—and all of this in a time of the deepest economic downfall and enormously mounting costs of operation—is it not an obvious, almost ethical, demand that first and foremost, we must think about cutting back expenditures for artistic purposes?⁴⁵

The editor of *Die Weltbühne* echoed these sentiments, writing in 1922 that actors and other artists needed to realize that they "should not seek to be fed by pitifully impoverished people for

⁴² Pamela Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 9–10.

⁴³ Feldman, 535.

⁴⁴ Potter, *Most German*, 27; Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 9.

⁴⁵ Paul Bekker, "Die Kunst geht nach Brot," in *Paul Bekker: Kritische Zeitbilder* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1921), 212. "Und ist es nicht selbstverständlich, dass, wenn Abstriche gemacht werden, wenn wir an die Regelung der Invaliden- und Hinterbliebenenfürsorge, an die Bezahlung unserer bisherigen Schulden und der uns noch aufzuerlegenden Entschädigungen denken müssen—und die alles in einer Zeit tiefsten wirtschaftlichen Niederganges und ungeheuerlich anwachsender Betriebskosten—ist es nicht eine selbstverständliche, beinahe sittliche Forderung, dass wir da zu allererst an die Einschränkung der Ausgaben für künstlerische Zwecke denken müssen?"

their own sake, for the sake of their beautiful eyes, beautiful voices, beautiful legs.”⁴⁶ Public funding for the arts did increase during the years of stabilization, yet soon dried up after the Wall Street crash of 1929 in the face of mass unemployment and the need to maintain welfare payments.⁴⁷ Paradoxically, the Depression forced cultural institutions to become even more dependent on these subsidies because of declining ticket sales.⁴⁸

Making matters worse, the financial crises of the 1920s came at a time when art music was already facing increased competition from popular music and technologies such as film, the phonograph, and radio (discussed in Chapters Two and Three).⁴⁹ These new media offered a cheaper form of entertainment than traditional concerts, while popular music was arguably more accessible to a larger demographic.⁵⁰ Music publisher Henri Hinrichsen of the firm C. F. Peters referred to the negative effect of technology and popular music on his business in a letter to a friend in 1926, observing that “just like all the other German publishers, it has not been going well for the firm for the past year. For the first time since the war, the firm has completely gone into the red. And because the public prefers to visit cinemas, listen to the radio, and dance the Charleston and the blues, at the moment sales are downright dismal. Very little is being published.”⁵¹ Publisher Ernst Roth also recalled how the introduction of radio in the early 1920s

⁴⁶ Siegfried Jacobsohn, “Der Schauspielerstreik,” *Die Weltbühne* 18 (7 December 1922): 603. “Wer und was keinem Bedürfnis mehr dient, begehre nicht, um seiner selbst willen, um seiner schönen Augen, seiner schönen Stimme, seiner schönen Beinen willen, von einem jammervoll verelendeten Volke mitdurchgefüttert zu werden.”

⁴⁷ Between 1925/26 and the 1928/29 seasons, subsidies for theaters (which included opera houses) increased no less than 38.6 percent. Führer, “German Cultural Life,” 467.

⁴⁸ Führer, “German Cultural Life,” 468. Paul Bekker also believed the lack of subsidies contributed to the current “opera crisis.” Bekker, “Krise des Operntheaters,” *Musik und Gesellschaft* 1 (1931): 206–209.

⁴⁹ Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 14–15.

⁵⁰ Potter, *Most German*, 26; Janik, 32.

⁵¹ Henri Hinrichsen to Elisabeth Lessing, 25 May 1926, quoted in Erika Bucholtz, *Henri Hinrichsen und der Musikverlag C. F. Peters: Deutsch-jüdisches Bürgertum in Leipzig von 1891*

“struck the music trade a heavy blow. The still imperfect but much-improved gramophone record was another contributory factor.”⁵² The introduction of an even newer technology—sound film—in 1929 (the same year as the Wall Street crash) only exacerbated the situation by putting musicians who played in movie houses out of work.⁵³

Together, these factors negatively impacted musical organizations. Reduced budgets frequently forced them to alter their programming, such as staging smaller works requiring fewer personnel.⁵⁴ Opera companies and orchestras also hesitated to program newer works, as this meant having to pay for new parts as well as royalties, not to mention new opera sets, costumes, and increased rehearsal time. Thus, many groups and performing musicians turned to older music no longer under copyright.⁵⁵ Rudolf Cahn-Speyer in 1921, for instance, referred to “societies and artists, who, wanting to save on the performance fees and cost of materials, only seldom, or never, care to take on works that require royalties.”⁵⁶ This reluctance to perform newer works also stemmed from a desire to play it safe by programming standard repertoire from the canon, rather than potentially risk alienating audiences with modern music.⁵⁷ Indeed, critic Heinrich

bis 1938 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 91. “Dem [Leipziger Buchverlag] wie dem gesamten deutschen Verlag geht es seit einem Jahr nicht gut; er hat sich in der ersten Zeit nach dem Kriege total ausgegeben, und da das Publikum es vorzieht, Kinos zu besuchen, Radio zu hören und Charleston und Blues zu tanzen, ist der Absatz augenblicklich geradezu trostlos. Es wird sehr wenig publiziert.”

⁵² Roth, 85.

⁵³ Janik, 59. An article from 1931 also singles out sound film and the radio as taking away audiences from classical music. “Musik im Not,” *Zeitschrift für Instrumentenbau* 52, no. 11 (1 March 1932): 217.

⁵⁴ Führer, “German Cultural Life,” 468.

⁵⁵ Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 15.

⁵⁶ Rudolf Cahn-Speyer, “Was kann der Staat für das notleidende Musikleben tun?” *Melos* 2, no. 1 (January 1921): 18. “[D]ie Vereine und Künstler, die bisher zur Ersparnis der Aufführungsgebühren und Materialkosten nur selten oder gar nicht zu Aufführungen tantièmepflichtiger Kompositionen zu schreiten pflegten...”

⁵⁷ Führer, “German Cultural Life,” 469. Führer notes that commissions for new scores and the programming of modern operas “dropped dramatically” as directors turned to standard

Strobel claimed that the 1931 season was a “frenzy of the classics” (*Klassikertaumel*) for “in these difficult times, it is said, the public is enticed only with its favorites. Even the maverick [Otto] Klemperer conducted only Beethoven, Brahms, and Bruckner... In order to save art, one jettisoned modern music overnight.”⁵⁸ Lastly, organizations frequently had to shorten their seasons, especially after the 1929 crash.⁵⁹ A *New York Times* article from 1930, for example, observed that “the opera crisis in Germany and Central Europe... has curtailed partly or totally the activities of many stages, among them those at Breslau, Frankfort [*sic*], Nürnberg, Plauen, Magdeburg, Mainz, Stettin, Duisburg, and Essen,” attributing the crisis to “political and economic conditions and by the change in taste; and according to still others, because of the radio and sound-film.”⁶⁰ The Depression even forced some organizations to close their doors altogether, such as the Koblenz Orchestra and the Kroll Opera in Berlin.⁶¹

These cost-cutting measures caused severe under- or unemployment among musicians, especially after 1929. Between 1931 and 1932, orchestras across Germany made deep personnel cuts; the following season, the city of Düsseldorf laid off 42 of its 105 musicians, the city

works or operettas. See also Klaus-Dieter Krabiel, “Das *Lehrstück* von Brecht und Hindemith: Von der Geburt eines Genres aus dem Geist der ‘Gebrauchsmusik,’” *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 24 (1995): 149.

⁵⁸ Heinrich Strobel, “Die Krisensaison geht zu Ende,” *Melos* 11, no. 5/6 (May/June 1932): 202. “In diesen schweren Zeiten so hieß es, ist das Publikum nur mit seinen Lieblingen anzulocken. Selbst der außenseiterische Klemperer dirigierte nur Beethoven, Brahms und Bruckner... Unter der Devise: rettet die Kunst, hat man über Nacht die modernen Musiker ausgeschifft.”

⁵⁹ Führer, “German Cultural Life,” 466–468; Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 16. Theaters often just got rid of opera altogether, as it was more expensive to produce than plays.

⁶⁰ “German Opera Plans,” *New York Times*, 14 Dec. 1930.

⁶¹ Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 14; Alexander J. Fisher, “Paul Hindemith, Gottfried Benn, and the Defense of the Autonomy of Art in the Late Weimar Republic” *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 28 (1999): 13. See also Robert Hernried’s article about orchestras shutting down in the Rheinland: “Frontangriff gegen die Kulturorchester und Theaterplanwirtschaft durch Notverordnung?” *Zeitschrift für Musik* 98, no. 10 (October 1931): 863–866.

orchestra in Aachen shrunk from 60 to 52, and the orchestra in Dortmund from 94 to 56.⁶²

According to historian Karl Christian Führer, 1,000 of the 6,000 members of German orchestras lost their jobs in 1931, joining the leagues of other unemployed professional musicians and music teachers.⁶³ One article from 1931 claimed that of the 60,000 professional musicians in Germany, two-thirds (40,000) were unemployed.⁶⁴

For composers and their publishing houses, the tendency of musical organizations to program older, more familiar works in order to attract audiences and avoid paying royalties translated into financial loss. Irene Lawson-Hinrichsen referred to this vicious cycle in her monograph on her family's publishing firm, C. F. Peters in Leipzig, as follows:

Little new music would be performed, and if the new works published by C.F. Peters were not performed, there would be a loss of performing and copyright fees as well as a loss of sales. There would be no way of recouping the investment that these works had entailed in their production, and hence there would be no income to finance new publications.⁶⁵

In response, the firm opened a rental department in 1924 for orchestral music, lending music out at a lower cost than the purchasing price. The situation was particularly grim for opera composers, Hindemith among them. Hans Heinsheimer, writing for the Austrian new music journal *Musikblätter des Anbruch* in 1932, attributed the lack of new theater works to the economic crisis:

⁶² Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 14.

⁶³ Führer, "German Cultural Life," 468.

⁶⁴ "Musik im Not," 218. "Die Musikerschaft Deutschlands umfasst 60,000 Berufsmusiker, davon sind 2/3, d. h. 40,000, ohne Arbeit." For a wider picture, in June 1933, the musical instrument and toy industry had a 55.1 percent rate of unemployment, while entertainment and recreation had 40.9 percent. For the printing and publishing industries, Germany had 27.1 percent unemployment, compared with the UK's 9.4 percent. Balderston, 81.

⁶⁵ Irene Lawford-Hinrichsen, *Music Publishing and Patronage: C. F. Peters, 1800 to the Holocaust* (Kenton: Edition Press, 2000), 170–171.

The relationship between the crisis in the theaters and production reveals itself in the fact that a whole slew of musicians have completely distanced themselves from theatrical productions, in particular Paul Hindemith, Ernst Toch, Igor Stravinsky, and others. It is extremely telling that the publishing firm Schott, one of the most active and lively marketers of stage works, has not published a single new opera during the season that is now coming to an end.”⁶⁶

Kultur in Crisis

Music journalists frequently highlighted the bad economic situation and its effect on musicians and musical life throughout the duration of the republic, with articles such as “The Plight of the Orchestral Musician,” “The Need of the Concert Orchestra,” “Economic Questions and Organization of Music Educators,” “Coffers and Art,” and “The Plight of German Musicians and German Music.”⁶⁷ While many of these authors spoke of the tangible effects of the economic crises, others expressed more existential fears about the future of German concert life—and even of German music itself. Articles like “Does Opera Have a Future?” or “The End of Concert Life?” were part of a larger wave that pronounced a crisis in the arts.⁶⁸ Authors gave a variety of interrelated reasons: the closing of theaters, lack of new music programming, threats of popular music and technology, competition from sports, and the growing working class.⁶⁹ Rudolf Cahn-

⁶⁶ Hans Heinsheimer, “Zeitbild aus Verlagskatalogen,” *Anbruch* 14, no. 4 (April/May 1932): 73. “Wir sehen, dass die Wechselwirkung zwischen Theaterkrise und Produktion sich vor allem so zu erkennen gibt, dass eine ganze Reihe von Musikern sich überhaupt von der theatralischen Produktion entfernt, so insbesondere Paul Hindemith, Ernst Toch, Igor Stravinsky und andere. Es ist ungeheuer interessant, dass der Verlag Schott, einer der regsten und lebendigsten Bühnenvertriebe, in der zu Ende gehenden Spielzeit nicht ein einziges neues Opernwerk herausgebracht hat.”

⁶⁷ Lorenz Höber, “Die Notlage der Orchestermusiker,” *Melos* 1, no. 7 (1920): 176–177; Paul Bekker, “Kasse und Kunst,” *Anbruch* 14, no. 2/3 (Feb/March 1932): 31–37; and Arnold Ebel, “Wirtschaftsfragen und Organisation der Musikerzieher,” *Melos* (1930): 214–218.

⁶⁸ Arnold Schoenberg, “Gibt es eine Krise der Opera?” *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 8, no. 5 (May 1926): 209; Bekker, “Krise des Operntheaters,” 206–209; Adolf Weissmann, “Weltkrise und Kunstkrise,” *Melos* 2 (1921): 147–149; Heinrich Strobel, “Krise der Oper—Krise der Kritik,” *Melos* 9, no. 4 (April 1930): 191–193.

⁶⁹ Krabiell, 149.

Speyer, for one, sounded the alarm in his 1920 article, “The Distress of Concert Orchestras and the Development of Symphonic Music.” Warning that “sooner or later our orchestras will cease to exist,” as organizations could no longer keep up with salaries and other expenses, he expressed concern that “we face a grave threat to our artistic development... how can a generation of composers who have grown up without contact to an orchestra understand how to write for the orchestra?”⁷⁰

These concerns about the end of concert life, and thus the end of German musical progress, reflected larger fears about national identity and the future of the nation. German cultural achievements and *Kultur* (culture) were strongly linked with German national identity, uniting Germans of all social classes.⁷¹ Although its definition is difficult to pin down, the term *Kultur* referred to the values or essence of the German people, comprising such traits as honesty, simplicity, authenticity, and spirituality. *Kultur* was often contrasted with *Zivilisation* (usually embodied by the French or English), which encompassed superficiality, amorality, and artifice. Music in particular was associated with Germanness. Conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler, for

⁷⁰ Rudolf Cahn-Speyer, “Die Not der Konzertorchester und die Entwicklung der symphonischen Musik,” *Melos* 1, no. 5 (April 1920): 117–118. “Es muss damit gerechnet werden, dass unsere Konzertorchester über kurz oder lang aufhören werden zu bestehen... Der Punkt dürfte erreicht sein, an welchem die Städte oder die Vereine, von denen die fest angestellten Orchester unterhalten werden, diese Kosten nicht mehr tragen, bzw. den Steuerzahlern nicht mehr aufbürden können, und die Auflösung der Orchester wird die Folge sein... Wir stehen also vor einer geradezu lebensgefährlichen Bedrohung unserer Kunstentwicklung... Und wie sollte wohl eine Generation von Komponisten, die ohne Kontakt mit dem Orchester aufgewachsen ist, auf einmal wieder für Orchester zu schreiben verstehen?”

⁷¹ Führer, “German Cultural Life,” 472. See also Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, “Germans as the ‘People of Music’: Genealogy of and Identity,” in *Music & German National Identity*, ed. Applegate and Potter (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 1–35. In the 1923 speech “Die Not der Geistigen Arbeiter” (The Distress of Intellectual Workers), sociologist Alfred Weber stated that, because of the inflation and resulting emphasis on industry and production, German cultural life would become an “appendage” of the economic sphere. Cited in Widdig, 187.

instance, described music in 1932 as “the most original and characteristic product of the Germans,” one which could “create awareness of the feeling of their togetherness, of their community.”⁷² For Furtwängler, protecting German musical life from decline was “virtually an obligation of cultural self-preservation in the highest sense.”⁷³ A member of the Berlin Philharmonic also called on the state and cities to fund orchestras because “music is the art of the people. Supporting our good orchestras means supporting music, an important part of German culture.”⁷⁴ Germany’s musical prowess was one last source of national pride for a country who had lost a war and was experiencing economic, social, and political turmoil. Thus, the perceived crisis in music was yet another source of shame, contributing to the overall sense of decline in values, tradition, and German culture.⁷⁵

The preoccupation with the decline of musical life also mirrored musicians’ fears regarding their status in German society.⁷⁶ Romantic ideals considered the performer as an

⁷² Wilhelm Furtwängler, “Die Klassiker in der Musikkrisis. Rede beim Jubiläum der Berliner Philharmonie 1932,” in *Ton und Wort: Aufsätze und Vorträge, 1918 bis 1954* (Wiesbaden: F. A. Brockhaus, 1958), 60–61. “Auch was die Musik gerade für die deutsche Nation bedeutet, wie sie, das originalste und eigentümlichste Produkt der Deutschen, mehr als jede andere Kunst berufen ist, diesen das Gefühl ihrer Zusammengehörigkeit, ihrer Gemeinschaft immer wieder von neuem zum Bewusstsein zu bringen...”

⁷³ Furtwängler, “Die Klassiker in der Musikkrisis,” 61. “[G]erade eine Pflicht kultureller Selbsterhaltung im höchsten Sinne sei, das deutsche Musikleben vor dem Niedergang zu schützen...”

⁷⁴ Höber, 177. “Die Musik ist die Kunst des Volkes. Unsere guten Orchester fördern, heißt die Musik, diesen wichtigen Teil deutscher Kultur fördern.”

⁷⁵ Führer, “German Cultural Life,” 472–473; Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 19. The shutdown of local theaters was damaging to civic pride in many smaller towns, as well as an economic blow to local businesses (restaurants, bars, retailers) that benefitted from having a reputable *Stadttheater* nearby.

⁷⁶ Martin J. Newhouse has also remarked on these tensions in the late nineteenth century, as orchestral musicians had to present themselves as artisans, rather than artists, in order to gain the protections and benefits given to workers and craftsmen under the German Industrial Code. Newhouse, “Artists, Artisans, or Workers? Orchestral Musicians in the German Empire” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1979).

interpretive artist, a practitioner of the highest form of art. Yet classically trained musicians now had to work jobs that they considered beneath them.⁷⁷ Personal accounts of musicians' misery and underemployment often appeared in musical journals, such as the story of a violinist reduced to building subways during the day while gigging at dance halls at night, or the seventy-year-old pianist "forced" to play jazz while fearing his advanced age and appearance could cost him his job, all "without savings, without a pension, without the prospect of finding a new position..."⁷⁸ Alfred Einstein spoke of music students compelled to play in movie theaters and coffee houses to make ends meet, "shattering" their idealism,⁷⁹ while another musician claimed that the quality of German orchestras was under threat because musicians could make more money playing in coffee houses, movie theaters, and bars—all without the inconvenience of rehearsals.⁸⁰

As artists who created music (*schaffende Künstler*) as opposed to merely reproducing it (*nachschaffende Künstler*), composers had even farther to fall from the top of the artistic hierarchy.⁸¹ The romantic myth of the isolated composer, living only for his art, still held

⁷⁷ Führer, "German Cultural Life," 468.

⁷⁸ Kurt Wachsmann, "Zur Situation des Berufsmusikers: Selbstbericht eines Orchestermusikers," *Musik und Gesellschaft* 1 (1930/31): 254–255; "Jazzspiel und Arbeitslosigkeit," *Musik und Gesellschaft* 1 (1930/31): 255–256.

⁷⁹ Einstein, "Die Not der deutschen Musiker," 25. "In Kino und Kaffeehaus werden nachts die Existenzmittel für den Tag erworben, der Heroismus, Idealismus vieler solcher Fälle ist ebenso erschütternd, wie die Gleichgültigkeit, Abstumpfung, Versumpfung anderer..."

⁸⁰ Höber, 176. "Fast in jedem Kaffeehaus, im Kino, in Bars und Dielen werden Musiker verlangt. Die Bezahlung dort ist im Verhältnis zu der der großen Orchester ungleich besser, die Anforderungen dagegen auf musikalischem wie technischem Gebiet sind geringer. Die Proben, den Orchesterdienst so erschweren, fallen ganz weg...Durch das ungesunde Verhältnis, dass der Orchestermusiker durchschnittlich bedeutend weniger als der Ensemblesmusiker verdient, ist in erster Linie die Qualität der Orchester gefährdet."

⁸¹ Taruskin has referred to the "intransigent pecking order that placed the composer at the top of a social hierarchy" as one of the tenets of romanticism. Taruskin, *Early Twentieth Century*, 352.

considerable sway, no matter how unrealistic it was (or had been).⁸² As one writer noted in 1931:

“In contrast to the majority of other professions, those who make their living in music think that their occupation is not just a source of income; rather, they cling to their profession for idealistic and artistic reasons.”⁸³ Yet Alfred Einstein illustrated how low composers had fallen by 1924:

The composers have it the worst. With the exception of five or six big names, no German composer even before the war was able live on the revenue from his art. The others managed to be productive through side jobs, which at least had some connection to music and which, as a side job, didn't demoralize and grind down the entire person. Today I know creative musicians [composers] of high regard who, crushed in a soul-killing profession (mostly in the banking industry), haven't written a note for a year and a day. But why should they? No stage would take on a creation to bring it into the world, no conductor would perform it, no singer would sing it, and above all, no publisher would recommend it for publishing: the “success” would not even be worth the cost of manuscript paper, the use of ink, and the postage of required letters and mailings.⁸⁴

Because of the economic crisis, as well as increased competition from new media and popular music, many composers would pursue new ways of attracting a mass audience, such as writing for communal music-making, writing in more popular styles, and directly engaging with new

⁸² Claire Taylor-Jay, *The Artist-Operas of Pfitzner, Krenek and Hindemith: Politics and the Ideology of the Artist* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 3.

⁸³ “Musik in Not,” 218. “Im Gegensatz zu der Mehrzahl anderer Berufe betrachten diejenigen, die in der Musik ihre Existenz finden, ihre Tätigkeit nicht nur als Quelle ihres Einkommens, sondern sie hängen an ihrem Beruf auch aus ideellen und künstlerischen Neigungen.”

⁸⁴ Alfred Einstein, “Die Not der deutschen Musiker,” 26. “Am schlimmsten daran ist der Schaffende. Mit Ausnahme von fünf oder sechs Namensträgern hat ja schon vor dem Kriege kein deutscher Komponist von dem Ertrag seiner Kunst leben können. Die anderen haben die Möglichkeit zur Produktion sich durch Nebenerwerb gewonnen, der aber immerhin in irgend einer Beziehung zur Musik stand, der als Nebenerwerb nicht den ganzen Menschen zermürbte und zerrieb. Heute kenne ich schaffende Musiker hohen Ranges, die, zermalmt in einem geisttötenden Beruf, meist im Bankgewerbe, seit Jahr und Tag keine Note mehr geschrieben haben. Und wozu auch? Keine Bühne hätte sich der etwa zur Welt gebrachten Schöpfung angenommen, kein Orchesterdirigent sie aufgeführt, kein Sänger sie gesungen, und vor allem kein Verleger sie zum Druck befördert: der ‘Erfolg’ hätte nicht einmal den Kauf des Notenpapiers, den Verbrauch der Tinte, das Porto der notwendigen Briefe und Sendungen gelohnt.”

media (discussed in the following chapters). Even with this practical approach, however, long-held beliefs about the autonomy of art and the artist would prove hard to abandon, resulting in a continual tension between composers coming to terms with modern culture and clinging to their sense of artistic mission.⁸⁵

Launching a Career: Hindemith and the Economics of Composition

It was during these turbulent postwar years that Hindemith launched his compositional career. Hindemith was born in Hanau on 16 November 1895 to the house painter Robert Rudolf Hindemith and his wife, Marie Sophie Warnecke. Because of the family's poverty, Hindemith began performing for money at a young age, as Robert Rudolf forced him and his two siblings, sister Toni and brother Rudolf, to learn an instrument and perform around Silesia as the "Frankfurt Children's Trio" (Frankfurter Kindertrio).⁸⁶ When he was 13 years old, Hindemith received a stipend to attend Hoch's Conservatory of Music in Frankfurt, studying violin with Adolph Rebner. In 1912, he began studying counterpoint and composition with Arnold Mendelssohn, followed by Bernhard Sekles. During this time, he helped support the family with his playing, performing with his younger brother, a cellist, at cinemas and in taverns.⁸⁷ Hindemith also began earning money as an orchestral musician in 1913, performing in the orchestra of the Frankfurt New Theater, as well as with a spa orchestra at resorts in Switzerland in the summers of 1913 and 1914. In June 1915, he gave up his scholarship at the Hoch

⁸⁵ Bernd Widdig speaks of the "traumatic experience" of intellectuals when "inflation called the very existence and worth of restricted cultural production [ie. high art] into question." Widdig, 187. See also Jeremy Richard Zima, "The Economics and Aesthetics of the Early Twentieth-Century German Artist-Opera" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2016).

⁸⁶ "Frankfurt Children's Trio," Hindemith-Institut, accessed 18 June 2018, <https://www.hindemith.info/en/life-work/biography/1895-1914/>. Various scholars have suggested that Robert Rudolf forced to children to learn music out of his own frustrated desire to be a musician.

⁸⁷ Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 37.

Conservatory in order to join the first violin section of the Frankfurt Opera orchestra, eventually becoming concertmaster that September with a guaranteed position for two years. Robert Rudolf's enlistment in the army around the same time likely prompted this move, as Hindemith now became the family breadwinner.⁸⁸ Hindemith himself was called up for service in August 1917 and served in a military band during the last year of the war. Although he had initially greeted the outbreak of war with enthusiasm and patriotism, after experiencing the war first hand, including standing guard at the trenches and surviving bombing attacks, he became cynical and angry at the war effort and the "warmongers."⁸⁹ He came through physically unscathed, if also profoundly disillusioned by the experience.

These experiences as a working musician before the war may have prepared him for the challenges of the 1920s and 1930s. Indeed, Hindemith's situation at the beginning of the Weimar Republic was quite favorable in comparison to that of many of his fellow musicians. After his release from military service, he returned to his prewar position as concertmaster of the Frankfurt Opera orchestra. As a member of the orchestra, Hindemith was now a civil servant, which secured him a salary, benefits, and job security.⁹⁰ Yet money was tight despite this steady employment, especially since Hindemith was permanently responsible for supporting his mother and sister Toni after his father's death in the war in 1915.⁹¹ In order to supplement his income, he took a variety of side jobs, such as teaching privately, playing chamber music and solo music

⁸⁸ Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 40. Hindemith continued to attend the conservatory until 1917.

⁸⁹ Hindemith's war diary has been published as "Notizen zu meinen *Feldzugs-Erinnerungen*," *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 18 (1989): 55–159.

⁹⁰ Steinweis describes orchestral musicians as "a kind of aristocracy within the German music world. As civil servants, they enjoyed enviable pay scales, benefit packages, and job security." Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 11.

⁹¹ Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 59.

me) a considerable sum each year.”⁹³ Hindemith quit the Rebner quartet in 1921 and soon co-founded the Amar Quartet (named after the first violinist, Licco Amar) the following year, which championed music by contemporary composers.⁹⁴ The quartet also kept up a demanding concert schedule, playing over 500 concerts between 1921 and 1929 and touring Denmark, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union.⁹⁵

While juggling this frenetic teaching and performing schedule, Hindemith also attempted to establish himself as a composer. Acting on the advice of his former composition teacher Bernhard Sekles, he approached the Mainz music publishing firm Schott und Söhne in June 1919, following a successful performance of his works at a concert sponsored by the Frankfurt Society for Theater and Musical Culture.⁹⁶ Schott was an old and reputable firm best known for publishing Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, as well as Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger*, *Ring* cycle, and *Parsifal*.⁹⁷ By 1919, however, the Wagner copyright had run out and the firm was in search of new composers.⁹⁸ Under the leadership of brothers Ludwig and Willy Strecker,⁹⁹ Schott und Söhne would aggressively expand their catalog in the direction of contemporary music,

⁹³ Hindemith to Carl Schmidt, 23 August 1919, in Skelton, *Letters*, 26.

⁹⁴ The Amar quartet was naturally a vehicle for his own compositions but also performed or premiered works by Bartók, Casella, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Webern, and Pfitzner, among others.

⁹⁵ Hindemith remained in the quartet until 1929. “Repertoire,” Hindemith-Institut, accessed 9 June 2018, <http://www.hindemith.info/en/life-work/biography/1918-1927/work/amar-quartet-repertoire/>.

⁹⁶ Sekles, and a certain Herr Fuchs, helped pave the way for Hindemith by both recommending Hindemith and inviting Ludwig Strecker, Sr. to the June 2 concert.

⁹⁷ The Schott firm was established in Mainz in 1770 by clarinetist and engraver Bernhard Schott.

⁹⁸ Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 58.

⁹⁹ With no descendants in the Schott family, the firm passed to the privy councilor Ludwig Strecker (1853-1943) in 1874. Strecker’s sons Ludwig (1883-1978) and Willy (1884-1958) both entered the firm in 1909, along with Strecker’s son-in-law, Heinz Schneider-Schott (1906-88).

publishing works by Stravinsky, Carl Orff, Erich Korngold, Kurt Weill, Werner Egk, Karl Amadeus Hartmann, and Wolfgang Fortner.¹⁰⁰ The firm accepted Hindemith's String Quartet in F Minor, op. 10 for publication, beginning a partnership (and eventually friendship) with Hindemith that would last for the rest of the composer's life.¹⁰¹

The correspondence between Hindemith and Ludwig and Willy Strecker throughout the 1920s and early 1930s provides a firsthand account of the effects of the turbulent economy on music production and consumption. For Hindemith, the inflation years drove up the costs of paper and other materials necessary for composing music. Writing to a friend in 1919, for example, he blamed his silence on the cost of paper, joking that, "I have a growing horror of words through all my dealings with music paper."¹⁰² Almost three years later, the situation was even worse, as he complained to Schott:

Couldn't you give me something higher for the pieces and, as with my earlier things, grant me a share of the profits from the 2nd printing on? For me, composing is now also tied up with large expenses (unfortunately, with the bad times, I've been forced to learn to crunch numbers!); the cello sonata and the new quartet, for example, recently cost me almost 2,000 Marks in copying fees for score & parts (and that's not even expensive). If I were to calculate the more profitable activities I could secure in the time it takes me to write—giving lessons, etc. (sooner or later I'll have to anyway), I would have to declare bankruptcy today. That's not a reproof against you, but I can't always be forking over

¹⁰⁰ *Gedruckte Musik: 225 Jahre Musikverlag Schott in Mainz* (Mainz: Gutenberg Museum, 1995), 40. It was Willy's contact with Stravinsky that launched the firm's push for modern music, with the 1908 publishing of Stravinsky's *Feu d'artifice* (Fireworks) and later publications of *Firebird*, the Violin Concerto, and other works.

¹⁰¹ Hindemith sent the firm a string quartet, piano quintet, two sonatas for violin and piano, and a sonata for viola and piano, as well as a (positive) review of the concert, asking that if only one work could be published, that it be the quartet, since he expected it would be played a lot in the coming season by the Rebner Quartet. Hindemith to Schott, 16 June 1919. All correspondence between Hindemith and his publishers, Willy and Ludwig Strecker, are from the Paul Hindemith—Schott correspondence files held at the Hindemith-Institut unless otherwise noted.

¹⁰² Hindemith to Carl Schmidt, 23 August 1919, in Skelton, *Letters*, 26.

money. With my slowly trickling fame I can't even keep myself in music paper (Oh God—one Mark per sheet. Now I'll only write duets for two violins).¹⁰³

He even made his remarks public, sarcastically noting in an autobiographical statement for the 1922 Donaueschingen Chamber Music Festival published in the *Neue Musik-Zeitung*: “As a composer I’ve mostly written things that I don’t like anymore: Chamber music in various arrangements, songs, and things for piano. Also three one-act operas, that will probably remain the only ones [I write]; due to the constant rising cost of manuscript paper, only small scores can still be written.”¹⁰⁴

Hindemith’s letters also reveal the internal conflict many composers faced: aspiring to the ideal of the independent, divinely inspired *Tonkünstler* creating music for its own sake, but forced to face the realities of composing in a rapidly changing, modern democratic society. This contradicts the typical portrayal of Hindemith as an anti-romantic, down-to-earth, practical musician, cobbling together music like an artisan “unburdened by grandiose thoughts of self-

¹⁰³ Hindemith to Schott, end of February 1922. “Können Sie mir die Stücke nicht etwas höher anrechnen und mir, wie bei den ersten Sachen, einen Gewinnanteil von der 2. Auflage an einräumen? Für mich ist die Komponiererei jetzt auch mit großen Kosten verbunden (leider bin ich durch die schlechten Zeiten gezwungen, ein wenig rechnen zu lernen!); die Cellosnate und das neue Quartett haben mir neulich z.B. fast 2000 MK Kopistenhonorare für Part. & Stimmen verursacht (das ist nicht einmal teuer). Wenn ich noch berechnen wollte, dass ich in der Zeit, in der ich schreibe, einträglichere Beschäftigungen ergreifen könnte—Stunden gebe etc; über kurz oder lang muss ich es ohnehin—müsste ich noch heute meinen Bankerott anmelden. Das ist kein Vorwurf für Sie; ich kann aber doch nicht immerzu Geld drauflegen. Von dem langsam tröpfelnden Ruhm kann ich mir noch nicht einmal das Notenpapier kaufen (O Gott—der Bogen eine Mark, ich scheibe nur noch Duette für zwei Geigen).”

¹⁰⁴ Hindemith, “Paul Hindemith,” *Neue Musik-Zeitung* 43, no. 20 (1922): 329. “Als Komponist habe ich meist Stücke geschrieben, die mir nicht mehr gefallen: Kammermusik in den verschiedensten Besetzungen, Lieder und Klaviersachen. Auch drei einaktige Opern, die wahrscheinlich die einzigen bleiben werden, da infolge der fortwährenden Preissteigerung auf dem Notenpapiermarkt nur noch kleine Partituren geschrieben werden können.”

expression.”¹⁰⁵ Yet the young Hindemith was thoroughly steeped in romantic notions;¹⁰⁶ in a letter to his friend Emmy Ronnefeldt in 1917, for example, Hindemith referred to the necessity of inspiration and artistic autonomy, complaining that his teachers at the conservatory had turned their art:

into mere craft (*Handwerk*)... One always tries to capture on miserable paper the sweetest kisses of Frau Musica. And when one thinks one has conjured up a reflection of such bliss, then these cabbage heads always hear notes, bars, dynamics, forms, and other such nonsense instead of music! Music—our music is lacking! And I always want only to make music. I don’t care if people like it or not—if only it’s genuine and true.”¹⁰⁷

He clarified his position further, telling Emmy that “incidentally, regarding ‘craftsmanlike’ (*handwerksmäßig*)—you are confusing that with ‘technique’ (*Technik*). Technique pertains to all art. Without technique, no art... And until one has mastered technique to the extent that one can write down everything one feels in one’s heart, a lot of water will flow down the Main.”¹⁰⁸ He reaffirmed these ideals in a letter to Emmy’s mother, noting that despite criticism from his composition teachers at the conservatory, “I learned something from it all: just to keep on writing as is necessary; to never retreat; to make no concessions. It is difficult, because it means many

¹⁰⁵ Morgan, 225. See also Ross, 182–183.

¹⁰⁶ As Skelton has observed, Hindemith “was basically still a romantic... in his belief in the validity of inspiration.” Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 51.

¹⁰⁷ Hindemith to Emmy Ronnefeldt, May 1917, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 60. “[I]hre ganze Kunst schon viel zu sehr Handwerk geworden ist... Immer bemüht man sich die süßesten Küsse der Frau Musika aufs armselige Notenpapier zu bannen. Und wenn man glaubt, man hat den Widerschein aller Seligkeit hingezaubert, dann hören die Krautköpfe immer wieder Töne, Takte, Dynamik, Formen und sonstiges Gesums statt Musik! Musik, die fehlt unserer Musik! Und ich will immer nur Musik machen. Ganz Wurscht, ob sie einem Menschen gefällt. Wenn sie nur wahr und echt ist...” See also his letter to Ronnefeldt from June 1917, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 65.

¹⁰⁸ Hindemith to Emmy Ronnefeldt, June 1917, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 65: “Übrigens: von wegen—‘handwerksmäßig.’ Du verwechselst das mit ‘Technik.’ Zu jeder Kunst gehört Technik. Ohne Technik kein Kunstwerk... Und bis man soweit die Technik in der Hand hat, dass man ganz schreiben kann, wie’s einem ums Herz ist, kann viel Wasser den Main hinabfließen.”

people will not go along with it; but it doesn't matter, as long as a few loyal souls remain who will go along until the end!"¹⁰⁹

Of course, these sentiments can be understood (and dismissed) as merely youthful outbursts in response to his teachers' critiques of his compositions. Another sign of Hindemith's continuing adherence to nineteenth-century musical values, however, was his creation (together with Reinhold Merten) of a "Community for Music" (*Gemeinschaft für Musik*) in Frankfurt in 1922.¹¹⁰ Scholars have typically framed this organization as an early manifestation of his eventual involvement in community music making (*Gemeinschaftsmusik*) or of his attempts to bridge the audience-composer gap.¹¹¹ Gerd Sannemüller, for example, states that it was "Hindemith's regular music educational activities (in connection with the efforts for a reshaping of musical life) that led to the creation of this (admittedly short-lived) community."¹¹² At first glance, Hindemith's and Merten's description of the aims of the group in their invitation to the inaugural concert (fig. 1.2) seems to confirm this view, as they are "convinced that the concert in its present form is an institution that must be fought, and we try to once again establish the

¹⁰⁹ Hindemith to Frau Ronnefeldt, 21 March 1918, in "Jugendbriefe von Paul Hindemith aus den Jahren 1916-1919," *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 2 (1972): 199–200. "Ich habe doch wieder etwas dabei gelernt: Nur stets schreiben, wie es nötig es; nie nachgeben; keine Konzessionen machen. Das ist schwer, weil Viele dann nicht mehr mitgehen; aber das tut nichts. Um diese ist es nicht schade; wenn nur ein paar Getreue bleiben, die bis zum Ende mitgehen!"

¹¹⁰ Reinhold Merten was the *répétiteur* (coach for opera singers) of the Frankfurt Opera.

¹¹¹ A possible reason for this belief is the word "Gemeinschaft," which Hindemith later uses to describe his works for amateurs (*Gemeinschaftsmusik*).

¹¹² Gerd Sannemüller, introduction to *Sing- und Spielmusik I*, vol. 8, no. 1 of *Paul Hindemith: Sämtliche Werke*, eds. Ludwig Finscher and Giselher Schubert (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1975–), ix. "Die im inneren Zusammenhang mit dem Bemühen um Neuordnung des Musiklebens stehenden musikerzieherischen Aktivitäten Hindemiths traten bereits im Sommer 1922 hervor und führten—gemeinsam mit Reinhold Merten, dem Korrepetitor an der Frankfurter Oper—zur Gründung einer allerdings nur kurzlebigen *Gemeinschaft für Musik*..." See also Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 67.

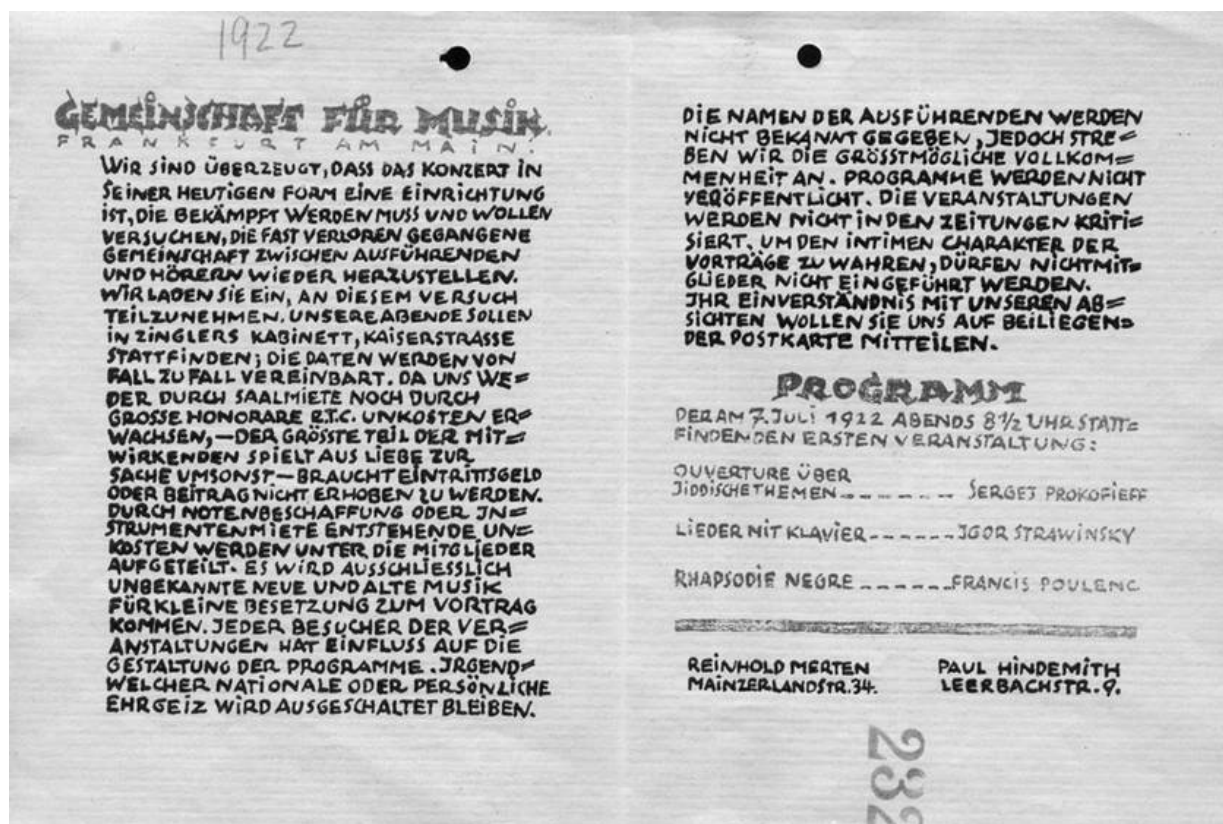


Figure 1.2. Invitation and program for the Gemeinschaft für Musik. “One-Act Operas,” Hindemith-Institut, accessed 6 March 2020, <http://www.hindemith.info/en/life-work/biography/1918-1927/work/one-act-operas/>.

almost-lost community between performers and listeners.”¹¹³ The rest of the invitation/manifesto, however, demonstrates that Hindemith’s “Community” has much more in common with Schoenberg’s more famous Society for Private Musical Performances and its mission “to give artists and music-lovers a real and exact knowledge of modern music.”¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Merten and Hindemith, “Gemeinschaft für Musik,” 1922. “Wir sind überzeugt, dass das Konzert in seiner heutigen Form eine Einrichtung ist, die bekämpft werden muss und wollen versuchen, die fast verloren gegangene Gemeinschaft zwischen Ausführenden und Hörern wieder herzustellen.”

¹¹⁴ Alban Berg, “Society for Private Musical Performances in Vienna. A Statement of Aims,” in *Music Since 1900*, 5th ed., ed. by Nicholas Slonimsky (New York: Schirmer Books, 1994), 1024. Hindemith’s group was probably based on conductor Hermann Scherchen’s “New Music Society” [*Neue Musikgesellschaft*], which was founded in 1919 in Berlin and modeled on Schoenberg’s group. Janik, 36.

Scholars generally consider Schoenberg's society an extreme version of (or the logical conclusion to) the belief in music's autonomy, as well as the alienation of modern music from audiences. Performances existed for the music itself, as the society forbade applause, the attendance of critics, and the admittance of the general public, completely cutting out any question of profit. Musicians themselves were expected to suppress their personal egos and desire for fame, as well as displays of virtuosity, in order to make "the work, and therewith its composer, intelligible."¹¹⁵

Like Schoenberg's "Society," Hindemith's "Community" was meant for an elite membership of cognoscenti, excluding the average bourgeois philistine ("non-members will not be admitted.") Other similarities included the conditions that programs were not to be published ahead of time, the events would not be critiqued in newspapers, and performances would consist of "only new and old music for small groups that's unknown."¹¹⁶ Likewise, performers ("who perform for free from the love of it") were to play strictly in the service of art, and not for publicity, profit, or pride, as "any sort of national or personal ambition will remain outside. The names of the performers will not be revealed; however, we aspire to the highest possible perfection."¹¹⁷ Finally, like Schoenberg's group, prospective members had to mail in a form agreeing to the group's conditions.¹¹⁸ Hindemith's letter to his friend Emmy after the first

¹¹⁵ Berg, 1025.

¹¹⁶ Merten and Hindemith, 8. "Es wird ausschließlich unbekannte neue und alte Musik für kleine Besetzung zum Vortrag kommen... Programme werden nicht veröffentlicht. Die Veranstaltungen werden nicht in den Zeitungen kritisiert. Um den intimen Charakter der Vorträge zu wahren, dürfen Nichtmitglieder nicht eingeführt werden."

¹¹⁷ Merten and Hindemith, 8. "Der größte Teil der Mitwirkenden spielt aus Liebe zur Sache umsonst... Irgendwelcher nationale oder persönliche Ehrgeiz wird ausgeschaltet bleiben. Die Namen der Ausführenden werden nicht bekannt gegeben, jedoch streben wir die größtmögliche Vollkommenheit an."

¹¹⁸ Merten and Hindemith, 8. "Ihr Einverständnis mit unseren Absichten wollen Sie uns auf beiliegender Postkarte mitteilen."

concert demonstrates how similar the Community's quest for musical autonomy was to

Schoenberg's Society:

The best thing I've succeeded in doing is founding the "Gemeinschaft für Musik" here. We play modern music for around 80 invited members (every 2 or 3 weeks) at Zingler's on Kaiserstraße); a purely musical affair without any financial dealings. The listeners pay nothing, the players receive nothing, and the minimal expenses are shared. Here is finally music for music's sake! Personal ambition is not allowed, no critic appears. And the best thing: no Frankfurters are allowed in!! I've already had a lot of grief about that, because everyone thinks they have to be there. It's not going to happen!¹¹⁹

The Community was apparently short-lived, which Geoffrey Skelton has attributed to "the growing inflation in Germany, which made financial considerations a necessity even for idealists."¹²⁰

Hindemith's romantic ideals immediately collided with economic realities in his first dealings with his publisher, however, when he learned that art music, while prized as an important part of German *Kultur*, was worth very little in the marketplace. After accepting Hindemith's string quartet for publication in July 1919, Ludwig offered an honorarium of 100 Marks, noting that "We probably don't need to tell you that, unfortunately, a publisher can't live [on] his ideals alone, and that serious and difficult pieces, like the one you offered, have no commercial value."¹²¹ Hindemith's angry response reveals his disappointment, as well as what

¹¹⁹ Hindemith to Emmy Ronnefeldt, September 1922, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 107. "Aber das Schönste, was mir geglückt ist, ist die Gründung der 'Gemeinschaft für Musik,' hier. Wir spielen vor ungefähr 80 geladenen Mitgliedern bei Zingler auf der Kaiserstraße moderne Musik (alle 2 oder 3 Wochen); eine rein musikalische Angelegenheit ohne Geldgeschichten. Die Zuhörer zahlen nichts, die Spieler bekommen nichts, die ganz geringen Unkosten werden gemeinsam getragen. Hier ist endlich einmal die Musik um der Musik willen da! Kein persönlicher Ehrgeiz wird berücksichtigt, keine Kritik erscheint. Und, was das Allerschönste ist: die ganzen Frankfurter dürfen nicht hinein!! Ich habe schon viel Krach deswegen gehabt, weil jeder glaubt, dabei sein zu müssen. Ist aber nicht!"

¹²⁰ Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 67. The last concert occurred on 12 March 1923.

¹²¹ L. Strecker to Hindemith, 1 July 1919. "Wir brauchen Ihnen ja wohl nicht zu sagen, dass ein Verleger leider nicht nur seinen Idealen leben kann und dass ernste und schwere Werke

Jeremy Zima describes as the “tension between the intellectual elitism of many German composers and the inherent populism of a modern, democratic society.”¹²² He replied on 3 July:

I am fully aware that right now it is very difficult for a publisher to accept large and serious works and that publishers cannot live by their ideals alone (although one can't view as an ideal the principle of paying no more than 100 Marks to composers who haven't made “a great name” for themselves yet, in order to be able to use them to produce the biggest nonsense [*Unsinn*] that, however, always sells well). I can assume that you also know how difficult it is for a composer to believe in his ideals when he learns that a piece he's worked on for weeks and months with the greatest love and care can fetch a whole whopping one hundred marks. 100 marks doesn't even pay for the music paper and copying of the parts, let alone for the time and trouble of composing the work. Your proposal suggests a considerable contempt for intellectual work that I am not prepared under any circumstances to undertake.¹²³

In response to these complaints, Ludwig assured Hindemith of the firm's respect for artistry, while patiently explaining the realities of the business:

When my firm offered you the figure, surely you were aware that it could not approximate an equivalent for intellectual work. Suitable compensation in this case is completely impossible, as it is in other cases in which an economic foundation is lacking. Production costs have risen astronomically and make the publication of chamber music, which was already unprofitable before the war, a surefire loss. [The publication of chamber music] is justified only through idealistic reasons and is made possible only

wie die von Ihnen angebotenen für einen Verleger keinen geschäftlichen Hintergrund haben können.”

¹²² Zima, 24.

¹²³ Hindemith to L. Strecker, 3 July 1919. “Ich bin mir vollkommen bewusst, dass es in dieser Zeit sehr schwer ist, größere und ernste Werke in Verlag zu nehmen und dass die Herren Verleger nicht allein ihren Idealen leben können (wenn man nicht das Prinzip als Ideal ansieht, Ehrenhonorare von nicht mehr als 100 MK an Komponisten zu zahlen, die noch keinen ‘großen Namen’ haben, um diesen dazu benutzen zu können, größten aber stets gern gekauften Unsinn zu verfertigen.) Ich kann wohl voraussetzen, dass auch Sie sich bewusst sind, wie schwer es einem Komponisten wird, an seine Ideale zu glauben, wenn er erfährt, dass man ein Werk, an dem er Wochen und Monate lang mit größter Liebe und Sorgfalt arbeiten musste, mit ganzen Hundert Mark honoriert sieht. Mit 100 MK ist mir nicht einmal das Notenpapier und das Abschreiben der Stimmen bezahlt, viel weniger die zur Komposition verwandte Mühe und Zeit. Ihr Vorschlag bedeutet mir eine reichliche Missachtung der geistigen Arbeit, auf den ich natürlich unter keinen Umständen eingehen werde.”

through the funds that a publisher earns through popular works. The system is turned upside down, as you observed.¹²⁴

Ludwig's response demonstrates how inflation impacted the cost of production, which in turn influenced how much the firm could pay Hindemith.¹²⁵ His belief that it is counterintuitive—or even wrong—that the sales of popular music support the production of chamber works also reveals his own difficulties reconciling his ideals with the demands of the market, or his self-described “efforts to help support genuine talent and in this way to help the development of art,” while at the same time making a profit.¹²⁶ He eventually pacified Hindemith by offering 1,000 Marks for the Quartet, a viola sonata, and two violin sonatas, with the proviso that Hindemith would offer any future works only to Schott.

These issues resurfaced three years later in fall 1922, shortly after inflation had kicked into hyperinflation.¹²⁷ Hindemith now had a number of successful works behind him, making a

¹²⁴ L. Strecker to Hindemith, July 7, 1919. “Wenn Ihnen meine Firma den bekannten Betrag anbot, so war Sie sich wohl bewusst, dass dieser auch nicht annähernd ein Äquivalent für die geistige Arbeit sein kann. Eine angemessene Entschädigung hierfür ist überhaupt nicht möglich, so wenig wie in allen anderen Fällen, in denen ein wirtschaftlicher Untergrund fehlt. Die Herstellungskosten sind heute ins fantastische gestiegen und machen die Herausgabe von Kammermusik-Werken, die schon vor dem Kriege unrentabel war, zu einem sicheren Verlust. Sie lässt sich nur aus ideellen Gründen rechtfertigen und mit Hilfe der Mittel ermöglichen, die ein Verlag mit volkstümlichen Verlagswerken gewinnt; der Weg ist also umgekehrt, wie Sie annehmen.”

¹²⁵ This illustrates Gerald Feldman's assertion that during the inflationary period in Germany, “the problem of properly rewarding creative work increased as inflation diminished the value of honoraria and advances while publishers were able more or less to adapt to conditions.” Feldman, 536.

¹²⁶ Schott to Hindemith, 24 July 1924. “...unseren Bestrebungen zu helfen, wirkliche Talente zu unterstützen und der Kunstentwicklung auf diese Weise zu helfen.” Ludwig's sentiments foreshadowed an article that appeared in *Die Weltbühne* on 21 June 1923 that complained how inflation had caused material production to be valued more than intellectual work, which the author called an “immoral perversion of conditions.” Cited in Widdig, 181.

¹²⁷ Ludwig noted that by 1922, production costs “have risen in such an alarming way that one asks whether it can continue” (“[D]ie Herstellungskosten, die in einer solch beängstigten

splash at the 1921 and 1922 Donaueschingen Chamber Music Festivals with his String Quartet No. 3, op. 22, the song cycle *Die junge Magd*, and *Kammermusik Nr. 1*. He had also earned considerable notoriety through his three one-act operas (*Mörder*, *Hoffnung der Frauen* [1919], *Das Nusch-Nuschi* [1920], and *Sancta Susanna* [1921]), owing to their sexual content.¹²⁸ This growing fame put him in a stronger position to renegotiate his contract. After accusing the firm of “taking advantage of my ignorance to palm me off with miserable royalties,” Hindemith threatened to go to another publisher as a negotiating strategy: “I have before me offers from three large publishing houses that show beyond all doubt that you have—to put it mildly—flat-out scammed me... if you outbid the highest of these offers by a considerable amount, I will gladly stay with you.”¹²⁹ He then demanded a greater share of the royalties and a monthly stipend, enough to be able to quit his job at the Frankfurt opera, which would:

remove the shackles that were a big obstacle to my compositional work. I can then work free and untroubled for myself—and you can more or less imagine what I’ll do when I have time for it, after you’ve seen what I’ve achieved when harnessed like a workhorse from morning until late into the night.¹³⁰

Weise gestiegen sind, dass man sich fragt, ob es so weitergehen kann”). L. Strecker to Hindemith, 7 March 1922. See also Feldman, 418–452.

¹²⁸ All three operas were adapted from Expressionist texts by Oskar Kokoschka (*Mörder*), Franz Blei (*Das Nusch-Nuschi*), and August Stramm (*Sancta Susanna*).

¹²⁹ Hindemith to L. Strecker, 31 October 1922. “Ich habe die Angebote von drei großen Verlagshäusern vor Augen, aus denen unzweifelhaft hervorgeht, dass Sie mich—gelinde gesagt—gründlich übers Ohr gehauen haben... Überbieten Sie das höchste der erwähnten Angebote um eine beträchtliche Summe, dann bleibe ich gerne bei Ihnen.” Another issue for Hindemith was the fact that the firm had required that he take responsibility for the costs of copying the parts for the premiere of his operas *Mörder*, *Hoffnung der Frauen* and *Das Nusch-Nuschi* in Stuttgart, to the tune of 8,000 Marks. They would advance him the money to cover the costs and then take it out of the honoraria for future works. The firm said they were doing this to minimize the risk for both parties, referring perhaps to the risk of producing operas during the depression. L. Strecker to Hindemith, 20 July 1919.

¹³⁰ Hindemith to L. Strecker, 31 October 1922. “Dabei mache ich Sie darauf aufmerksam, dass es mir zwei der Angebote ermöglichen, meine Stellung am Theater aufzugeben und damit eine Fessel abzustreifen, die mir bei meiner kompositorischen Arbeit ein großes Hindernis war. Ich kann dann vollkommen unbekümmert und ohne Sorgen für mich arbeiten—and Sie können

This desire to give up his position at the Frankfurt opera in order to compose complicates the common image of Hindemith as the all-around musician; while he enjoyed performing music, he also was obligated to do it out of financial pressures. A letter the following month repeating these shows his pragmatic cynicism after three years in the profession, as he writes, “as things stand, one large publisher is as good as another, and the one that pays me the most is the one I like best. The present times force everyone into this selfish attitude, and besides, I have learned from you yourself, if nothing else, that you have to keep your own interests in mind.”¹³¹ After three months of negotiations involving lawyers, Schott agreed to pay him a regular salary along with royalties.¹³²

True to his word, Hindemith was extremely prolific in the mid-1920s, composing works such as the song cycle *Das Marienleben* (1923), violin sonatas, and six additional works titled *Kammermusik*, as well as the opera *Cardillac* (1926). He also continued to perform with the Amar Quartet, and in 1923, he joined the program committee for the annual Donaueschingen Chamber Music Festival, along with Joseph Haas and Heinrich Burkhard.¹³³ Despite this success, the Hindemith-Strecker correspondence reveals the unrelenting economic pressures on

sich ungefähr vorstellen, was ich arbeite, wenn ich Zeit dazu habe, nachdem Sie gesehen haben, was ich leiste, wenn ich wie ein Erntepferd von morgens bis in die Nacht eingespannt bin.”

¹³¹ Hindemith to L. Strecker, 10 November 1922. “andererseits ist jeder große Verlag für mich, wie die Dinge heute liegen, gleich gut—und der mir das meiste zahlt, ist mir der liebste. Die Zeit drängt wohl jeden auf diesen egoistischen Standpunkt, außerdem habe ich nicht zuletzt von Ihnen selbst gelernt, dass man seine Vorteile im Auge haben muss...”

¹³² Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 68.

¹³³ Schubert, *Paul Hindemith: mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten dargestellt von Giselher Schubert* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1981), 42.

art music (especially contemporary art music) sales— even during the years of stabilization.¹³⁴

Ludwig described Hindemith's earnings in July 1924 as "dulled" (*getrübt*),¹³⁵ clarifying:

The entire publishing of modern works is indeed, from a commercial standpoint, practically a sacrifice, as you can see from the financial statement (sent to you a few days ago) for your own works. And yet, today you are the acknowledged leader of the younger school of composers and by far the most performed. You can therefore well imagine the sums of the others [composers]. For your own works, I'm not concerned and I am certain that the next sums will show another picture, because now other countries really are also beginning to pay attention to your works.¹³⁶

Two years later, however, things had not significantly improved, as Ludwig remarked in 1926 when sending Hindemith a statement of his previous year's earnings:

I had actually hoped to be able to present you with a better result, but the current economic situation affects us as well. No one has any money, least of all the people and the associations on which we depend. Aside from that, it appears that the number of those who are interested in modern, serious music is, for familiar reasons, fairly small. Dilettantes reject it, more or less; in contrast, the music profession [*Musikergilde*] pounces on every new work that appears from you, so that the initial sales are the fastest, but then it gets significantly slower."¹³⁷

¹³⁴ As Steinweis observes, "Even during the middle, so-called Golden Years of the Weimar Republic, the sense of economic crisis that had prevailed in the arts during the early 1920s persisted in many circles." Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 14.

¹³⁵ L. Strecker to Hindemith, 21 July 1924.

¹³⁶ Schott to Hindemith, 24 July 1924. "Das ganze Verlegen moderner Werke ist ja von geschäftlichen Standpunkt als nahezu ein Opfer, wie Sie schon aus den vor einigen Tagen übersandten Abrechnung Ihrer eigenen Werke ersehen können. Dabei sind Sie heute der anerkannte Führer der jungen Schule und weitaus am meisten aufgeführt. Sie können sich daher die Resultate bei den anderen unter [illegible] wohl denken. Für Ihre eigenen Werke ist mir nicht bange und ich bin gewiss, dass die nächsten Ergebnisse ein anderes Bild zeigen werden, da nun auch das Ausland wirklich anfängt, Ihren Werken überall Beachtung zu schenken."

¹³⁷ For other examples of the effect of the economy on Hindemith's music, see Willy's letters to Hindemith from 27 July 1924 and 29 May 1926. L. Strecker to Hindemith, June 23, 1926. "Ich hatte eigentlich gehofft, Ihnen ein besseres Ergebnis vorlegen zu können; die gegenwärtige Wirtschaftslage fiel aber auch hier hinein. Kein Mensch mehr hat Geld, am wenigsten die Leute und Vereinigungen, auf die wir angewiesen sind. Abgesehen hiervon zeigt es sich, dass der Kreis von Interessanten für moderne ernste Musik aus den bekannten Ursachen halt doch nur recht klein ist. Dilettanten scheiden mehr oder minder aus, dagegen stürzt sich die Musikergilde auf jeden neu erscheinende Werk von Ihnen, sodass der erste Absatz der schnellste ist, dann aber es bedeutend langsamer geht."

Hindemith may have heeded Ludwig's comment about the rejection of modern, serious music by amateurs, for much of his activities in the following years would be devoted to teaching them to appreciate it (discussed in Chapter Four). Over the years, however, the untenability of contemporary art music (or at least chamber music) must have become apparent to Hindemith, as he wrote to one aspiring composer in March 1929:

Regarding your quartet: Today it is almost impossible, and, at the least, has become almost unnecessary, to publish chamber music. No one wants to hear new quartets. If you look closely at the concert-going public here and especially in the provinces, you will understand why this is... Performances of entirely new works (Berg, Schoenberg, Bartok) are almost always limited to the few societies devoted to the cultivation of contemporary music. I therefore ask you not to put too much hope into a performance of your work. In the coming months, we (the Amar Quartet) aren't going to be rehearsing any new works. I myself am not entirely in favor of your work.¹³⁸

After several years of disappointing sales, Hindemith accepted a position as a professor of composition at the Berlin Music Conservatory (Hochschule für Musik) in 1927. Scholars have typically interpreted this move as reflecting his growing interest in pedagogy, his desire to further educate himself, his interest in spreading his ideas about composition to a younger generation, or a reaction to limited creative opportunities in Frankfurt.¹³⁹ Yet the desire for more

¹³⁸ Hindemith to Hans Kayser, 13 March 1929, in Rudolf Haase, ed., *Paul Hindemiths Harmonikale Quellen: Sein Briefwechsel mit Hans Kayser* (Wien: Lafite, 1973), 11. "Und Ihr Quartett betreffend: Es ist heute fast unmöglich, zum mindesten fast unnötig geworden, Kammermusik herauszubringen. Kein Mensch will neue Quartette hören. Wenn Sie sich das Konzertpublikum hier und besonders in der Provinz genau ansehen, werden Sie begreifen, warum das so ist... die Aufführungen ganz neuer Stücke (Berg, Schönberg, Bartok) beschränken sich fast nur auf die wenigen Vereine zur Pflege heutiger Musik. Ich bitte Sie also, sich wegen einer Aufführung Ihres Stückes nicht allzu viel Hoffnungen zu machen. Wir (d.h. das Amar-Quartett) kommen in den nächsten Monaten nicht dazu, Neues einzustudieren. Ich selbst bin nicht ganz mit Ihrem Stück einverstanden."

¹³⁹ Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 86; Rexroth, *Briefe*, 132; and Dietmar Schenk, "Hindemith, die Berliner Musikhochschule und die Kunstpolitik der Weimarer Republik," in *Paul Hindemith*

financial stability may have also been a significant factor behind this decision, especially after his marriage to Gertrud Rottenberg (daughter of the conductor of the Frankfurt Opera orchestra, Ludwig Rottenberg) in 1924. As a civil servant, Hindemith would receive a salary, pension, and benefits. A letter to a former member of the Amar Quartet seems to hint at these practical motives for taking the job; Hindemith mentions that he and the other quartet members had decided “all three of us, to give up quartet playing and take steady jobs. [Licco] Amar will become a teacher here. Privately at first, but then at the new state music school here after the first of January... And I myself am going to Berlin.”¹⁴⁰ Despite the job security, Hindemith seemed a bit hesitant to enter the academy, later telling an American student that his first reaction to the offer was to think of his own teacher, Arnold Mendelssohn, with his black coat, his big gold watch-chain and his Olympian air.¹⁴¹ Indeed, as he wrote to one friend shortly after his appointment, “I have grown a long beard, have a thick gold watch-chain and in the mornings yolk from my breakfast hard-boiled egg hangs on my waistcoat.”¹⁴² Likewise, after announcing the breakup of the Amar Quartet, he immediately seemed to second-guess his decision:

The news of our breakup has caused great regret everywhere. We’ve received many letters asking us to keep on playing. We also have a large number of engagement offers for next year, so it is worth considering whether something as good as this should be allowed to disappear from the face of the earth without a whimper. One could have a steady job and play quartets for one’s own amusement: just concerts that are fun and that pay well and a few tours abroad. That could be a very pleasant life.”¹⁴³

in Berlin: Essays und Dokumente, ed. Franz Bullmann, et al. (Berlin: Hochschule der Künste, 1998), 23.

¹⁴⁰ Hindemith to Maurits Frank, 12 April 1927, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 133. “Und so haben wir denn beschlossen, das Quartettspielen sein zu lassen und alle drei in Stellungen zu gehen. Amar wird hier Lehrer werden. Vorerst privat, ab erstem Januar an der hier neu zu gründenden staatlichen Musikschule... Und ich selbst gehe nach Berlin.”

¹⁴¹ Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 85.

¹⁴² Hindemith to Else Thalheimer, 27 May 1927, quoted in Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 85.

¹⁴³ Hindemith to Maurits Frank, 12 April 1927, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 133. “Die Nachricht von unserer Auflösung hat überall großes Bedauern hervorgerufen. Wir haben viele Briefe bekommen, worin wir aufgefordert werden, doch weiterzuspielen. Zudem haben wir eine Menge

Yet the financial benefits of the job may have ultimately outweighed these hesitations; Hindemith would keep this position until his resignation in 1937.

While Hindemith's position at the Berlin Hochschule arguably shielded him from the worst of the depression that followed the 1929 crash, the economy in Germany—and abroad—still affected him and the performance of his works. The New Music Berlin festival (the successor to the Donaueschingen and Baden-Baden festivals) was cancelled after 1930.¹⁴⁴ Conductor Leopold Stokowski of the Philadelphia Orchestra vetoed a proposed Hindemith festival in 1931 because “it looks so difficult to organize under the present economic conditions. I think it might be wiser to postpone this idea one season. By then things will either be a little better, or much worse!”¹⁴⁵ The same year, Willy Strecker had to tell Hindemith, once again, that his financial statement “unfortunately corresponds to the general economic situation.”¹⁴⁶ Finally, in a letter to composer Gian Francesco Malipiero in summer 1934, Hindemith refers to having “no money” and having “fallen onto poor times.”¹⁴⁷ That July, Willy Strecker had yet another

Engagementsanträge für nächstes Jahr, so dass es doch zu überlegen ist, ob man eine gute Sache so sang- und klanglos vom Erdboden verschwinden lässt. Man könnte in seiner Stellung sein und zum Vergnügen Quartett spielen: nur Konzerte, die einem selbst Spaß machen und gut zahlen und einige Auslandsreisen. Das könnte ein sehr angenehmes Leben sein.”

¹⁴⁴ Dietmar Schenk, “Paul Hindemith und die Rundfunkversuchsstelle der Berliner Musikhochschule,” *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 25 (1996): 193.

¹⁴⁵ Leopold Stokowski to L. Strecker, Philadelphia, 21 September 1931.

¹⁴⁶ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 20 July 1932. “die leider der allgemeinen Wirtschaftslage entspricht.”

¹⁴⁷ Hindemith to Malipiero, 1934, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 156–157. “Wir haben kein Geld... Wir sind in arme Zeiten geraten...”

disappointing financial statement to report, believing the situation would improve with the production of the composer's opera, *Mathis der Maler*.¹⁴⁸

The Appeal of National Socialism

Despite his status as Germany's leading young musician, Hindemith's own precarious situation illustrates the enormous challenges composers faced during the Weimar Republic. Thus, for many musicians, like the German population in general, National Socialism promised a way forward out of the economic turmoil. One manifestation of this belief was creation of the Reich Culture Chamber (Reichskulturkammer or RKK) in November 1933, a centralized union headed by Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels whose mission was "to promote German culture on behalf of the German *Volk* and Reich, to regulate the economic and social affairs of the cultural professions, and to bring about a compromise between [the groups] belonging to it."¹⁴⁹ Although historians have frequently portrayed the creation of the RKK as simply a way for the Nazi party to control every aspect of German cultural life,¹⁵⁰ there had been calls for such an agency from the years predating the Weimar Republic.¹⁵¹ These demands started to increase and take on some urgency during the postwar inflation and especially after the 1929 Wall Street crash. For advocates, a centralized organization would replace the current multitude of

¹⁴⁸ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 27 July 1934. Hindemith responded that he and Gertrud were "somewhat under pressure" ("Wir sind etwas im Druck und die etwas höhere Summe hilft mir viel"). Hindemith to W. Strecker, 29 July 1934.

¹⁴⁹ Paragraph 3, cited in Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 44.

¹⁵⁰ The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, for example, stresses the chambers' "synchronization of culture" in line with Nazi aesthetics. "Culture in the Third Reich: Overview," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed 8 June 2018, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005207>. This belief is typically framed as part of the Nazis' process of coordination, or *Gleichschaltung*.

¹⁵¹ Steinweis notes that the idea of a centralized musicians' chamber had come up as early as 1912. Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 17.

musicians' unions and associations, whose interests often conflicted.¹⁵² The Association of German Composers (Genossenschaft deutscher Tonsetzer, or GDT), for example, was chiefly concerned with copyright reform, hoping to extend copyright law from thirty to fifty years after a composer's death.¹⁵³ This goal, however, was directly at odds with the concerns of performers and directors, for whom stronger copyright laws meant higher fees and fewer performances.¹⁵⁴ (In fact, Ludwig Strecker warned Hindemith not to join the GDT because of the "poor relationship that exists between publishers and this society."¹⁵⁵) The author of the 1931 article "Music in Distress," for example, referred to the injurious competition between various musical unions, believing they "wear themselves out in part in mutual fights over issues that, given the great dangers that threaten their existence, have absolutely no inner justification."¹⁵⁶ After observing that "all professional groups who make their living from music have the same interest in the cultivation and preservation of live music," he called for the creation of "an organization

¹⁵² These included the Deutscher Musiker-Verband (DeMuV), whose membership largely consisted of entertainment musicians, or the Reichsverband deutscher Orchester und Orchestermusik, which represented orchestral players. Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 10.

¹⁵³ Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 12. The emergence of reproducing technologies also spurred new questions about copyright. For an in-depth look at calls for copyright reform, see Zima, 76–88.

¹⁵⁴ Publishers were also against extending copyright protections so they could continue to sell older works without paying royalties. Zima, 61, 79.

¹⁵⁵ L. Strecker to Hindemith, 1 July 1919. Ludwig indicates that Hindemith's contract actually forbids him joining the GDT. "Zum Schlusse möchten wir nicht verfehlen, Ihnen zu Ihrem Vorteil nahe zu legen und um einen entsprechenden Absatz in dem Vertragsformulare zu erklären, nicht der Genossenschaft deutscher Tonsetzer beizutreten, im Falle man Ihnen diesen Vorschlag machen sollte. Die unseligen Verhältnisse, die zwischen Verlegern und dieser Gesellschaft bestehen, sind Ihnen ja bekannt."

¹⁵⁶ "Musik im Not," 218. "In der Musik herrscht eine Zersplitterung in kleine und kleinste Organisationen, die sich zum Teil im gegenseitigen Kampf teilweise aufreiben über Angelegenheiten, die angesichts der großen existenzbedrohenden Gefahren keinerlei innere Berechtigung haben."

based on the widest foundation, in which producers and dealers, publishing firms, music teachers, musicians and concert agents would participate equally.”¹⁵⁷

This centralized organization, comprising what was essentially a giant union, was realized in the Reich Music Chamber (*Reichsmusikkammer*, or RMK), one of the seven sub-chambers of the larger RKK. In order to address the multifaceted needs of all sectors of the music industry, the music chamber was divided into several “specialty associations” (*Fachverbände*), such as composition, instrument vendors, church music, copyright, and orchestral musicians.¹⁵⁸ Initially, the RMK implemented many longed-for reforms, including setting wages for professional musicians, extending copyright from thirty to fifty years, establishing a pension plan, and screening prospective members in order to eliminate competition for professionals.¹⁵⁹ The chamber also helped with work creation by sponsoring concerts and theatrical events, although historian Alan Steinweis notes that such work creation was “carried out in an improvised fashion” without a long-term plan.¹⁶⁰ Finally, Goebbels reassured artists by promising that the regime would not censor or interfere with artistic development, stating that “art can flourish only when it is given the greatest possible freedom to develop [within] the framework and borders of the laws of national life.”¹⁶¹ Of course, compulsory membership in the RMK also served as a way to purge Jewish members or others

¹⁵⁷ “Musik im Not,” 218. “Alle Berufsgruppen, die in der Musik ihre wirtschaftliche Existenz finden, haben die gleichen Interessen an der Pflege und Erhaltung der lebenden Musik.” “eine Organisation auf breitester Grundlage geschaffen wird, an der sich Hersteller und Händler, Musikverleger, Musiklehrer, Musiker und Konzertagenturen in gleicher Weise beteiligen.”

¹⁵⁸ Potter, *Suppression*, 12.

¹⁵⁹ Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 84–85. The RMK also prohibited amateurs from performing for money and often denied foreign musicians permission to perform, creating more opportunities for German musicians.

¹⁶⁰ Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 74–75.

¹⁶¹ Goebbels, speech from 15 November 1933, quoted in Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 47.

the Nazis considered objectionable. In the first year or so, however, there was no specific exclusion of Jews per se, but rather those not possessing the vague qualifications of “reliability” and “aptitude.”¹⁶²

In addition to the RMK, other actions taken by the National Socialists seemed to bode well for music. As early as 1931, the party had raised funds to support two symphony orchestras: the National-Sozialistisches Reichs-Symphonie-Orchester in Munich and the Kulturbund-Orchester in Berlin. The latter, led by the esteemed violinist and professor at the Berlin Hochschule Gustav Havemann, even gave special concerts once a month in 1932 specifically for an audience of unemployed people, with tickets inexpensively priced at ten and twenty Pfennig.¹⁶³ At a party convention in September 1933, Hitler himself promised that “this new state will look after the arts far more strongly than the old one,” adding that the state had a duty to foster art even during times of economic crisis.¹⁶⁴ And indeed, the new government dramatically increased public spending on art music, in sharp contrast to the budget cuts of the early 1930s. In 1934, the Reich appropriated 72,000 RM for direct grants to support “culture orchestras” and “young talent and unemployed musicians,” doubling that amount the following year, while paying an additional 850,000 RM to support existing orchestras and start new ones.¹⁶⁵ The Propaganda Ministry also assumed financial responsibility for the struggling Berlin Philharmonic in 1934.¹⁶⁶ The Strength Through Joy (Kraft durch Freude, or KDF) program, a leisure organization that operated under German Labor Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront, or DAF),

¹⁶² A mass expulsion of Jewish members from the RMK took place between June and September 1935. Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 107–111.

¹⁶³ Führer, “German Cultural Life,” 474–475.

¹⁶⁴ Hitler, *Führung und Gefolgschaft* (Berlin, 1934), 26–28, quoted in Führer, “German Cultural Life,” 478.

¹⁶⁵ Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 76.

¹⁶⁶ Potter, *Most German*, 28.

also created job opportunities for musicians, sponsoring 3,000 concerts and 7,000 folk music concerts in 1934 – 1935 alone.¹⁶⁷ A 1934 article from *Melos* reflected a cautious optimism about the new government, noting that while “only the unreasonable could expect that the gigantic work-creation plan of the Führer could, immediately in the first years, have an effect the new registration of music students,” as well as solve the “torpor in artistic life” (*die Erstarrung im Kunstleben*), the “first promising signs” of a solution:

are already visible. This winter one could clearly observe a stronger participation of the public at high-quality concerts. For those private music teachers who are able to prove their own skills, the possibility for artistic engagement presents itself in the large after-hours organization “Strength Through Joy.” Here, many capable players will be needed, who in recent years had to completely fall back on their teaching profession because any opportunity for public playing was lacking.¹⁶⁸

These actions arguably created the impression of a government that valued the arts and, more importantly, promised to restore status to German musicians and music. Many high-ranking officials did, indeed, view themselves as patrons and connoisseurs of the arts, believing in the romantic ideal of the creative genius.¹⁶⁹ Hitler, a Wagner enthusiast, was personally responsible for saving the financially strapped Bayreuth Festival, while Goebbels considered himself the patron of the Berlin Philharmonic, referring to it in correspondence as “my

¹⁶⁷ Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 76.

¹⁶⁸ Kurt Schubert, “Aussichten und Aufgaben für den Privatmusiklehrer in neuen Deutschland,” *Melos* 13, no. 3 (March 1934): 90–91. “Nur Unvernunft konnte annehmen, dass der gigantische Arbeitsbeschaffungsplan des Führers sich gleich im ersten Jahre in Neuanmeldungen von Musikschülern auswirken würde... Schon sind hoffnungsvolle Ansätze sichtbar. In diesem Winter konnte man deutlich eine stärkere Anteilnahme des Publikums an hochwertigen Konzerten wahrnehmen. Für denjenigen Teil der Privatmusiklehrerschaft, der fähig ist, sein eigenes Können unter Beweis zu stellen, eröffnen sich in der großen Feierabendorganisation ‘Kraft durch Freude’ künstlerische Betätigungsmöglichkeiten. Hier wird mancher tüchtige Spieler gebraucht werden, der sich in den letzten Jahren ganz auf den Lehrberuf zurückziehen musste, weil ihm jede Gelegenheit zum öffentlichen Spielen fehlte.”

¹⁶⁹ Potter, *Suppression*, 224.

orchestra.”¹⁷⁰ Hermann Göring, who, as Prussian prime minister, was in charge of all opera houses, theaters, and orchestras in Prussia, took a direct role in promoting and supervising “his” institutions. Finally, National Socialist rhetoric repeatedly stressed the revitalization of German art; implied with this was the revitalization of *Kultur* and by extension, German pride and national identity.¹⁷¹ If one could ignore or downplay the party’s brutality, anti-Semitism, and rhetoric against “cultural bolshevism,” then musical life (for those deemed part of the *Volksgemeinschaft*) did appear to be on the upswing.¹⁷²

Hindemith’s Involvement

Hindemith was never a member of the Nazi party, nor could he be considered a supporter of it.¹⁷³ (His stance towards the party will be explored in greater depth in the final chapter.)

Throughout the Weimar Republic and early years of the Third Reich, his correspondence with his publishers reveals no firm political position.¹⁷⁴ With a National Socialist government

¹⁷⁰ Potter, “The Nazi ‘Seizure’ of the Berlin Philharmonic, or the Decline of a Bourgeois Musical Institution,” in *National Socialist Cultural Policy*, ed. Glenn R. Cuomo (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 51.

¹⁷¹ Potter, *Suppression*, 9, 249.

¹⁷² As Carl Christian Führer puts it, “The NSDAP succeeded very quickly to dispel the gloom that had prevailed in Germany’s cultural life during the years of economic crisis. Compared to the psychological value of this regained optimism the loss created by the purge [of Jewish artists] may have appeared insignificant.” Führer, “German Cultural Life,” 479. Potter repeats these sentiments, observing that “Following decades of struggle for musicians’ rights, years of chaotic inconsistencies in the Weimar years, low morale and damaged national pride as a result of the First World War and subsequent events, and the general distrust of the republic for its perceived lack of order and leadership, the Nazis and their reforms must have appeared as the answer to the prayers of many of Germany’s music professionals.” Potter, “Germany Musicology and Early Music Performance, 1918–1933,” in *Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic*, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 98.

¹⁷³ There is anecdotal evidence from his former conservatory student Franz Reizenstein that Hindemith “did not make any secret of his anti-Nazi convictions.” Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 108.

¹⁷⁴ Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 108. Skelton, who has published many of Hindemith’s letters, also observes that “[Hindemith’s] letters showed no interest in politics.”

becoming a reality after 1933, however, he did see a chance for musical reform under the new regime. As early as April 1933, Hindemith mentioned to his publishers that the Fighting League for German Culture (Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur or KfdK), a party-affiliated organization devoted to fighting cultural degeneracy, “commissioned me (although not quite officially) to submit plans for changing the entire composition and theory curriculum.”¹⁷⁵ Following this announcement, he met with officials from the German Labor Front (the National Socialist trade union organization) in February 1934 about designing and implementing a new, nationwide program for music education.¹⁷⁶ As he reported to Willy Strecker:

I am incessantly “meeting” with all sorts of higher-ups in the Arbeitsfront, the Dopolavoro, and the Arbeitsdienstlager. The result is that I will make a plan for a very lavish musical education system for the German people and, if things continue as they have now begun and these people continue to show goodwill, I hope to provide the impetus for vast plans and to cooperate in putting them into effect.¹⁷⁷

By “Dopolavoro,” Hindemith presumably meant the Strength through Joy program, which was modeled on the fascist National Recreation Club (Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro) in Italy.

“Arbeitsdienst” refers to the Reich Labor Service (RAD), a state labor service organization meant to mitigate the effects of unemployment.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 15 April 1933. “Mittlerweile haben sie mich (allerdings nicht hoch-offiziell) beauftragt, Pläne zur Änderung der ganzen Kompositions- und Theorieunterrichts einzureichen.” Hindemith’s relationship with the Kampfbund is explored in Chapter Six.

¹⁷⁶ Hindemith met with these officials in Lübeck while performing in a concert there.

¹⁷⁷ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 5 February 1934. “Ich ‘tage’ immerzu mit allerhand Größen der Arbeitsfront, der Dopolavoro und der Arbeitsdienstlager. Es wird darauf hinauslaufen, dass ich Entwürfe für eine ganz großzügige Musikerziehung des deutschen Volkes mache und wenn alles so weitergeht, wie es bis jetzt angefangen hat und die Leute weiter guten Willens sind, hoffe ich, den Anstoß zu ganz gewaltigen Plänen geben und an ihrer Ausführung mitarbeiten zu können.”

¹⁷⁸ Cornelia Schmitz-Berning, *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 532.

These meetings must have been a promising sign that his position as the leading young composer of new German music, as well as his job at the Hochschule, would remain secure. Yet Hindemith also appeared to be genuinely interested in the opportunity to overhaul music education in Germany, believing that it would “provide the basis for the most lavish musical popular education program (combined with the corresponding composer training) that the world has ever seen. One can actually have the musical education of millions in one’s hands.”¹⁷⁹ Willy Strecker agreed, calling Hindemith’s “official inclusion in the Arbeitsfront and youth education” a “useful development, even if it involves inevitable hassles and disturbs your own more fruitful activities. You can do a lot of good and prevent mischief.”¹⁸⁰ Despite his excitement, Hindemith still exercised caution, telling Willy he wanted to “still keep out of any official bureaucracy, but I think I could do all the more in the background. In particular, I want to take charge of the composer training; however, without burdening myself with additional work: I hope then to drop my work at the school.”¹⁸¹ (This would not be the first sign of reluctance, as he spoke of “selling my corpse as dearly as possible” when asked to participate in a propaganda concert.¹⁸²)

¹⁷⁹ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 9 February 1934. “Unsere ganze Unterhaltung wird wahrscheinlich durch alle Blätter des In- und Auslandes gehetzt werden und ich glaube, dass sie und einige demnächst noch folgende Besprechungen und schriftliche Vorschläge (verbunden mit dementsprechender Komponistenausbildung) bilden wird, die je die Welt gesehen hat. Man kann tatsächlich die musikalische Bildung von Millionen Menschen in die Hand bekommen.”

¹⁸⁰ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 8 February 1934. “Ihre offizielle Eingliederung in die Arbeitsfront und Jugenderziehung ist zweifellos eine ebenso wichtige, wie nützliche Entwicklung, selbst wenn sie mit unvermeidlichen Ärger und Störungen Ihrer fruchtbareren eigenen Tätigkeit verbunden ist. Sie können viel Gutes schaffen und Dummheiten verhindern.”

¹⁸¹ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 9 February 1934. “Ich selbst will mich allerdings nach wie vor aus allem öffentlichen Amtsbetrieb draußenhalten, aber im Hintergrunde denke ich umso mehr zu tun; zumal die Komponistenausbildung für diese Sache will ich in die Hand nehmen, ohne mir allerdings Mehrarbeit aufzuladen: ich hoffe, meinen ganzen Schulbetrieb dann darauf einzustellen.”

¹⁸² Hindemith to W. Strecker, 5 February 1934. “Auch für eine Art Propaganda Konzert, das Havemann veranstalten wollte, zog ich nicht recht, weil ich sehr dagegen bin, dass meine Musik immer wieder die Deckung für alle möglichen Nichtskönner abgehen soll und dass

Hindemith also may have seen his appointment to a position in the Reich Music Chamber in February 1934 as another opportunity to change musical life for the better.¹⁸³ (Of course, this appointment also represented another promising sign of his security under National Socialism, which will be discussed in Chapter Six.) Richard Strauss, for instance, had agreed to be the president of the RMK after the government had agreed to extend copyright law for composers, an issue he had championed for decades.¹⁸⁴ Hindemith was part of the leadership council (*Führerrat*) of the RMK composers' subsection (*Berufstand der deutschen Komponisten*, Fachschaft I) along with composers such as Paul Graener, Joseph Haas, Siegmund von Hausegger, Hans Pfitzner, and Georg Schumann.¹⁸⁵ Given Hindemith's early struggles with his publishers over payment and royalties, it is possible that by accepting the appointment, he (like Strauss) felt he could now help other composers by representing their interests.

Conclusion

Despite the idealized image of the Weimar Republic as a golden era in music, the day-to-day reality for most musicians was quite precarious. The economic upheavals that bookended the decade forced musical organizations to reduce their programming or shut down altogether, while competition from popular music and mass media only exacerbated the problem. Additionally, fears about the decline or even disappearance of concert life mirrored fears about the decline of

überhaupt immer die heutige Musik als abseitsstehend und extravagant besonders aufgezogen wird. Man kommt von allen Seiten gekrochen, aber ich bin dafür, den Leichnam möglichst teuer zu bekaufen."

¹⁸³ Kater, *Composers*, 36.

¹⁸⁴ Barbara A. Peterson, "Die Händler und die Kunst: Richard Strauss as Composers' Advocate," in *Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer and His Work*, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 119; Zima, 12–13; Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 51.

¹⁸⁵ Richard Strauss, "Begrüßungsansprache anlässlich des ersten deutschen Komponistentages in Berlin," *Zeitschrift für Musik* 101, no. 3 (March 1934): 290.

German *Kultur* and, by extension, Germany's future. Hindemith was no exception in reacting to these pressures, as his correspondence with his publishers shows the effect of the depressed economy on his work, including the high price of materials due to inflations and poor sales of his music. Like other composers, Hindemith's own romantic ideals also collided with realities of the market, a tension he would explore in several of his jazz-influenced works (discussed in the next chapter).

Given these circumstances, the National Socialist government represented positive change for many musicians by increasing funding for cultural institutions, paying lip service to the importance of German art, and creating the Reich Music Chamber, which promised to represent musicians' interests. While never a supporter of the new government, Hindemith's talks with officials about developing a music education plan, and his position in the RMK suggest that he did see some promise of positive change. The final chapter will explore his negotiations to maintain his position in Germany *vis-à-vis* his opera *Mathis der Maler*.

Chapter Two

Satirizing Modernity

In discussions of Hindemith's works from the 1920s, his jazz-influenced compositions play a prominent role. Works such as *Kammermusik Nr. 1*, which caused a scandal at its premiere owing to its inclusion of a foxtrot, or the cheeky orchestral work *Rag Time (wohltemperiert)* (1921) supposedly epitomize his *enfant terrible* stage, shocking bourgeois audiences and subverting art music conventions. Likewise, scholars view his use of jazz forms, gestures, rhythms, and instruments as part of European composers' interest in popular music as a new, revitalizing source for art music, as well as a rejection of prewar romanticism.¹ This interest, in turn, reinforces idealized images of the Weimar Republic as the jazz age, or in the words of J. Bradford Robinson, "our picture of bare-kneed flappers dancing the shimmy with tuxedoed lounge lizards in post-war Berlin, a city caught in a frenzy of sexual excess and political thuggery."²

This chapter explores three of Hindemith's jazz-infused works: *Kammermusik Nr. 1* (1922), *1922: Suite für Klavier*, op. 26 (1922), and the opera *Neues vom Tage* (1929). I place these works within the discourse in Germany about jazz, showing how debates mirrored larger concerns about the "Americanization" of Germany life. Drawing on critical responses to the works, Hindemith's own comments, and the works themselves, I argue that, rather than celebrations of the jazz age or paradigmatic expressions of Weimar modernism, Hindemith used

¹ J. Bradford Robinson, "Jazz Reception in Weimar Germany: In Search of a Shimmy Figure," in Gilliam, *Music and Performance*, 107; Susan Cook, "Flirting with the Vernacular: America in Europe, 1900–45," in Cook and Pople, *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, 155; Auner, *Music*, 100.

² Robinson, 107.

jazz to satirize and even critique modern life. While he may have had genuine interest in jazz as a musical resource, this interest was mixed with a certain degree of ambivalence and even skepticism, echoing larger anxieties in Germany regarding modernity.

Jazz in Postwar Germany

Despite its identification with the Weimar Republic, jazz (the term generally signifying syncopated dance music) was also present in prewar Germany.³ The Sousa Band had performed two-steps and syncopated cakewalks during its tours of Europe (which included Germany) around the turn of the century, while traveling minstrel shows contributed to familiarity with African American dances.⁴ German composers also tried their hand at creating songs based on popular social dances, such as Herman Klink and Rudolf Nelson's "Cake-Walk Lied: Meine kleine Braune," which were often performed in cabarets.⁵ Prewar films featured syncopated dance music, portrayed (silently) onscreen and through the accompaniment by cinema musicians.⁶

It was after the war, however, that jazz experienced significant growth and established a stronger presence in Germany. It had first made inroads among French and British troops during the First World War through recordings, sheet music, and, most importantly, the service of segregated army bands, such as the 369th Infantry Band led by James Reese Europe.⁷ During the

³ In this chapter, the term "jazz" refers to syncopated dance music. J. Bradford Robinson notes that "jazz to Weimar Germany was an all-embracing cultural label attached to any music from the American side of the Atlantic." Robinson, 113. See also Cook, "Flirting," 156.

⁴ The band toured Europe in 1900, 1901, 1903, and 1905. Cook, "Flirting," 160; Mark Christian Thompson, *Anti-Music: Jazz and Racial Blackness in German Thought Between the Wars* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018), 17.

⁵ Alan Lareau, "Jonny's Jazz: From Kabarett to Krenek," in *Jazz and the Germans: Essays on the Influence of "Hot" American Idioms on 20th-Century German Music*, ed. Michael J. Budds (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon, 2002), 31–33.

⁶ Thompson, 18.

⁷ Cook, "Flirting," 167.

Allied Occupation along the Rhine immediately following the war, soldiers brought these recordings and music into Germany, while jazz bands performed in the areas of occupation.⁸ Although performances by actual American jazz bands were initially limited to these regions, by 1919, German groups began to spring up, marketing themselves as jazz bands and performing in venues across Germany.⁹ During the period of currency stabilization in the mid-1920s, German audiences had the opportunity to hear actual African American jazz bands in revues like *La revue nègre* (1925), featuring Josephine Baker, or Sam Wooding's *The Chocolate Kiddies*, which played in Berlin intermittently between 1925 and 1927.¹⁰ For those unable to attend a live show, one could listen to gramophone recordings or hear broadcasts of dance music (often live performances from hotels) during the late evening.¹¹ Sheet music also reflected the growing popularity of American social dances. The Hofmeister yearly catalogue of published musical works, for example, listed only five foxtrots for piano in 1918; by 1928, the catalogue now required special subcategories to accommodate a multitude of dances, such as the black bottom, blues, Charleston, foxtrot, ragtime, slow fox, one-step, 6/8 step, Boston, and something called a "Yale."¹² 1928 also saw the institutionalization of jazz when the Hoch Conservatory in

⁸ Jonathan O. Wipplinger, *The Jazz Republic: Music, Race, and American Culture in Weimar Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 24–26; Michael Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 5.

⁹ Cook, "Flirting," 171.

¹⁰ Cook, "Flirting," 169

¹¹ Provided one had the means to purchase, or access to, a radio or gramophone player. Both types of technology were too expensive for most Germans in the 1920s. Moreover, Karl Christian Führer points out that radio listenership was concentrated in urban areas, due to the prohibitive costs of radio sets and (until 1930) weak transmissions. Karl Christian Führer, "A Medium of Modernity? Broadcasting in Weimar Germany, 1923–1932," *The Journal of Modern History* 69, no. 4 (December 1997): 737.

¹² *Hofmeisters Jahresverzeichnis* 77 (1928), 244–246. For musicians, practical handbooks also appeared, such as Alfred Baresel's *Das neue Jazzbuch* (1927).

Frankfurt, under the leadership of Bernhard Sekles, began offering courses in jazz to its students with the reasoning that “today, more than half of all musicians are forced to regularly or occasionally play in a jazz ensemble.”¹³

Because of this growth, jazz and its significance increasingly became a subject of debate among musicians and intellectuals, with reactions ranging from enthusiasm to outright rejection. Modern music journals *Musikblätter des Anbruch* and *Auftakt* even devoted special issues to the subject.¹⁴ For proponents, jazz’s lively syncopation and seemingly spontaneous improvisation promised to revive a stagnant European art music tradition. In his article “Jazz as Salvation,” for example, Alfred Baresel argued that jazz’s interplay of different solo voices seemed to be the only way to encourage a more engaged form of chamber music “without being smothered in the polyphony” of traditional counterpoint.¹⁵ Incorporating jazz elements into art music also offered a way for composers to reach out to mass audiences by giving their music greater relevance and accessibility.¹⁶ Finally, jazz represented another rejection of romanticism and its ideals of subjectivity, emotionality, and masterpiece culture by being rooted firmly in the present, the commercial, the international, and the physical. For E. J. Müller, jazz “gets rid of all hollow

¹³ Sekles’s decision to offer jazz courses was part of a larger set of reforms for the conservatory. “Kreuz und Quer. Jazz-Klasse an Dr. Hoch’s Konservatorium,” *Zeitschrift für Musik* 94 (1927): 706. “Mehr als die Hälfte aller Musiker ist heutzutage gezwungen, in einem Jazz-Ensemble dauernd oder gelegentlich zu spielen...”

¹⁴ *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 7, no. 4 (April 1925); *Auftakt* 6, no. 10 (1926).

¹⁵ Alfred Baresel, “Jazz als Rettung,” *Auftakt* 6, no. 10 (1926): 215. “Diese Jazz-Kontrapunktik, die an Stelle durchgeführter Gegenstimmen kurze, spontane Einfälle und Zwischenbemerkungen einzelner Instrumente in einem gleichberechtigten Solisten-Ensemble setzt, erscheint als einzige Möglichkeit, eine stärker besetzte Kammermusik zu geben, ohne dass wir in Polyphonie ersticken.”

¹⁶ Auner, *Music*, 100, 118; Cook, “Flirting,” 155.

pomp, it does not go on stilts, but rather always preaches *life*, child-like fresh, free life.”¹⁷ For jazz’s detractors, of course, these very factors represented a threat to the metaphysical essence of German art music.¹⁸

These debates reflected a larger preoccupation with America and its mass culture (*Amerikanismus*) following the Great War.¹⁹ Its skyscrapers, film industry, productivity, economic strength, sports, popular culture, democracy, and capitalism seemed to embody the very essence of modernity. As an American creation, jazz thus became a symbol or soundtrack of fast-paced, contemporary urban life, its rhythms evoking those of the metropolis or factory. Fritz Giese, in his book *Girllkultur* (1925), made an explicit connection between jazz and sensory experience of the city, as jazz gave the feeling:

of being run over, of the electric shock, the clap of the mail box, the whistle of the locomotive, the whetting of a razor blade, as elegantly expressed as the rolling of the elevated train, the functioning of the vending machine, the flapping of a revolving door of a café, stumbling up and down the stairs of the subway, the calls of the newspaper sellers, the pounding of jackhammers constructing a high-rise, the grinding of cranes, howling of factory sirens or anything else that life in the city might offer.²⁰

¹⁷ E. J. Müller, “Jazz als Karikatur,” *Auftakt* 6, no. 10 (1926): 218. “Sie räumt mit allem hohlen Pomp auf, geht nicht auf Stelzen, sondern predigt immer wieder das *Leben*, das kindlich frische, freie Leben.”

¹⁸ Beeke Sell Tower notes that “the enormous success of American-style mass culture stirred anxieties about the eclipse of serious European ‘high’ culture in many quarters.” There were also concerns about jazz’s popularity threatening the livelihoods of classical musicians. Beeke Sell Tower, “‘Ultramodern and Ultraprimitive’: Shifting Meanings in the Imagery of Americanism in the Art of Weimar Germany,” in *Dancing on the Volcano: Essays on the Culture of the Weimar Republic*, eds. Thomas W. Kniesche and Stephen Brockmann (Columbia: Camden House, 1994), 94.

¹⁹ For discussions of the influence of America on postwar Germany, see Cook, “Flirting,” 154; Wipplinger, 4; Sell Tower, 85–104; and Thomas J. Saunders, “How American Was It? Popular Culture from Weimar to Hitler,” in *German Pop Culture: How “American” Is It?* ed. Agnes C. Mueller (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), 54–55.

²⁰ Fritz Giese, *Girllkultur: Vergleiche zwischen amerikanischem und europäischem Rhythmus und Lebensgefühl* (Munich: Delfin-Verlag, 1925), 33. “Das Erlebnisse, wie das des Überfahrenwerdens, des elektrischen Schlags, der Briefkastenklappe, des Lokomotivpfeiffs, des Rasiermesserwetzens ebenso elegant zum Ausdruck bringt wie das Rollen der Hochbahn, das Funktionieren des Warenautomaten, das Flügeln der Kaffeedrehtür, das Treppauf-treppab-

Likewise, Katharina Rathaus, in her 1926 essay on the Charleston, linked jazz's rhythms with production, speed, and modern technology:

The waltz is dead—and all attempts to resuscitate it are failing and destined to fail. For the times have changed and with them, like a natural necessity, so must the dances. Today, when a new car rolls out of Ford's factory every minute, when "Valencia" and the latest hits are played simultaneously in major cities and the smallest provincial nests, when radio makes it possible for us and the deepest forest dwellers to check out simultaneously the applause earned by the closing Charleston in the Savoy Hotel in London, in Berlin's pace-setting Dance Palace, or in Paris—today the movement and rhythm of dance is different than it was in the cozy times of the blessed Strauss. They are creatures of the new mobility of life, of its whipped-up and racing tempo!²¹

Jazz's potential to revitalize art music through its machine-like rhythms echoed calls to revitalize the German nation after its defeat in the war with American-style efficiency ("Taylorism") and assembly lines ("Fordism").²² Katharina Rathaus referred to the idea of a desiccated Europe in need of revivification through jazz's rhythms, writing how "the new generation fastens its excited grip on the new dances. It senses that the empty bowls of the old Europe will offer no new nourishment for the blood, that the burned-out temperament of the European centers of culture can convey to the body no unsuspected, electrifying rhythm."²³ Jazz also seemed a representation of American democracy; as a part of popular culture, it stood in sharp contrast to the elitism of art music. Hermann Schildberger in *Die Musik* even saw the jazz band itself as a

Stürzen in der Untergrundbahn, das Rufen der Zeitungsverkäufer, das Pochen der Niethämmer im Hochhausbau, das Knirschen von Kränen, Heulen der Fabriksirenen oder was es sonst aus diesem Leben der Stadt gäbe."

²¹ Katharina Rathaus, "Charleston: Every Age Has the Dance It Deserves," in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, 558.

²² Balderston, 74.

²³ Rathaus, 558.

microcosm of emancipation, noting that “democratic America has created an orchestra run by democratic rules.”²⁴

Yet jazz’s association with America and modernity also prompted opposition to it from all sides of the political spectrum.²⁵ For some, the surge in American social dances heralded an onslaught of American superficiality and *Zivilisation* and the end of German *Kultur*. With its links to “Fordism” and technology, jazz was also an unwelcome manifestation of the mechanization of modern life, turning individuals into soulless automatons. One writer for the leftist newspaper *Die Aktion*, for example, stated that the “wildest gyrations” of dancers suggested “ultimately nothing other than a well-oiled automaton,” while the composer Hans Pfitzner condemned jazz as “soulless American machinism.”²⁶ Stefan Zweig also attributed American popular dances with contributing to the “monotonization and sterilization” of national customs and habits, as well as the “complete end of individuality,” as “millions of people, from Cape Town to Stockholm, from Buenos Aires to Calcutta, dance the same dance to the same short-winded, impersonal melodies.”²⁷

Jazz’s African American origins sparked similar debates. In his monograph *Anti-Music: Jazz and Racial Blackness in German Thought Between the Wars*, literary scholar Mark Christian Thompson argues that, despite the prevalence of white performers and attempts to

²⁴ Kater, *Drummers*, 17; Hermann Schildberger, “Jazz-Musik,” *Die Musik* 17, no. 12 (September 1926): 916. “Das demokratische Amerika schuf sich ein nach demokratischen Regeln gehandhabtes Orchester.”

²⁵ Cook, “Flirting,” 173.

²⁶ Alice Gerstel, “Jazzband,” *Die Aktion* 12, no. 4–5 (4 February 1922): 90–91; Hans Pfitzner, *Gesammelte Schriften*, v. 2 (Augsburg: Filser 1926), 117, quoted in Cornelius Partsch, “Hannibal ante Portas: Jazz in Weimar,” in Kniesche and Brockmann, *Dancing on the Volcano*, 108.

²⁷ Stefan Zweig, “The Monotonization of the World,” in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, 397–398.

appropriate it for European art music, jazz was “racially, fully, and inalterably identified with blackness.”²⁸ For jazz’s detractors, German *Kultur* was threatened by a music whose creators were believed to be racially inferior.²⁹ Descriptions of jazz as “howling,” “shrieking,” or simply “noise” reflected racial stereotypes of the “primitive” nature of Africans and/or African Americans.³⁰ The disproportionate focus on jazz’s rhythms and their effect on the body was also positioned against Western music’s supposed emphasis on melody and harmony that appealed to the mind, as seen in Ivan Goll’s 1926 assertion that “negroes dance with their senses. (While Europeans can only dance with their minds.)”³¹ Furthermore, the perception that jazz was engulfing Germany, such as the 1926 essay, “The Negroes are conquering Europe,” dovetailed with paranoid fears regarding the presence of Moroccan and Senegalese troops (as part of the French occupying forces) in the Rhineland immediately after the war.³² According to Thompson, the occupation prompted a “mini-industry of popular novels of black fighters raping German women and acting out other atrocities in accordance with racist stereotypes and fantasies.”³³ It is important to note, however, that champions of jazz employed this racial rhetoric as well. Jazz’s (and African Americans’) supposed naiveté, freedom, and irrationality were celebrated; its energy and rhythm could, in the right (white) hands, be cultivated and refined.³⁴ In his article regarding the introduction of jazz at the Hoch Conservatory, for instance, director Bernhard

²⁸ Thompson, 24.

²⁹ As Kater notes, due to its African-American origins, jazz was “deemed to be morally and aesthetically inferior to high German culture.” Kater, *Drummers*, 19.

³⁰ Partsch, 112.

³¹ Ivan Goll, “The Negroes Are Conquering Europe,” in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, 559.

³² Partsch, 111.

³³ Thompson, 16.

³⁴ Partsch notes that these tropes surrounding African art and its creators before the war were eventually transferred to jazz and its African American creators. Partsch, 30; Thompson, 24.

Sekles opined that, “only a transfusion of unspent Negro blood, if mediated by a tactful musician,” could revive European music.³⁵ Katharina Rathaus also spoke of how “the original motions of primitive peoples” could be “melted together with the remnants of Western culture” and “tempered in the ovens of modern civilization.”³⁶

Hindemith and Popular Music

In his oft-cited autobiographical statement for the 1922 Donaueschingen Festival, Hindemith referred to his experience with popular music, stating that “as a violinist, violist, pianist, or percussionist, I have ‘cultivated’ extensively the following music genres: chamber music of all kinds, cinema, coffee house, dance music, operetta, jazz bands, military music.”³⁷ Scholars generally use this quote to demonstrate the eclecticism of Hindemith’s compositions, the influence of jazz on his works, or his later involvement with non-concert works, or *Gebrauchsmusik*.³⁸ Yet Hindemith specified that he was familiar with these genres as a performer rather than as a composer. Indeed, Hindemith and his brother Rudolf, a cellist, frequently played at cinemas and coffee houses before the war, as noted in the previous chapter. He also performed light music in spa orchestras (*Kurkapelle*) in Switzerland, playing at a resort in Lugano at Lake Lucerne in 1913 and one in Heiden on Lake Constance the following year in order to help his family’s financial situation.³⁹ Programs from these performances show the

³⁵ Sekles, 706. “Hier kann eine von einem taktvollen Musiker vermittelte Transfusion unverbrauchten Niggerblutes wirklich nur nützen...” Ivan Goll also spoke of the drops of “Negro blood... slowly falling over Europe, a long-since dried-up land that can scarcely breathe.” Goll, 560.

³⁶ Rathaus, 232.

³⁷ Hindemith, “Paul Hindemith,” 329. “Habe als Geiger, Bratscher, Klavierspieler, oder Schlagzeuger folgende musikalische Gebiete ausgiebig ‘beackert’: Kammermusik aller Art, Kino, Kaffeehaus, Tanzmusik, Operette, Jazz-Band, Militärmusik.”

³⁸ Morgan, 222.

³⁹ Rexroth, *Briefe*, 23.

inclusion of popular dances such as two-steps, tangos, and one-steps (frequently with titles that evoked America like “Uncle Sammy” or “The Wigwam”), in addition to the usual fare of waltzes, overtures, polkas, and marches (fig. 2.1).⁴⁰

The image shows a photograph of a program from the Kurkapelle Bürgenstock. The left page contains a list of musical pieces for three different times of day: Mornings 10–11 Uhr Grand Hotel, Nachmittags 4 Uhr Bahnhof-Rest, and Abends 8 1/4 Uhr Palace-Hotel. The right page features an advertisement for Schweizer & Co., Lucerne, which includes an illustration of a building and text in German and English describing their products and services.

Kurkapelle Bürgenstock
(Direktion HANS WUTSCHKA)

Mittwoch den 20. August 1913

Morgens 10—11 Uhr Grand Hotel

1. Marsch aus „Der Extrazug nach Nizza“ Weis
2. Ouvertüre zur Oper „Zampa“ Herold X
3. Puppchen-Walzer Gilbert
4. Fantasie aus „La Bohème“ Puccini
5. Rêverie Vieuxtemps X
6. Marschlied Gilbert

Nachmittags 4 Uhr Bahnhof-Rest.

1. 73er Regiments-Marsch Kopetzky
2. Ouvertüre zu „Die Fledermaus“ Strauss
3. Wiener Bonbons, Walzer Strauss
4. Fantasie aus „Faust u. Margarethe“ Gounod
5. Duett aus „Die Studentengräfin“ Fall
6. Vive l'amour! Lied aus „Grigri“ Lincke
7. Berlin wackelt! Potpourri Morena
8. The Wigwam, Two-Step Farban

Abends 8 1/4 Uhr Palace-Hotel

1. Le Régiment de Sambre-et-Meuse, Marche Turlet
2. Ouvertüre z. Op. „Figaros Hochzeit“ Mozart X
3. Walzer aus „Der Rosenkavalier“ R. Strauss
4. Fantasie aus „Die Meistersinger“ R. Wagner
5. Zwei Menuette Beethoven
6. Slawischer Tanz Nr. 1 Dvorak

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près de la cathédrale.
Spécialités: Etoffes de soie, Robes et Corsages brodés, véritables dentelles, linge, bonneterie de soie, Toilettes sur mesure.
Envoi de nos marchandises franco de port et de droits à l'étranger. Echantillons franco sur demande.

Schweizer & Co., Lucerne
bei der Hofkirche.
Spezialität: Seidenstoffe, gestickte Roben und Blousen, echte Spitzen, Linge, seid. Unterkleider. Kleider n. Mass. Versand unserer Waren zoll- und portofrei ins Ausland. Muster auf Verlangen umgehend franko.

Figure 2.1. Program from the Kurkapelle Bürgenstock. Hindemith-Institut, Kopien von Programmzetteln, 1916–1922, 1923–1925.

Popular music even formed part of the soundscape of his military service in the First World War, as he and his fellow band members were frequently ordered to provide entertainment for his superior officers.⁴¹ Numerous entries in his war diary also record Hindemith and his comrades

⁴⁰ See programs from 6, 21, and 20 August 1913. Hindemith-Institut, Kopien von Programmzetteln, 1916–1922, 1923–1925.

⁴¹ In their introduction to Hindemith's war diary, Sylvie Gregg and Giseler Schubert note that the composer “thrashed on the piano the cheesiest entertainment music for drunken

playing and dancing to music for their own (often drunken) enjoyment, including a dance he called “The Bear,” which possibly refers to the “Grizzly Bear,” an American dance popularized and brought to Europe by the Anglo-American dancers Irene and Vernon Castle around 1911.⁴² Despite—or because of—this extensive performing experience, Hindemith generally viewed popular or entertainment music (*Unterhaltungsmusik*) as a commercial, rather than artistic, product.⁴³ Moreover, he often held these gigs and their music in low regard; an entry from his war diary spoke, for example, reads, “In the evening the ‘celebration’ at the recreation center. An awful event. Crap, kitsch. Delivered some crappy music with August. The stupidest pop music.”⁴⁴

This rather disparaging attitude carried over when, in the last year of the war through the early 1920s, Hindemith tried his hand at composing the sort of popular music he had “cultivated” as a player.⁴⁵ On 22 March 1920, for example, he wrote his publishers to offer his latest

officers” (“[Hindemith] drischt auf einem Klavier vor sich betrinkenden Offizieren billigste Unterhaltungsmusik”). Hindemith, “Notizen,” 55.

⁴² See entries from 14 February 1918 and 5 March 1918; Susan Cook, *Opera for a New Republic: The Zeitopern of Krenek, Weill, and Hindemith* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), 44.

⁴³ Historian Bernd Widdig has noted how the “large-scale production” of popular culture “was much better suited to survive the cultural onslaught of an inflation. Its consumption was instantaneous, and it could adapt itself well to the present-oriented atmosphere during the inflation.” In contrast, “high culture... tended to suppress or even deny its ultimate reliance on money.” Widdig, 191.

⁴⁴ Hindemith, entry for 26 January 1928, “Notizen,” 63. “Abends das ‘Fest’ im Soldatenheim. Eine furchtbare Veranstaltung. Mist, Kitsch. Eine Saumusik geliefert mit August. Die blödsinnigsten Schlager.” He also complained about the quality and repertoire of the *Kurkapelle* in Switzerland in a letter to family friends. Hindemith to the Weber Family, 27 July 1913, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 26.

⁴⁵ Much of this music seems to have stemmed from performances with friends at parties. Examples include “The Spleeny Mau” ragtime (1917), based on the nickname of cellist Maurits Frank; “Lijonel, der Abschieds-Foxtrot (1920), written for a party at Frank’s house; or “Bobby’s Wahn-Step” (1922), a two-step written for the Frankfurt Opera baritone Robert vom Scheidt. Unfortunately, these works are lost today. “Serious” works in which he used popular music

compositions: *Three Hymns of Walt Whitman*, Sonata for Viola and Piano, and a new string quartet. Towards the end of the letter, he added, “Can you also use Foxtrots, Bostons, Rags and other kitsch? Whenever I can’t come up with any more respectable (*anständige*) music, I always write such things. I’m quite successful with them and I think you can do more business with them than with my best chamber music. (Good kitsch is really hard to find.)”⁴⁶ Confirming the profitability of such music, Ludwig Strecker responded that, “the news that you’re also engaging with the light Muse (*leichten Muse*) really interested us. Unfortunately, we do have a use for it and we beg you to forward us the sample of your talent in this area.”⁴⁷ Hindemith jumped on the offer, stating that he would send his serious works and “besides these respectable (*anständige*) things, the following unrespectable (*unanständige*) ones,” listing off several waltzes, a ragtime and marches.⁴⁸ If both Hindemith and Ludwig viewed popular music as a commercial product, they also made a clear distinction between it and art music in their choice of vocabulary. While Ludwig delicately referred to Hindemith’s engagement with the “light Muse,” Hindemith’s constant, if joking, use of the word “unanständige” implies a value judgment, as the word

included the piano work *In einer Nacht, Träume und Erlebnisse*, op. 15 (ca. 1917–1919) and *Rag Time (wohltempiert) für großes Orchester* (1921).

⁴⁶ Hindemith to Schott, 22 March 1920. “Können Sie auch Foxtrotts, Bostons, Rags und anderen Kitsch brauchen? Wenn mir keine anständige Musik mehr einfällt, schreibe ich immer solche Sachen. Die gelingen mir sehr gut und ich denke mir, Sie könnten mit einem solchen Stück mehr Geschäfte machen als mit meiner besten Kammermusik. (Guter Kitsch ist ja auch furchtbar selten).”

⁴⁷ Indeed, Hindemith’s foxtrot titled “Dance of the Wooden Dolls” (*Tanz der Holzpuppen*) from the Christmas play *Tuttifantchen* (1922) was sold separately as a piano work, also pointing to the commercial value of such music. L. Strecker to Hindemith, 24 March 1920. “Sehr interessiert hat uns die Nachricht, dass Sie sich auch mit der leichten Muse befassen. Wir haben leider dafür Verwendung und bitten Sie sehr, uns doch die Proben Ihrer Begabung auf diesem Gebiete zu übersenden.”

⁴⁸ Hindemith to Schott, 1 April 1920. “Und außer dieser anständigen Sachen noch folgende unanständige: Drei Märsche („Musik für 6 Instrumente,” „Das Grab ist mein Freude” und „Gouda-Emmental”), zwei Walzer („Gut Ziel” und „Een krachtig voedel”), ein Ragtime („The Spleeny Mau”) und das Intermezzo „Colombo.”

translates to “indecent,” “dirty,” “obscene,” or “shocking.” This short exchange once again demonstrates the conflict between prewar romantic ideals and postwar economic realities that composers faced.

Kammermusik Nr. 1 mit Finale 1921, Op. 24, no. 1 (1922)

Hindemith would exploit these tensions between commercial and concert music in his *Kammermusik Nr. 1 mit Finale 1921*, op. 24, no. 1, which premiered on 31 July 1922 at the Donaueschingen Chamber Music Festival. The work is scored for twelve players: flute (doubling on piccolo), clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, percussion, harmonium (which Hindemith later changed to accordion), piano, string quartet, and bass. Although Hindemith specifically designated it as chamber music, the instrumentation carried a whiff of the commercial rather than the esoteric, calling to mind that of a dance band.⁴⁹ The variety of percussion instruments in “Finale: 1921” (snare drum, woodblock, tambourine, small cymbals, xylophone, triangle, siren, a can filled with sand, and a single pitch from a glockenspiel) also suggested the instrumentation of a cinema orchestra, since percussionists would have to provide a variety of sound effects for a film.⁵⁰ The prominent xylophone part arguably added another layer of kitsch, as this instrument was not only prominent in dance bands by virtue of its piercing, staccato timbre, but it also appeared in vaudeville shows with flashy soloists and entire xylophone bands.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Susan Cook has suggested that the instrumentation resembles that of his *Kurkapelle* in Switzerland. Cook, *Opera*, 150.

⁵⁰ The instrumentation is quite similar to that of his score for the film *Im Kampf mit dem Berg*.

⁵¹ James Allen Strain, “The Xylophone, ca. 1878–1930: Its Published Literature, Development as a Concert Instrument, and Use in Musical Organizations,” (DMA diss., Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, 1995), 37. The xylophone scoring may have also been a nod to the prominent xylophone part in *Petrushka*, as Ian Kemp describes the first movement as “undoubtedly the finest *Petrushka*-derivative of the twentieth century.” Kemp, *Hindemith*, 11.

Hindemith's instructions in the score that the performers should be invisible to the audience also collided with art music conventions.⁵² Like the instrumentation, he may have intended to evoke a dance band or cinema orchestra in which the music remains a secondary concern, in contrast to the attentive listening by audience members at a chamber concert. Susan Cook has also suggested that the invisible ensemble could have been a reference to the gramophone record or radio, two media Hindemith would explore in the late 1920s.⁵³ If so, the effect is to transform traditional live music into a reproduced commodity. This possible nod to technology would have also reinforced the commercial slant of the music; early recording technology was linked with popular music, as its short songs and simple arrangements suited the technology's limitations in length and timbral reproduction.⁵⁴

The most prominent clash between art and popular music, however, occurred in the fourth movement, titled "Finale: 1921," which quotes an actual foxtrot by the composer Wilm Wilm and ends with a siren blast.⁵⁵ Scholars traditionally frame this movement as part of Hindemith's vehement postwar rejection of romanticism. Ian Kemp, for example, notes that the work's "collusion with jazz," "brutish finale," and "shriek the of the siren" debunked "cherished ideals" of chamber music, while Stephen Hinton describes it as "a rather puerile, noisy farewell

⁵² It seems that the work was never performed this way. Hindemith, *Kammermusik Nr. 1 mit Finale 1921 für zwölf Solo-Instrumente*, op. 24, no. 1 (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1922), 4. "Es empfiehlt sich, die vortragenden dem Publikum unsichtbar zu plazieren."

⁵³ Cook, *Opera*, 150.

⁵⁴ Corey Ross, "Entertainment, Technology and Tradition: The Rise of Recorded Music from the Empire to the Third Reich," in *Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 29–30.

⁵⁵ Michael Kube reproduces the original foxtrot in his article "Paul Hindemiths Jazz-Reception: Stationen einer Episode," *Musiktheorie* 10, no. 1 (1995): 63–72. Ian Kemp and Glenn Watkins both describe the siren as Futurist and/or Dadaist. Kemp, *Hindemith*, 11; Watkins, *Proof Through the Night: Music and the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 404.

to Romanticism.”⁵⁶ The *succès de scandale* caused by the work at its premiere also bolsters the image of Hindemith as the *enfant terrible*, who deliberately shocked concertgoers by imposing jazz onto the concert hall. Attfield, for example, describes *Kammermusik Nr. 1* as “the iconoclastic work of a roguish young performer-composer. Gleeefully, the work challenges the aesthetics of chamber music and the institution of the bourgeois concert hall...”⁵⁷ Stephen Hinton likewise notes that with this work, “youthful proclivity towards ‘épater le bourgeois’ reaches its high point and where there is not so much a rapprochement between the two worlds of ‘kitsch’ and ‘Kammermusik’ as a head-on collision.”⁵⁸

While Hindemith may have intended to challenge chamber music conventions, another possible interpretation of the finale of *Kammermusik Nr. 1* is that Hindemith drew on jazz’s extramusical associations in order to express his own ambivalence toward (or even critique of) modern life. In particular, he drew on the common association of jazz with fast-paced, mechanized, urban life.⁵⁹ The fourth movement, marked “Lebhaft,” begins with quiet yet relentless triplets in the strings, punctuated by percussive entrances by the piano, giving the impression of the hum of machinery, or of a machine starting up (ex. 1). The regular rumbling of triplets is frequently interrupted by the fortissimo rat-a-tat-tat of snare drum triplets (perhaps recalling a jackhammer), accompanied by dissonant chords (G-C-F, D-G#-C#) in the piano and in the accordion (ex. 2). The dissonance, the harmonium’s unique timbre, and the three repetitions give the impression of a honking horn, foreshadowing the noise of the siren at the

⁵⁶ Kemp, *Hindemith*, 10-11; Hinton, *Gebrauchsmusik*, 170.

⁵⁷ Attfield, 100.

⁵⁸ Hinton, *Gebrauchsmusik*, 165.

⁵⁹ The first and second movement also feature fast tempos and aggressive rhythms: the first is marked “sehr schnell und wild” and the second “sehr streng im Rhythmus.”

Example 2.1.1. Hindemith, *Kammermusik Nr. 1*, op. 24, no. 1, “Finale ‘1921’,” mm. 1–6.

Lebhaft

The musical score is written for five instruments: Klavier (Piano), Violine I (Violin I), Violine II (Violin II), Bratsche (Viola), and Cello. The tempo is marked **Lebhaft**. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 12/8. The piano part begins with a *ppp* (pianississimo) dynamic. The string parts enter in measure 2 with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic. The violin parts are marked *8va bassa* in measure 2. The viola and cello parts also have a *pp* dynamic marking. The score shows the first six measures of the piece.

Example 2.2. Hindemith, *Kammermusik Nr. 1*, op. 24, no. 1, “Finale ‘1921’,” mm. 41–43.

The musical score for Example 2.2, Hindemith's *Kammermusik Nr. 1*, op. 24, no. 1, “Finale ‘1921’,” measures 41–43, is presented below. The score is for a chamber ensemble including Flute, Clarinet in B $\flat$, Klein Trommel, Klavier, Akkordeon, Violine I, Violine II, Bratsche, Cello, and Kontrabaß. The measures are marked with a bracket and the number 40. The Flute and Clarinet play a dotted rhythm melody. The Klein Trommel, Klavier, and Akkordeon play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The strings (Violine I, Violine II, Bratsche, Cello, Kontrabaß) play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo) and *pp* (pianissimo).

end. Floating above the noise and frenetic pace, a dotted rhythm melody that recalls a foxtrot appears in the flute and clarinet, permeating the atmosphere. The quotation of Wilm Wilm’s foxtrot appears about midway through the movement in the trumpet, functioning as a sort of

diegetic music, as if one were hearing a recording or performance of the foxtrot rising above the urban cacophony (ex. 3).

Example 2.3. Hindemith, *Kammermusik Nr. 1*, op. 24, no. 1, “Finale ‘1921’,” mm. 172–177.

The musical score for Hindemith's *Kammermusik Nr. 1*, op. 24, no. 1, “Finale ‘1921’,” measures 172–177, is presented for a chamber ensemble. The score includes parts for the following instruments: Großflöte, Klarinette in B $\flat$, Fagott, Trompete (in B), Klein Trommel, Akkordeon, Klavier, Violine I, Violine II, Bratsche, Cello, and Kontrabaß. The music is in 3/4 time and features a complex, rhythmic texture with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The key signature has one sharp (F $\sharp$). The score shows measures 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, and 177. Dynamics include *ff* (fortissimo) and *sf* (sforzando). The instrumentation is typical of a 1920s chamber ensemble.

The image displays a page of musical notation, likely from a score for a work by Hindemith. The notation is arranged in several systems, each containing multiple staves. The top system includes a vocal line (soprano, alto, and tenor parts) and a piano accompaniment. The middle system shows a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) for piano. The bottom system continues the piano accompaniment with multiple staves. The notation is complex, featuring many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together in rapid passages. There are also various rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings throughout the score.

Hindemith's subtitle for the finale, "1921," also suggests that the work was meant to depict modern, and presumably, urban life. Richard Taruskin interprets this title as evidence of Hindemith's postwar antiromantic stance, conveying a sort of "planned-obsolescence" by

signaling that the music was meant to be used and consumed, rather than be a timeless piece of art.⁶⁰ Yet the subtitle may simply function in a quintessentially romantic way: painting not only the soundscape of a modern city, but also reflecting a time of hyperinflation, political instability, and violence. Critics certainly understood the work as program music, frequently calling it a mirror or picture of the current time. The critic for the *Hannoverscher Anzeiger*, for instance, believed that “the clearly expressed intention of Hindemith” was to “paint a picture of the times (*Zeitbild*),”⁶¹ and although the writer for the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* disliked how Hindemith had “dragged the foxtrot from the dance floor to the concert hall with an unspeakably nasty trumpet gesture,” he still recognized that the purpose was to “paint the chaos of our frenzied time.”⁶² Another critic, after a performance in March 1923 in Mainz, noted that Hindemith himself had called the work a “picture of the times from the metropolis” (*Zeitbild aus der Großstadt*), positing the composer’s intent to “hold up a funhouse mirror of his time” (*Zerrspiegel seiner Zeit*).⁶³ More importantly, many critics also interpreted *Kammermusik Nr. 1* as an indictment of modern times and of the inflationary period in particular.⁶⁴ Guido Bagier in *Die Musik* called Finale “1921” “worthy of that year: We poor people, who experienced it and

⁶⁰ Taruskin, *Early Twentieth Century*, 528.

⁶¹ *Hannoverscher Anzeiger*, 29 May 1924, quoted in Giselher Schubert, introduction to *Konzertante Kammermusik I*, vol. 4, no. 1 of Finscher and Schubert, *Paul Hindemith: Sämtliche Werke*, xx. “Nun, die deutlich ausgesprochene Absicht Hindemiths, ein *Zeitbild* ,1921’ zu malen...”

⁶² *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 20 March 1924, quoted in Schubert, introduction to *Konzertante Kammermusik I*, xx. “mit einer unsäglich gemeinen Trompetengeste den Foxtrott aus der Tanzdiele in den Konzertsaal zerrt...Chaos unserer wilde Zeit zu malen...”

⁶³ *Mainzer Anzeiger*, 8 March 1923, quoted in Schubert, introduction to *Konzertante Kammermusik I*, xx. “wie es Hindemith selbst benamst hat...”

⁶⁴ The idea of the work as a “*Zeitbild*” of 1921 was especially prominent in performances after 1923, when the German economy was beginning to recover.

now have to hear it!”⁶⁵ One writer asked whether “in these years of misery” (*Jammerjahren*) it was more worthy to write pleasing, escapist music or to deal directly with the “entirely grey horrific episode of 1921”:

Hindemith goes this second way, not caring whether the result is also comfortably enjoyable. If his musical picture of the times becomes anything other than a picture of the culture, it would be more fair to boo this time period and the activities of 1921 contemporaries that are musically depicted, than to boo the composer.”⁶⁶

An unidentified article from 1924 also blamed the time and not the composer:

But what does Hindemith want? The subtitle of the last movement “1921” gives a hint. He paints the craziness of people in this year in his kind of music and it is no wonder that it teems with dissonances and cacophony. He holds up to people, as it were, a mirror of the time, and people are horrified at the hideous face that stares back at them, when in the last movement, the most famous foxtrot of 1921 emerges in the trumpet and a shrill whistle signals the end of the gin joint activities.⁶⁷

Underscoring the work’s satirical, unflattering portrait of modernity, one critic even compared Hindemith’s aural *Zeitbild* to the work of visual artist George Grosz, questioning whether it was

⁶⁵ Guido Bagier, “Donaueschingen,” *Die Musik* 15, no. 1 (October 1922): 67. “Das Finale ‘1921’ war jenes Jahres würdig; wir Armen, die wir dies erlebten und nun hören!”

⁶⁶ In this review, the writer is favorably comparing Hindemith’s work to Strauss’s 1924 ballet *Schlagobers*, which featured different dancing confections. *Hannoverscher Anzeiger*, 29 May 1924. “[O]der: sich diesen ganzen grauen Spuk von 1921 geradeweg, ohne Schlagsahne von der Leber wegzuschreiben. Hindemith geht diesen zweiten Weg, unbekümmert darum, ob das Ergebnis auch bequem genießbar ist. Wenn nun sein musikalisches Zeitbild alles andere als ein Kultur-Bild wird, so wäre gerechterweise mehr über diese Zeit, über das musikalisch abgemalte Treiben der Zeitgenossen 1921 als über den Komponisten Pfui zu rufen.”

⁶⁷ Article from June 1924, quoted in Schubert, introduction to *Konzertante Kammermusik I*, xxi. “Aber was will Hindemith? Der Untertitel des letzten Satzes: ‘1921’ gibt einen Fingerzeig. Er malt die ganze Verrücktheit der Menschen in diesem Jahre auf seine Art in Töne, und da ist es kein Wunder, wenn es von Dissonanzen und Kakophonien nur so wimmelt, er hält den Menschen gleichsam einen Spiegel der Zeit entgegen, und die Menschen sind entsetzt, was für eine Fratze ihnen daraus entgegenstarrt, wenn im letzten Satz in der Trompete der bekannteste Foxtrott des Jahres 1921 auftaucht und ein schriller Pfiff dem Kaschemmentreiben ein Ende bereitet.”



Figure 2.2. George Grosz, *Friedrichstraße* (1918). Off-set lithograph on woven paper. 10 3/8 x 6 7/8 inches (26.35 x 17.46 cm). Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

“the duty of music to set the pictures of George Grosz to music, to symphonically illustrate the spirit of profiteering...”⁶⁸ In his works of the 1920s, Grosz repeatedly depicted the feverish bustle of the city, populated by corpulent capitalists, prostitutes, and disfigured war veterans, “reflecting a ruined world that manifested itself most trenchantly in the big city and its excesses” (fig. 2.2)⁶⁹

In their attempts to describe how the foxtrot-laden “Finale: 1921” captured the chaos of the time, critics often relied on the trope of the Witches’ Sabbath (*Hexensabbath*), the myth in Christian European tradition (dating back to the fourteenth century) of witches assembling to participate in various Satanic rites and orgiastic dancing.⁷⁰ Critic Paul Bekker, for example, commented on the “infernally-filled cockiness” of the last movement, while the critic for the *Leipziger Neuesten Nachrichten* described it as a “witches’ Sabbath” and “foxtrot orgy, which is indeed extremely witty, furious, and [full] of courageous cockiness.”⁷¹ The critic for the *Hessische Landeszeitung* believed that Hindemith has created a work:

that without question displays a downright refined technical mastery, but that unfortunately, in its lascivious-erotic attitude, has nothing more in common with art in a higher, nobler, or even ethical sense. It is the expression of a crude, white-hot sensuality that whips up all instincts in order to have them circle in a wild frenzy.⁷²

⁶⁸ *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, quoted in Schubert, introduction to *Konzertante Kammermusik I*, xix. “Ob es Aufgabe der Musik, Bilder von George Grosz zu vertonen, den Schiebergeist sinfonisch zu illustrieren, auf diese Frage kann der Kunstästhet nur ein glattes Nein antworten.”

⁶⁹ Ursula Zeller, “Grosz, George,” *Grove Art Online*. 2003, accessed 9 Feb. 2020. <https://www-oxfordartonline-com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/groveart/view/>.

⁷⁰ Widdig, 204–205. The language of these descriptions frequently bled over into racial stereotypes of jazz’s primitiveness and hypersexuality.

⁷¹ Paul Bekker, quoted in Schubert, introduction to *Konzertante Kammermusik I*, xix. “das von infernalischem Übermut erfüllte ‘Finale’ 1921’ der Kammermusik...”; *Leipziger Neuesten Nachrichten*, 10 August 1922, quoted in Schubert, introduction to *Konzertante Kammermusik I*, xix. “... in einen wilden Musik-Hexensabbath, in einer Foxtrott-Orgie (Motto: 1921) landet, die gewiss äußerst witzig, grimmig, von mutiger Keckheit ist...”

⁷² *Hessische Landeszeitung*, quoted in Schubert, introduction to *Konzertante Kammermusik I*, xix. “[Hindemith] hat in seiner *Kammermusik Nr. 1* ein Werk geschaffen, das

The critic's allusion to a circle of dancers calls to mind the most famous example of a Witches' Sabbath: Berlioz's round dance in the "Dream of a Witches' Sabbath" from *Symphonie fantastique* (1830).

Kammermusik Nr. 1 also evoked another infernal dance: the Dance of Death (*Totentanz*).

The dance of death was originally a medieval representation of death as a skeleton leading the living of all social stations to the grave, often to the accompaniment of music, as depicted in the iconic woodcuts of Hans Holbein the Younger (fig. 2.3).⁷³ (Hindemith's prominent use of the xylophone in *Kammermusik Nr. 1* resonates with this connection, as Holbein depicted skeletons playing the instrument, while Saint-Saens used the instrument in a similar manner in his *Danse macabre* (1875) and for the "Fossils" movement in *Carnival of the Animals*.) Hindemith himself may have adopted this association, as a program from a performance of the work in Halle on 19 March 1923 directly linked the finale with the Dance of Death motif, while also regarding the motif as a metaphor for the present time: "The two outer movements mirror our current time. 'The horrid Dance of Death, the foxtrot with which Germany rages to its own grave,' has never before been musically depicted with such strong vividness, with such infernal humor, as in the last movement of this work."⁷⁴ In case critics misunderstood the work as an endorsement of the

ohne Frage von einer geradezu raffinierten technischen Meisterschaft ist, das aber leider in seiner lasziv-erotischen Einstellung mit Kunst in höherem, edleren oder gar ethischen Sinne nichts mehr gemein hat. Es ist der Ausdruck einer rohen, weißglühenden Sinnlichkeit, die alle Instinkte aufpeitscht, um sie in wildem Tummel kreisen zu lassen."

⁷³ The message is that death comes for us all, no matter one's social station.

⁷⁴ Program notes from a performance on 19 March 1923 in Halle, quoted in Schubert, introduction to *Konzertante Kammermusik I*, xxiii. "Die beiden Ecksätze spiegeln unsere gegenwärtige Zeit. 'Der grauenvolle Totentanz, der Deutschland durchtobt, das Foxtrotten auf dem eigenen Grabe' ist noch nicht mit so starker Deutlichkeit, mit so infernalischem Humor musikalisch dargestellt worden, wie in dem Schlusssatz dieses Werkes..." Schubert indicates that Hindemith himself wrote the program notes, stating that with these words, Hindemith "gave

time, the program was quick to add that the “middle movements, however, show that Hindemith considers himself cut off from all this chaos.”⁷⁵



Figure 2.3. Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Old Woman* from *Dance of Death* (1538). Woodcut. 2 9/16 x 1 15/16 inches (6.5 x 5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Such associations with infernal dance appeared frequently in the discourse of the 1920s to symbolize Germany’s current chaos and violence, as well as its moral decay (crime, prostitution, sexual liberation). Artists had appropriated a darker version of the Dance of Death to explore the experiences and horrors of the Great War, including Otto Dix’s *Dance of Death*

the audience an understanding” of the work. (“Im Programmheft dieses Konzertes wurde er dem Publikum mit den Worten näher gebracht...”). Schubert, xxiii.

⁷⁵ Ibid. “dessen Mittelsätze aber zeigen, dass Hindemith sich von all diesem Chaos abzuschließen versteht.”

1917 (*Dead Man's Hill*) (*Totentanz anno 1917 [Höhe Toter Mann]*, 1924, fig. 2.4), Käthe Kollwitz's *The Volunteers* (*Die Freiwilligen*, 1921-22, fig. 2.5), Richard Hülsenbeck's Dadaist poem *Totentanz* (1916), choreographer Kurt Jooss's *The Green Table* (*Der Grüne Tische*, 1932), in which a hybrid figure of Death/German soldier interacts with different social archetypes, such as an old woman or other soldiers.⁷⁶



Figure 2.4. Otto Dix, *Dance of Death 1917 (Dead Man Hill)* (*Totentanz anno 1917 [Höhe Toter Mann]*) from *The War (Der Krieg)* (1924). Etching, aquatint, and drypoint. Plate: 9 5/8 x 11 5/8 inches (24.5 x 29.5 cm). The The Museum of Modern Art.

⁷⁶ Watkins, *Proof*, 222; Kate Elswit, "Berlin... Your Dance Partner is Death," *The Drama Review* 53, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 80.



Figure 2.5. Käthe Kollwitz. *The Volunteers (Die Freiwilligen)* from *War (Krieg)* (1923). Woodcut. 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (34.9 x 49.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art.

The Dance of Death theme was appropriated to describe the ills of the fledgling republic as well. Klaus Mann used it as a metaphor for inflation, portraying people of all social stations dancing to their demise to the sounds of jazz:

Why should we be more stable than our currency? The mark is dancing, so we dance along.

Millions of malnourished, corrupted, desperately horny, furiously hedonistic people stagger and whirl along in a jazz delirium. Dance becomes a mania, an *idée fixe*, a cult. The stock market leaps, the ministers wiggle, the Reichstag cuts capers. War cripples and war profiteers, film stars and prostitutes, retired monarchs (with compensation) and retired teachers (completely uncompensated)—all of them throw their limbs in gruesome euphoria... The “Girls” of the new revue theaters shake their behinds.

People dance fox-trot, shimmy, tango, the old-fashioned waltz and the chic St. Vitus' dance. They dance hunger and hysteria, anxiety and lust, panic and horror.⁷⁷

The new government itself also drew on the Dance of Death to symbolize the political chaos after the war, as seen in the 1919 poster "Berlin, stop! Come to your senses. Your dance partner is Death" (*Berlin, halt ein! Besinne Dich. Dein Tänzer ist der Tod*, fig. 2.6), which depicted a woman dancing a modern social dance with Death.⁷⁸ An artist named Van Santen had created the poster for the Publicity Office of the Socialist Republic in direct response to the street fighting in Berlin in January 1919.⁷⁹ The poster was part of a larger publicity campaign to help the republic's survival by railing against strikes, Communist uprisings, and general disorder.⁸⁰ Van Santen borrowed the image from Dutch artist Louis Raemaekers's cartoon *German Tango* (1916), depicting what appears to be the statue of Berolina (the personification of Berlin) that stood in Alexanderplatz. Raemaekers became a fierce critic of Germany after its invasion of Belgium, satirizing the Kaiser and German atrocities in the Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf*.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Klaus Mann, *Der Wendepunkt: Ein Lebensbericht* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1958), 132. "Warum sollten wir stabiler sein als unsere Währung? Die deutsche Reichsmark tanzt: wir tanzen mit! Millionen von unterernährten, korrumpierten, verzweifelt geilen, wütend vergnügungssüchtigen Männern und Frauen torkeln und taumeln dahin im Jazz-Delirium. Der Tanz wird zur Manie, zur *idée fixe*, zum Kult. Die Börse hüpf, die Minister wackeln, der Reichstag vollführt Kapriolen. Kriegskröppel und Kriegsgewinnler, Filmstars und Prostituierte, pensionierte Monarchen (mit Fürstenabfindung) und pensionierte Studienräte (völlig unabgefunden)—alles wirft die Glieder in grausiger Euphorie... die 'Girls' der neuen Revue-theater schütteln animiert das Hinterteil. Man tanzt Foxtrott, Shimmy, Tango, den altertümlichen Walzer und den schicken Veitstanz. Man tanzt Hunger und Hysterie, Angst und Gier, Panik und Entsetzen."

⁷⁸ Wipplinger, 31.

⁷⁹ Sherwin Simmons, "Grimaces on the Walls: Anti-Bolshevist Posters and the Debate about Kitsch," *Design Issues* 14, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 27.

⁸⁰ Simmons, 23. The Publicity Office was simply a continuation of the wartime Central Office for Domestic Propaganda.

⁸¹ The caption came from Paul Zech's poem *Berlin, halt ein* (1914/1916), in which Zech "juxtaposed the visceral horrors of World War I with the distractions of the city that prevented



Figure 2.6. *Berlin, halt ein! Besinne Dich. Dein Tänzer ist der Tod.* Stanford University (1918). 28 x 38 inches (71.1 x 96.5 cm). Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Stanford University.

Author and Dada participant Walter Mehring explicitly linked this tango image with postwar jazz dances, while satirizing its anticommunist message, in his poem “Dada-Prologue 1919,” which contained the lines: “Berlin, your dance partner is Death—Foxtrot and jazz—The republic is amusing itself royally/ Forget me not on the first of May.”⁸² The linkage between the Dance of Death, jazz dances, and fears of unrest was apparent even in review of *Kammermusik Nr. 1*, as

his addressee, Berlin, from hearing anything besides the screeching of violins that enticed fools to the masquerade.” Zech later directed the Publicity Office of the Socialist Republic. Elswit, 73.

⁸² Walter Mehring, “Dada-Prolog 1919,” in *Das politische Cabaret: Chansons, Songs, Couplets* (Dresden: R. Kaemmerer, 1920), 9. “Berlin, dein Tänzer ist der Tod/ Foxtrott und Jazz/ Die Republik amüsiert sich königlich/ Vergiss mein nicht zum ersten Mai.” Other Dada artists targeted these propaganda posters in magazines such as *Jedermann sein eigener Fußball*. Simmons, 23–24.

one critic observed that in “Finale 1921,” “we can imagine the tumultuous noise of the excitement, when the Bolsheviks of the musical modern joined the music’s boiling, hissing, hooting, pillaging, and burning.”⁸³

The image of the witches’ sabbath was also used as a metaphor for inflation and its subsequent social ills. Thomas Mann recalled the summer of 1923 as when “the Inflation, like the legendary witches’ dance, became wilder and wilder, the figures rose faster and faster.”⁸⁴ A 1922 cartoon that appeared in the satirical German magazine *Simplicissimus* depicted inflation as a corpse with a distended belly, while a ring of naked women dance gleefully around it (fig. 2.7), adding what scholar Bernd Widdig describes as “a third dimension of inflation besides misery and ruthless profiteering: a Dionysian, amoral celebration of sensuality and chaos.”⁸⁵ Hindemith’s publishers also made a connection between jazz, the urban demimonde, and the infernal, specifically citing “Finale 1921.” When discussing a modernized version of *Faust* for a stage production in September 1923, Ludwig suggested Hindemith could use a foxtrot for Faust’s descent into hell: “Whether one relocates the scene to a modern metropolis—Hotel, in an opium den or otherwise—is a minor point. But it would be possible to feature some sort of modern Bacchanal with an infernal foxtrot, similar to your Kammermusik, as an introduction to the trip to hell.”⁸⁶

⁸³ *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, quoted in Schubert, introduction to *Konzertante Kammermusik I*, xix. “Man kann sich vorstellen, mit welchem tosendem Lärm der Begeisterung die Bolschewisten der musikalischen Moderne in das Sieden, Zischen, Johlen, Sengen und Brennen dieser Musik einstimmten.”

⁸⁴ Thomas Mann, “Inflation: The Witches’ Sabbath: Germany 1923,” *Encounter* 44, no. 2 (February 1975): 63. This essay was a reprint and translation from a 1942 lecture.

⁸⁵ Widdig, 204.

⁸⁶ L. Strecker to Hindemith, 18 September 1923. “Ob man das Bild in ein modernes Großstadt—Hotel, in eine Opium-Höhle oder sonst wohin verlegt, ist Nebensache. Es wäre aber denkbar, etwa ein modernes Bachanal mit dem infernalischen Foxtrott, ähnlich Ihrer Kammermusik, als Einleitung nur Höllenfahrt zu bringen.”

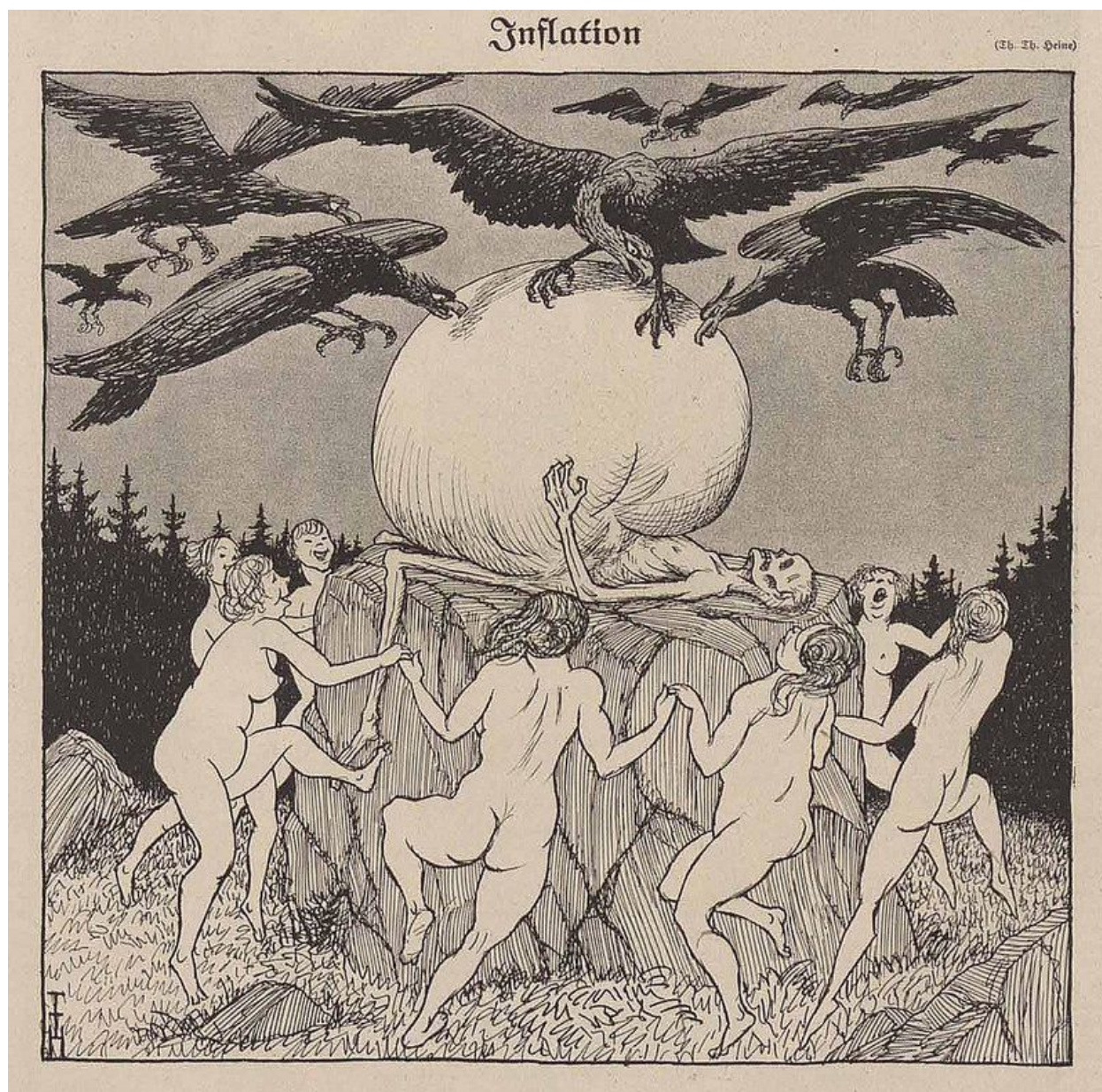


Figure 2.7. "Inflation." Illustration by Thomas Theodore Heine, in *Simplicissimus* 27, no. 32 (8 November 1922): 459.

Alfred Heuss, editor of the prestigious *Zeitschrift für Musik*, virtuosically wove these strands of modernity, jazz, urban life, and the demonic together in his 1923 review of *Kammermusik Nr. 1* titled "The Foxtrot in the Concert Hall" (Der Foxtrott im Konzertsaal).⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Alfred Heuss, "Der Foxtrott im Konzertsaal," *Zeitschrift für Musik* 90 (1923): 54–55. A performance of *Kammermusik Nr. 1* at the Leipzig Gewandhaus prompted his review.

Today, this review is almost as notorious as the work's premiere, as Heuss's polemic is, in the words of Stephen Hinton, "far more shocking and vulgar than the piece of music he is writing about."⁸⁸ Moreover, Heuss's railings elsewhere against Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Weill, his notorious anti-Semitism, and his subsequent entry into the NSDAP after 1937 have traditionally positioned him in Hindemith scholarship as a conservative foil to Hindemith the modernist.⁸⁹ At first glance, the article's notoriety is well-deserved, for Heuss launches into argument by proclaiming: "It has been achieved! Modern German music has finally succeeded in expressing life nowadays, as it riots at its most frivolous and most vile, where sexually perverse orgies take place and the French maxim "After us, the flood" has also become a German motto."⁹⁰ In case he wasn't clear enough, he also provided a detailed depiction of that orgy:

What we have here is a whistling and seething, a tearing, jabbing, and surging. A shrieking and screaming worries our ears; we see vulgar faces distorted by carnality, we hear whippings and hammerings, laughing and crying, moaning and cheering, piping and hooting; pairs split off in the most lascivious ways to perform literal foxtrot melodies, barbaric sounds of half-brute people indulging themselves in the fray are given voice, and at the end a long, all-penetrating whistle—perhaps a warning signal—before, in a trice, the whole thing is at an end. It is the most immoral, frivolous, and therefore most objective music one can think of.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Hinton, *Gebrauchsmusik*, 171.

⁸⁹ Nicholas Attfield has challenged this image in his chapter "Alfred Heuss, the *Zeitschrift für Musik*, and the Music Journal as Community," chapter three in *Challenging the Modern*, 70–105.

⁹⁰ Heuss, 54. "Es ist erreicht! Der modernen deutschen Musik ist es endlich gelungen, das heutige Leben dort zu fassen, wo es sich am frivolsten und gemeinsten austobt, wo sexuelle Perversitätsorgien sich abspielen und die französische Sentenz: *Après nous le déluge* auch zum deutschen Sinnspruch geworden ist."

⁹¹ Heuss, quoted and translated in Attfield, 100. "Es hebt da ein Zischen und Brodeln, ein Reißen, Stoßen und Drängen an, Gekreische und Schreien dringen an unser Ohr, man sieht sinnlich verzerrte, gemeine Gesichter, hört Peitschen und Schlagen, Lachen und Schreien, Gestöhn und Jauchzen, Pfeifen und Johlen, in laszivster Art mengen sich Paare auf buchstäbliche Foxtrottmelodien, barbarische Laute halb vertierter, im Taumel sich ergehender Menschen machen sich Luft, zum Schluss ein langer, alles durchdringender Pfiff, wohl ein Warnungspfiff, im Nu ist dann das Stück zu Ende. Es ist die lasterhafteste, frivolste und dabei gegenständlichste Musik, die man sich denken kann..."

After this graphic description, Heuss then sarcastically notes that, “With this chamber music... we Germans may once again march at the head of the musical nations,” adding, “the one people who would show the most understanding for this music would be the French, who already have their school of sadism and perversion long behind them and also once again activate this side of their being in public political life.”⁹² This comment pits German *Kultur* against French *Zivilisation* and may also have been a reference to the occupation of the Ruhr Valley by French troops, with French African soldiers among them.

Notwithstanding his overly outraged tone and provocative imagery, Heuss essentially drew on the same infernal imagery as other critics (and possibly Hindemith himself) to make the same point: *Kammermusik Nr. 1* was a mirror of the current, terrible times.⁹³ It was Heuss’s personal attack on Hindemith’s character, however, implying Hindemith himself felt at home with or gloried in such filth, that fundamentally set this critique apart from others. In other words, he did not view Hindemith’s motivation as satiric or even impersonal:

Hindemith possesses that cold fire of a reckless nature, which only knows one thing: himself. He shies away from nothing; his imagination is most at home and finds its most fertile ground where modern life casts a light on human beings, which is placed at the forefront by today’s anal-genital-playwrights and of which only one thing is regretted: that they are not permitted to go further in their depictions.⁹⁴

⁹² Heuss, 54. “Dasjenige Volk, das dieser Musik einmal das stärkste Verständnis entgegenbringen wird, werden die Franzosen sein, die ihre Schule in Sadismus und Perversität schon lange hinter sich haben und diese Seiten ihres Wesens gerade auch jetzt wieder im öffentlich politischen Leben betätigen.”

⁹³ Attfield notes that while the review is harsh, it also contains “signs of a grudging, glowering respect for Hindemith’s achievement,” as Heuss commented on Hindemith’s “force of impact” and “clear-cut artistic power of imagination.” Attfield, 101.

⁹⁴ Heuss, 54–55. “Hindemith besitzt jenes kalte Feuer rücksichtsloser Naturen, die nur eines, sich selbst, kennen, vor nichts schreckt er zurück, seine Phantasie ist dort am stärksten zu Hause und findet dort ihren fruchtbarsten Untergrund, wo das moderne Leben menschliche Wesensseiten ans Licht stellt, die von heutigen Kloaken-Geschlechtsdramatikern an die vorderste Stelle gesetzt werden, und von denen nur eines bedauert wird, dass sie nicht noch weiter in ihren Darstellungen gehen dürfen.”

Heuss also criticized Hindemith's integrity as an artist, stating that "whoever scourges the foxtrot and everything that is associated with it into the concert hall has never seen the idealistic realm of an exhilarating art and frees himself from its rules by subscribing to an unflagging materialism."⁹⁵

In response to this personal attack by a respected and prominent music critic, Hindemith sent Heuss a postcard with an obscene self-portrait of himself [Hindemith] wallowing in the modern decadence Heuss had described, complete with "anal-genital" imagery (fig. 2.8).⁹⁶

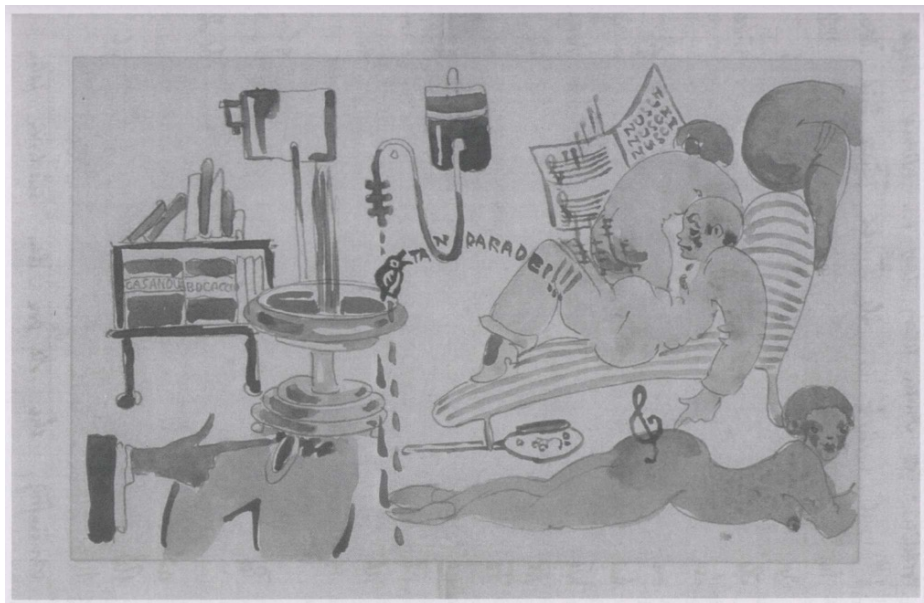


Figure 2.8. Hindemith's postcard to Heuss, February 1923. Reproduced in Attfield, 71.

More importantly, however, Heuss's review put Hindemith in the position of having to defend jazz. First, Hindemith justified his use of jazz by invoking a pantheon of other German

⁹⁵ Heuss, 55. "Wer den Foxtrott und was mit ihm alles zusammenhängt, in den Konzertsaal hineinpeitscht, hat die idealischen Gefilde einer beglückenden Kunst nie geschaut und spricht sich von ihren Gesetzen frei, indem er sich einem eisernen Materialismus verschrieben hat."

⁹⁶ For an analysis of this picture, see Attfield, 72.

composers (including Mozart, Schubert, Mahler) who used dance idioms in their works, asking Heuss:

Did the thought never occur to you that a foxtrot or ragtime of today is more or less the same thing as a gavotte or gigue in Bach's time? And don't you realize that if Bach (sadly for him) were a living contemporary of yours, and set about composing the one-steps of today, you would sling mud at him just as you sling it at me? (It slides off, thank goodness—and how should it stick, anyway, to someone whose musical conscience is clear?).⁹⁷

Hindemith's second defense strategy was to strip jazz of any erotic extra-musical associations, insisting that it was strictly jazz's musical properties that interested him. But, as in his letters to his publisher, he again drew a firm line between jazz and art music, while linking jazz with the mechanical or industrial:

Has it ever crossed your mind that a foxtrot of today is actually the most un-sensual music conceivable—precisely the opposite of what you imagine? Do you realize that a Viennese waltz is ten times more lascivious than our dances with their machine-like rhythm, which is actually far from erotic? And do you know that half of all foxtrots are musically better and neater, harmonically and rhythmically more interesting, and melodically far more original than 90% of the so-called “respectable” (*anständige*) music that we produce nowadays?⁹⁸

He underscored this point by using a Hanslickian argument to pin the work's unsavory associations on Heuss himself, writing that music is only “a beautiful art, a wonderful play of tones, rhythms, forms etc... It is not what you and your whole troop fixate on: presentation of feelings, portrayal of characters, and all that other nonsense. Music is music, at most it *unleashes* feelings. Any claim beyond that is just a crowd-pleasing scrawl.”⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Hindemith to Heuss, quoted and translated by Attfield, 215. This statement illustrates Cook's observations that “apologists of the 1920s frequently legitimated the use of popular music by identifying Bach suites and other functional music of the past as models.” Cook, “Flirting,” 157.

⁹⁸ Quoted and translated in Attfield, 215.

⁹⁹ Quoted and translated in Attfield, 215.

His “the music itself” excuse rings false, however, given the dance band orchestration, siren, quotation of an actual foxtrot, motoric rhythms, and subtitle “1921,” all of which clearly draw on jazz’s extramusical associations with modernity and urban life. Despite Hindemith’s protestations, as Susan Cook notes, “the widespread discussion, throughout European and American culture, of jazz dance and its meanings meant that there was no way such borrowings could ever have been simply about ‘the music itself.’ ‘Jazzy’ works could not erase the attendant social implications of their models.”¹⁰⁰ Ultimately, Hindemith seemed to want it both ways: drawing on jazz’s extramusical meanings in order to disrupt art music conventions and/or comment on modernity, while seeking refuge in “the music itself” when the attacks became too personal.

1922: Suite für Klavier, Op. 26

Hindemith’s next jazz-influenced work, *1922: Suite für Klavier*, op. 26 (1922), would further undermine his argument regarding jazz’s musical autonomy. As indicated by the title, Hindemith modeled the work on a baroque dance suite, replacing the traditional allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue with a march, shimmy, Nachtstück (Night piece), Boston, and ragtime. Written simultaneously as *Kammermusik Nr. 1*, *Suite “1922”* shares many features with the chamber work: both reference a specific year in the title and incorporate jazz idioms within a traditional genre of art music. Because of these similarities, scholars frequently make the same claims about the solo work; namely, that it demonstrates Hindemith’s rejection of romanticism, his interest in jazz as a resource, his desire to shock bourgeois audiences, and so on.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Cook, “Flirting,” 157.

¹⁰¹ Morgan believes the work “reflects Hindemith’s anti-Romantic and parodistic stance,” Morgan, 222. See also Kemp, *Hindemith*, 11; Taruskin, *Early Twentieth Century*, 528; and Michael Kube’s discussion on the reception of this work in scholarship. Kube, “Provokation

Without denying these possible motivations, *Suite “1922”* arguably satirized modern life (and jazz itself) to a greater extent than *Kammermusik Nr. 1*. Each of the movements, with the exception of the slow “Nachtstück,” is a sharp caricature of the prototype, even verging into the realm of the grotesque.¹⁰² The march movement, for instance, begins with a ludicrously dissonant fanfare before launching into the march proper, occasionally slipping into triple time before righting itself again. Unlike a stalwart military march, this is a sort of circus march, leading the listener into what Alfred Schnittke has described in his article on *Suite “1922”* as “a world of the eccentric, of parody, and of the grotesque.”¹⁰³ Indeed, Hindemith composed the march on a program while attending a performance of the 5 Hutchinsons, a trapeze act, at a variety show in Frankfurt.¹⁰⁴ The fourth movement, Boston, parodies the sentimentality associated with the dance. While it does not display the extreme dissonances or shocking dynamics of the other movements, Hindemith follows the conventions so closely (exaggerating its rubato and sighing gestures) that the result is a banal stereotype of the dance, rather than a sincere interpretation.¹⁰⁵ The final movement “Ragtime” is the culmination of the satire, or, in Schnittke’s words, an “apotheosis of all brusqueness, mechanical, of all that’s wild, that defines

und Innerlichkeit.’ Ästhetische und kompositionstechnische Aspekte von Paul Hindemiths Suite 1922, op. 26,” *Muzyka fortepianowa* 12 (2001): 212.

¹⁰² Alfred Schnittke describes Hindemith as “coarsening” (vergröbern) his dances, and both Schnittke and Christian Münch use the term “grotesque” to describe these dances. Schnittke, “Paul Hindemiths Suite 1922 op. 26,” *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 32 (2003): 15; Münch, 40. For an analysis of the dances, see Kube, “Provokation,” 217–222; Schnittke, 15–33.

¹⁰³ Schnittke, 19. “In ihm führt der Komponist... den Zuhörer in eine ver-rückte, zunächst ungewohnte Welt ein—eine Welt der Exzentrik, der Parodie und der Groteske.” See also Münch, 40.

¹⁰⁴ Kube, “Provokation,” 213.

¹⁰⁵ Schnittke, 28; Kube, “Provokation,” 219. Raymond Monelle also notes the use of banality as an indicator of satire. Monelle, *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 177.

in such an essential majority the character of the work as a whole.”¹⁰⁶ Hindemith maintains the genre’s standard 2/4 meter, the tied-syncopation in the right hand, and eighth notes in the left hand. Yet in contrast to a standard rag, it is dissonant rather than diatonic, has exaggerated dynamics (reaching *ffff* at the end), and is meant to be played at breakneck speed rather than a typical march tempo.

In addition to satirizing each dance, Hindemith exploited jazz’s extramusical association with the mechanical, especially in the work’s famous (and oft-cited) directions prefacing the ragtime movement:

Mode d’emploi Direction for Use

Have no regard for what you have learned in piano lessons
 Don’t think too long whether you should strike D# with the fourth or sixth finger
 Play this piece really wild, but always very strictly in rhythm like a machine
 Regard the piano as an interesting type of percussion instrument and handle it accordingly¹⁰⁷

Obviously, the directions reflect Hindemith’s interest in what he described to Heuss as jazz’s “machine-like” rhythmic qualities.¹⁰⁸ Including “Directions for Use,” however, also cast the work as a commercial product or a new piece of foreign (possibly American) technology, one

¹⁰⁶ Schnittke, 31.

¹⁰⁷ Hindemith, 1922: *Suite für Klavier*, op. 26 (London: Schott: 1922), 19. “Nimm keine Rücksichten auf das, was Du in der Klavierstunde gelernt hast/ Überlege nicht lange, ob Du *Dis* mit dem vierten oder sechsten Finger anschlagen musst/ Spiele dieses Stück sehr wild, aber stets sehr stramm im Rhythmus, wie eine Maschine/ Betrachte hier das Klavier als eine interessante Art Schlagzeug und handle dementsprechend.”

¹⁰⁸ Cook, *Opera*, 151. Hermann Danuser notes that the percussive style of playing the piano also had its roots in works such as Stravinsky’s *Les Noces* and Bartók’s piano sonata. Danuser, “Jazz und Kunst-Musik—ihre Affinität in den zwanziger Jahren,” *Universitas* 38 (1983): 382.

requiring instructions on how to use it correctly, rather than an artwork.¹⁰⁹ The music is not meant to be performed, interpreted, or even played; it is meant to be *used*.

If critics interpreted the foxtrot-laden “Finale: 1921” as a (negative) depiction of the present times, Hindemith made this connection explicit in the piano solo. Once again, he gave a programmatic title (“1922”) to the work.¹¹⁰ Moreover, rather than merely calling up the soundscape of modern urban life, Hindemith drew an actual cityscape for the work’s cover that depicts the hustle and bustle of a modern metropolitan area with streetcars, automobiles, and even a horse-drawn cart jockeying for space (fig. 2.9). An electric light is in the foreground, while the electric lines for the tram crisscross the top of the drawing. The cover also features all sorts of people from German society jostling each other on the street, from men in top hats with walking sticks and women in fur stoles, to working class men in flat caps and drivers of carts and vehicles.¹¹¹ A contemporary critic, Adolf Weissmann, saw the cover’s depiction of the chaos of modern life as suitable to the music, writing, “The cover design, drawn by the composer himself, is already a mirror of the chaos and folly of the cabaret man, which is further reflected in the score: the pell-mell activity of the people, of the vehicles, and of the arched street lamps, the offspring of electricity.”¹¹² Although he did not specifically mention the cover, Russian

¹⁰⁹ E. Douglas Bomberger believes that the directions are meant to indicate music that is exotic or foreign. Bomberger, “European Perceptions of Ragtime: Hindemith and Stravinsky,” in Budds, *Jazz and the Germans*,” 89.

¹¹⁰ As Kube notes, the title not only designates the year of composition, but also functions as a “snapshot of the society found in the continual whirl” (“Momentaufnahme einer sich im anhaltenden Taumel befindenden Gesellschaft”). Kube, “Provokation,” 214.

¹¹¹ Hindemith’s drawing admittedly lacks the sharp satire of one of Grosz’s. Schnittke, 14; Kube, “Provokation,” 215.

¹¹² Adolf Weissmann, “Le Jeune Musique allemande et Paul Hindemith,” *L’Esprit nouveau*, nos. 20, 22 (1925), quoted in Cook, *Opera*, 154.

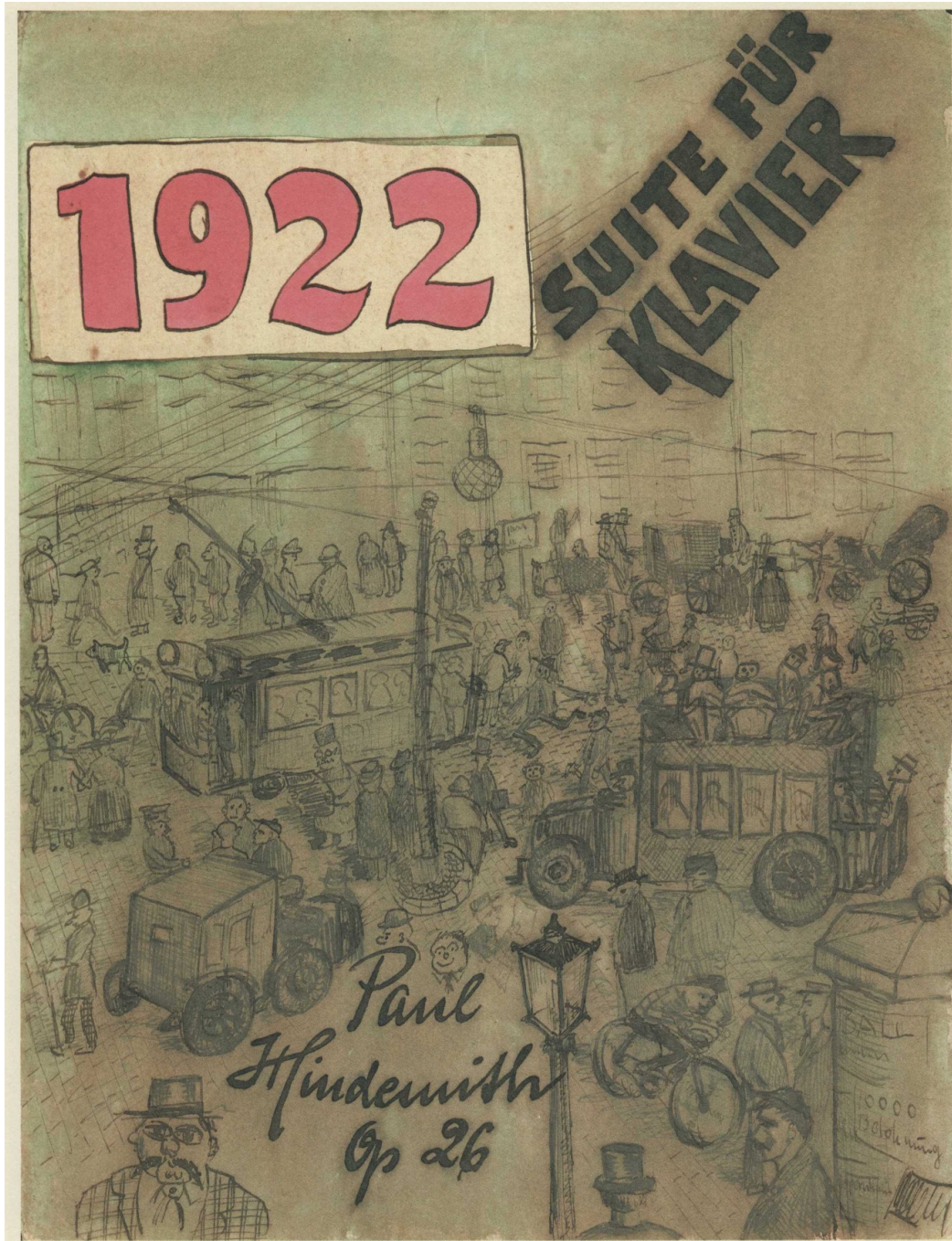


Figure 2.9. Paul Hindemith, Cover of *1922: Suite für Klavier* (1922). Reproduced from Bernhard Billeter, ed., *Klaviermusik I*, vol 5, no. 9 of *Sämtliche Werke*, eds. Finscher and Schubert.

musicologist and composer Boris Asafiev compared the music to a metropolis in 1927 while connecting it to the visual realm, stating that “every movement of the suite is a lurid and bold placard, and the suite overall a poem of the contemporary city.”¹¹³

Because there are no statements by Hindemith regarding his motivations behind “Finale: 1921” and *Suite “1922”* (apart from his blistering letter to Heuss), the interpretation of these works as an ambivalent or even satiric portrait of modernity remains only speculation. (Although the reception of “Finale: 1921” clearly shows that many critics understood his intentions in precisely this way.) A 1925 essay by Franz Willms about Hindemith and his music, however, may provide some evidence that Hindemith did, indeed, intend these works to negatively depict the inflation years. Willms’s “Paul Hindemith: An Essay” (“Paul Hindemith: Ein Versuch”) appeared in the monograph *On New Music: Articles for the Understanding of Contemporary Music*, whose selection of essays on contemporary topics and composers was meant to “offer an insight into the manifestations of contemporary creations.”¹¹⁴ While Hindemith himself did not write the essay, Willms was far from a neutral commentator, working as an editor and arranger for Hindemith’s publishers, Schott und Söhne. Furthermore, he had a close professional relationship with the composer, arranging many of the works for piano and also writing a lengthy study on his opera *Cardillac* (1926).¹¹⁵ There is no evidence that Hindemith dictated the essay to

¹¹³ Boris Asafiev, “Élemety stilja Chindemita,” *Novaja muzyka* 2 (1927): 19, quoted in Schnittke, 34.

¹¹⁴ “Dieser Auslese von Beiträgen zur neuen Musik liegt der Gedanke zugrunde, eine Einsicht in die Erscheinungsformen des zeitgenössischen Schaffens zu bieten.” Willms’s essay provides some biographical information and proceeds chronologically with Hindemith’s published works through the string trio, op. 34 (1924). It also identifies his stylistic influences and his relationship to artistic and musical trends. Franz Willms, “Paul Hindemith: Ein Versuch,” *Von Neuer Musik: Beiträge zur Erkenntnis der Neuzeitlichen Tonkunst* 1 (1925): 78–123.

¹¹⁵ Franz Willms, *Führer zur Oper Cardillac von Paul Hindemith* (Mainz: Schott, 1926). Willms was the person who came up with the idea of using the painter Mathias Grünewald as an opera subject, which eventually led to the opera *Mathis der Maler*.

Willms; however, it seems likely that Willms would have discussed the contents with Hindemith beforehand or at least obtained his approval before it was printed. At any rate, as an employee of Schott, Willms had a vested interest in portraying the firm's most prominent young composer accurately, or at least in a flattering light. This essay, therefore, may come closest to expressing Hindemith's own thoughts and intentions regarding *Kammermusik Nr. 1* and *Suite "1922"*.¹¹⁶

Because of this, the similarity between Willms's descriptions of the works and those of critics' (including Heuss's) begs the question of whether their observations were really that removed from Hindemith's own intentions. Like critics, Willms linked both *Kammermusik Nr. 1* and *Suite "1922"* to a mechanized, modern urban environment. The instrumentation of the former, he claimed, "corresponds to a metropolitan coffee house ensemble. The sound of such an ensemble most likely lives up to the task. He is especially generous to the percussion, that strongest stimulus of new dance music; the player must handle no less than nine instruments, which are switched often in fast changes."¹¹⁷ Willms also tied the music specifically to reproducing technology by claiming that the "chattering xylophone" and the piano act as a caricature of a "mechanical musical instrument."¹¹⁸ Willms's use of the adjective "chattering" (or "rattling," *klappern*) also calls up the skeletal aspect of the Dance of Death/Witches' Sabbath tropes, echoing Hindemith's critics. He called the rhythm of "Finale 1921" as "the basic drive...

¹¹⁶ Stephen Luttman describes Willms as a "Schott colleague who knew Hindemith well." Luttman, 228.

¹¹⁷ Willms, 99. "Hindemith verwendet nämlich ein Kammerorchester, dessen Besetzung—vier Bläser, dabei Trompete, fünf Streicher, Klavier, Harmonium und Schlagzeug—in etwa der einer großstädtischen Kaffeehauskapelle entspricht. Der Klang eines solchen Ensembles mochte am ehesten der gestellten Aufgabe gerecht werden. Besonders reich ist das Schlagzeug, dieses stärkste Reizmittel neuer Tanzmusik, bedacht; der Spieler muss nicht weniger als neun Instrumente, die sich oft in raschem Wechsel ablösen, bedienen. "

¹¹⁸ Willms, 99. "Auch dem Klavier werden ungewohnte Aufgaben zugeteilt; gelegentlich dient es zu paukenartigen Baßwirkungen, dann wieder wird es in höchster Lage zusammen mit dem klappernden Xylophon wie zur Karikatur eines mechanischen Musikinstruments benutzt."

which soon swirling, soon stamping, then again as gliding or skipping, provides each individual movement with its particular character. Whether the meters are constantly changing or continue on in stupid monotony—out of the melody and rhythm, a picture emerges of a great, meaningless frenzy.”¹¹⁹ These verbs (swirling, stamping, gliding, skipping) are only a milder version of Heuss’s word choice, with both using the word “frenzy” (*Taumel*) to describe the movement.¹²⁰

Most importantly, Willms unequivocally stated that these works were meant to satirize the inflation years, as both are “musical pictures” that “pillory the demon of those years 1921 and 1922 with biting mockery and masterful irony.”¹²¹ He also confirmed that Hindemith achieved this satire through the caricature of jazz. According to Willms, *Kammermusik Nr. 1* was:

motivated as a musical grotesque. This music is only comprehensible when viewed in this light. Its meaning is revealed in the final movement, which carries the title “Finale 1921” and which undoubtedly demonstrates its meaning as a satire of the time with the inclusion of the “Fuchstanz” by Wilm-Wilm that initiated the foxtrot... Here that tumultuous year 1921 haunts and speeds, reels and shrieks.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Willms, 100. “Das eigentlich Treibende ist hier wir überall der Rhythmus, der bald wirbelnd, bald stampfend, dann wieder wie gleitend oder hüpfend jedem einzelnen Satzteil seinen Sondercharakter verleiht. Sei es, dass die Taktarten ständig wechseln, oder in stupidem Einerlei weiterrasen—es entsteht aus Melodik und Rhythmik zusammen das Bild eines tollen, sinnlosen Taumels.”

¹²⁰ Willms’s also frequently uses the term “primitive” to describe the works. While this carries racial connotations, it may also be a reference to Stravinsky’s own Russian brand of primitivism, especially since the first movement strongly references *Petrushka*.

¹²¹ Willms, 105. “Gewiss wird man den Grotesken Hindemiths mehr als nur vorübergehende Bedeutung beimessen, zumal sie den Ungeist jener Jahre 1921 und 1922 mit beißendem Spott und überlegener Ironie an den Pranger stellen und als musikalische Sittenbilder einen einzigartigen rang einnehmen...”

¹²² Willms, 98–99. “...das liegt im Charakter des op. 24 Nr. 1 als einer musikalischen Groteske begründet. So gesehen wird diese Musik erst verständlich; ihr Sinn erschließt sich einem vom Schlusssatz aus, der die Überschrift ‘Finale 1921’ trägt und mit der Einbeziehung des seinerzeit den Foxtrottrummel einleitenden ‘Fuchstanzes’ vom Wilm-Wilm seine Bedeutung als Zeitsatire unzweifelhaft dartut... Denn hier spukt und rast, taumelt und kreischt jenes wirre Jahr 1921.”

Willms also states that the instrumentation of the work also shows “that the composer drew a grotesque with the depiction of this period.”¹²³ Likewise, rather than an homage to jazz, the four dance movements in *Suite “1922”* were satires of their models, owing to their “percussive caricatures,” “angular syncopation and jagged flourishes,” “piercing dissonances,” “hideously distorted melodies,” “biting humor,” and “colliding lines,” which “give the impression of someone playing on a wildly out-of-tune instrument.”¹²⁴ Thus, *Suite “1922”*:

obviously harks back to Kammermusik Nr. 1. Even the title “1922. Suite for piano” forms an analogy to “Finale 1921.” The fact that the purpose of this music... is the same, (namely, that Hindemith wanted to musically record the face of the time in a grotesquely ironic examination), may probably be deduced from the composer’s pencil drawing that is attached to the music in which he, with his modest artistic skill, has recorded the picture of a metropolitan confusion of vehicles of all types and people of all physiognomies.¹²⁵

¹²³ Willms, 99. “Dass der Komponist mit der Abschilderung dieses Zeitabschnitts.. eine Groteske zeichnet, ergibt sich schon aus der Instrumentierung.”

¹²⁴ Willms, 104. “Die vier Tanzsätze stellen den denkbar schärfsten Gegensatz dazu dar; in ihnen gibt der Komponist schlagende Karikaturen. Das rhythmische und formale Gerüst der Vorbilder wird beibehalten; man höre etwa beim Marsch den Wechsel zwischen langgezogenen und knapp rhythmischen Perioden, beim Shimmy die eckigen Synkopen und zackigen Schnörkel, beim Boston die Rubati, den unisonen Beginn mit dem schmelzenden Vorschlag und der typischen Luftpause, später dann die pathetischen Baßrezitative, und endlich beim Ragtime die starre rhythmische Bewegung mit dem stereotypen Halt auf dem letzten Sechzehntel des Taktes... In der Musik findet dieser beißende Humor sein Spiegelbild: nirgends sonst arbeitet Hindemith mit so schneidenden Dissonanzen. Klänge mit mehrfachen kleinen Sekundpackungen, doppelten getrübbten Oktaven begegnen einem auf jeder Seite. Die Melodie ist ins Fratzenhafte verzerrt; Doppelquarten, Nonen- und doppelte Sekundkopplungen in den scharf gegeneinander geführten Linienzügen erwecken geradezu den Eindruck, als spiele jemand auf einem wüst verstimmten Instrument.”

¹²⁵ Willms, 103. “Das op. 26 greift ganz offensichtlich auf die Kammermusik Nr. 1 zurück. Schon die Überschrift ‘1922. Suite für Klavier’ ist eine Analogiebildung zum ‘Finale 1921’ dort. Dass auch der Gegenstand dieser Musik—sofern man in einem übertragenen Sinn davon reden kann—der gleiche ist, dass Hindemith nämlich in einer grotesk-ironischen Auseinandersetzung das Gesicht der Zeit musikalisch festhalten wollte, darf wohl auch aus der Bleistiftzeichnung des Komponisten geschlossen werden, die dem Notenheft beigegeben ist, und auf der er mit bescheidener Kunst das Bild eines großstädtischen Durcheinanders von Fahrzeugen aller Arten und Menschen aller Physiognomien festgehalten hat.”

Willms's final point in his discussion of these works was to stress that critics missed Hindemith's intent to satirize modern life, instead interpreting these works as a celebration of modernity or just youthful mockery for its own sake. He wrote:

No doubt it has harmed Hindemith among the many serious music lovers, since the very pieces from this group of grotesques—especially frequently Kammermusik Nr. 1 with its foxtrot and Suite “1922”—were played in our conservative concert halls and were misunderstood by the public, critics, and often even by conductors. One took at face value what was keen irony and failed to hear the tones of tender inwardness that sounded in the slow movements.¹²⁶

Not only did the slow movements of both works show the face of the “true” Hindemith, Willms argued, but his compositional technique “elevates this music again above the randomness of a momentary joke and makes it that, despite the predominant mockery, something like a remnant of poignant feeling remains: the necessary result of an art, that (like every satire) mixes a bitter undertone with garish laughing.”¹²⁷

Given this defense of Hindemith, this essay may have been simply a propagandistic apologia for these early works, especially after Heuss's damning review.¹²⁸ To be sure, Willms

¹²⁶ Willms, 104–105. “Es hat Hindemith zweifellos bei vielen ernsten Musikfreunden geschadet, dass gerade Stücke aus dieser Gruppe der Grotesken—besonders häufig die Kammermusik Nr. 1 mit dem Foxtrott und die ‘Suite 1922’—in unseren konservativen Konzertsälen aufgeführt und von Publikum, Kritik und oft auch von den Dirigenten missverstanden wurden. Man nahm für bare Münze, was schneidende Ironie war, und überhörte die Töne zarter Innigkeit, wie sie aus den langsamen Sätzen erklingen.”

¹²⁷ Willms, 104. “Das erhebt dann diese Musik wieder über das Zufällige eines Augenblickwitzes und macht, dass trotz allem überlegenen Spott zuletzt etwas wie ein Rest schmerzlichen Empfindens zurückbleibt: notwendiges Ergebnis einer Kunst, die wie jede Satire in das grelle Lachen einen bitteren Unterton mischt.” This apparent bitterness underneath the mockery resembles Linda Hutcheon's concept of *ethos* as a framework for describing the functions or motivations of parody and satire, with satire in particular having a scornful or disdainful *ethos*. In this case, the *ethos* is bitter or negative, pushing the parody into the realm of satire. Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, 1985), 43–44.

¹²⁸ In his biography of Hindemith from 1948, Heinrich Strobel also excuses Hindemith's use of jazz, calling it a “fleeting moment that was unimportant to his development” (“eine

framed their mockery and irony as youthful “weapons” against romanticism (*die Waffe des Spottes und der Ironie gegen das Alte*), claiming that “after Hindemith had grappled with these things... he himself turned to other tasks,” such as the song cycle *Das Marienleben* and violin sonatas.¹²⁹ Nonetheless, this source is valuable because it completely contradicts Hindemith’s statement to Heuss that he was simply interested in jazz’s musical properties, writing music that was, in his words, “a wonderful play of tones, rhythms, forms, etc.” Willms’s position at Schott also makes this the “official” statement regarding the motivations and meaning behind the two works—whether or not Hindemith had set out with them in mind or simply adopted them later. And that meaning was not a celebration or light-hearted parody of the early 1920s, but a satirical portrait of that time.

Kammermusik Nr. 1 and *Suite “1922”* were just two of the many artistic creations from the Weimar Republic that used jazz and its extramusical associations to express what Pamela Potter characterizes as “ambivalence and even antagonism toward modernization and Americanization.” As she notes, Otto Dix’s *To Beauty* (*An die Schönheit*, 1922, fig. 2.10) and his triptych *Metropolis* (*Großstadt*, 1927-28, fig. 2.11), for example, “graphically depict the misery of postwar Germany, showing caricatures of black jazz musicians (one of them playing a drum emblazoned with an Indian Head penny, a symbol of American exploitation of Germany’s poor

flüchtige Episode, ohne Bedeutung für die Entwicklung des Komponisten”). Strobel, *Paul Hindemith* (Mainz: B. Schott’s Söhne, 1948), 24.

¹²⁹ Willms, 105. “...aber nachdem sich Hindemith mit diesen Dingen auseinandergesetzt hat—seiner ganzen Entwicklung nach war er wohl mehr dazu prädestiniert wie jeder andere—, wendet er sich von selber anderen Aufgaben zu.”



Figure 2.10. Otto Dix, *To Beauty (An die Schönheit)* (1922). Oil and collage on canvas. 54 x 47 inches. Von-der-Heydt-Museum.

economy), the growing rift between rich and poor, and the degradation of German women forced into prostitution.”¹³⁰ Art historian Beeke Sell Tower also described Dix’s triptych as a “moral tale of depravity and corruption” that “reflects the growing disenchantment of many Germans with the Americanization of Weimar Germany.”¹³¹ Ernst Krenek’s opera *Jonny spielt auf!* (1927)

¹³⁰ Potter, *Suppression*, 191–192. Potter also argues that films such as Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* (1926) and Carl Mayer and Walter Ruttmann’s *Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis* (*Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt*, 1927) “mirrored the simultaneous celebration, hostility, and ambivalence with regard to American-style industrialization.”

¹³¹ Sell Tower, 95.

also exemplified this ambivalence. Scholars have long considered this work a celebration of American culture based on its inclusion of popular dance music, the foregrounding of modern technology (trains, telephones, radio), and the fact that the title character is an African American jazz musician. Yet as Jeremy Zima and others have shown, the plot, which pits a European art music composer against the jazz-playing Jonny, reflected Krenek's own cynicism toward popular culture, as well as fears about the decline of the German artistic tradition. The final scene, in which Jonny stands triumphantly atop a globe playing his violin, serves not as a paean to jazz, but rather as a warning about the future of *Kultur*, suggesting "the international domination of American greed and kitsch over German integrity and beauty."¹³²



Figure 2.11. Otto Dix, *Metropolis (Großstadt)* (1927–1928). 71 x 158 inches (181 x 402 cm). Kunstmuseum Stuttgart.

Neues vom Tage (1929)

Krenek's cynicism would find a counterpart in Hindemith's own jazz-laced opera *Neues vom Tage* (*News of the Day*), which premiered at the Kroll Opera in Berlin on 8 June 1929 under

¹³² Potter, *Suppression*, 192.

the conductor Otto Klemperer.¹³³ The opera features a couple, Laura and Eduard, who want to divorce. They hire a professional co-respondent, Herr Hermann from the “Office of Family Affairs, GmbH,” to pose as Laura’s lover in order to provide grounds for divorce (i.e. infidelity). During a fake seduction scene at an art museum, however, Eduard becomes jealous and destroys a priceless statue of Venus in a fit of rage. Meanwhile, Herr Hermann decides he’s actually in love with Laura and confronts her while she’s bathing in her hotel room; this is witnessed by the staff and causes a scandal. The couple’s squabbling and divorce proceedings have now become tabloid fodder (“the news of the day”), and they are hired by a cabaret to re-enact their story nightly to sold-out audiences. In the epilogue, Laura and Eduard decide to stay together and live as private citizens, but the public won’t allow it.

Today, both *Jonny spielt auf!* and *Neues vom Tage* serve as paradigms of *Zeitoper*, or Weimar-era opera that has a contemporary setting and deals with contemporary issues.¹³⁴ Like *Jonny*, the opera is set in present-day Paris and includes scenes of urban life: a modern office, a hotel, a modern bathroom with indoor plumbing, and a revue. Modern telephones, typewriters, and signals bells also pervade the opera. Underscoring the modern, urban setting, Hindemith subtly wove jazz elements throughout the lightly-polyphonic musical style of the score.¹³⁵ The instrumentation, for example, includes an alto saxophone and banjo, two instruments explicitly associated with jazz, as well as two pianos and mandolin.¹³⁶ The overture features jazz-like

¹³³ It was part of the “Berliner Festspiele 1929” event along with *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tales of Hoffmann*, *Iphigenie auf Taurus*, and one-acts operas by Krenek.

¹³⁴ See Cook, *Opera*, 4–5; Taruskin, *Early Twentieth Century*, 530.

¹³⁵ Cook sees this use of jazz as highlighting the *Alltäglichkeit* of the opera, as “commonplace domestic scenes are set to everyday music.” Cook, *Opera*, 161.

¹³⁶ The critic for *The Daily Telegraph* noted that “jazz instruments, such as the saxophone and banjo, supplement the traditional orchestra.” *Daily Telegraph*, 10 June 1929, quoted in Giselher Schubert, introduction to *Neues vom Tage*, vol. 1, no. 7 of Finscher and Schubert, eds., *Paul Hindemith: Sämtliche Werke*, xxi.

syncopations and Susan Cook has identified the use of a foxtrot in the opening “hate duet” between Laura and Eduard, as well as a Boston in a quartet later in the act.¹³⁷ Contemporary critics did not miss these elements, noting that the score “operated with Jazz-rhythms” (*operiert mit Yazzrhythmen*) and referring to “jazz-perforated first act” (*Jazzhaft durchbrochener erste Bild*) with winds that “snicker” (*kichern*) and “jeer” (*spotten*).¹³⁸

Like *Jonny*, *Neues vom Tage* has traditionally been framed as a light-hearted depiction or parody of modern life.¹³⁹ Scholars also view *Neues vom Tage* as a continuation of Hindemith’s rejection of romanticism, citing his lampooning of operatic clichés (there is a hate duet rather than a love duet), the work’s numbers opera format, use of jazz, and the polyphonic texture of the music.¹⁴⁰ It also features everyday people in everyday situations (*Alltäglichkeit*), instead of mythological or historical settings. Finally, the opera serves to further strengthen the image of the Weimar Republic as the Jazz Age or Golden Twenties, based on its overt modernity and jazzy score. The opera’s premiere at the Kroll Opera in Berlin, the site of many new—and controversial—opera stagings by artists such as László Moholy-Nagy and Giorgio de Chirico, also strengthens its modernist credentials. Most significantly, Joseph Goebbels’s condemnation of the opera in a 1934 speech, and the rumor (often taken as fact) that Hitler himself walked out of a performance, seems to seal *Neues vom Tage*’s reputation as an emblem of Weimar culture. However, as with his earlier jazz-tinged works, based on Hindemith’s correspondence with his

¹³⁷ Cook, *Opera*, 161.

¹³⁸ Stege, “Berliner Festspiele,” *Zeitschrift für Musik* 96, no. 7 (July 1929): 399; Strobel, “Hindemiths ‘Neues vom Tage,’” *Melos* 8, no. 5/6 (May/June 1929): 258.

¹³⁹ Bernd Feuchtnner states that it would be “presumptuous” to read “a truly critical attitude” into the opera. Feuchtnner, liner notes to *Paul Hindemith: Neues vom Tage*, Kölner Rundfunkorchester, WERGO 6192-2, CD, 1991, 14.

¹⁴⁰ Cook, *Opera*, 159–163; Kemp, *Hindemith*, 21–22; Taruskin, *Early Twentieth Century*, 530–532.

publishers and contemporary music criticism, I suggest that *Neues vom Tage* expressed an ambivalent, even negative, stance towards modernity.

On 17 August 1927, Hindemith announced to his publishers that he was embarking on an opera project with Marcellus Schiffer, a song lyricist and author of several Berlin revues and operettas. The two men had collaborated earlier that summer on the short opera *Hin und Zurück* (*There and Back Again*) for 1927 Baden-Baden festival, which also featured a squabbling, modern-day couple.¹⁴¹ Hindemith was not alone in his decision to write an opera set in the present; Krenek's *Jonny* had been an enormous hit, with over 400 performances in Europe between 1926 and 1931, and soon set off a wave of Zeitopern throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s.¹⁴² These included works such as Max Brand's *Maschinist Hopkins* (1929); Kurt Weill's *Der Zar läßt sich photographieren* (1927), *Ausstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (1930), and *Die Bürgschaft* (1932); and Schoenberg's *Von Heute auf Morgen* (1929).¹⁴³ Hindemith went to see many of these operas while composing *Neues vom Tage*, including Weill's *Der Zar* (27 March 1928), *Der Protagonist* (13 October 1928), and *Jonny spielt auf* (22 December 1928).¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ The 1927 festival included the category of short operas, which included Milhaud's "minute opera" *Die Entführung aus Europa*, Ernst Toch's *Die Prinzessin auf der Erbse*, and Weill's "Mahagonny" *Songspiel*, the forerunner to his later opera. Schiffer based *Hin und Zurück* on his own revue *Hetärengespräche*, which Cook notes has several similarities to *Neues vom Tage*. Cook, *Opera*, 154–157.

¹⁴² Cook, *Opera*, 217–218. In his review of *Neues vom Tage*, critic Hans Gutman noted the spate of operas set in the present time, commenting how "Krenek, Weill, and Hindemith followed suit each after his own fashion." Hans Gutman, "Tabloid Hindemith," *Modern Music* 7, no. 1 (December 1929): 35.

¹⁴³ Hinton discusses the "game of artistic rivalry" between Hindemith and Weill, noting the parallels in the types of works they wrote. Hinton, "Hindemith and Weill: Cases of 'Inner' and 'other' Direction," in *Driven into Paradise: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany to the United States*, ed. Reinhold Brinkman and Christoph Wolff (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 264–265.

¹⁴⁴ Schubert, introduction to *Neues vom Tage*, xvi.

As Susan Cook has shown, this blossoming of *Zeitoper* was, at least in part, a response to a perceived crisis in opera (*Opernkrise*).¹⁴⁵ Like concert life in general after the First World War, opera was believed to be under threat from a perfect storm of impoverished bourgeois audiences, lack of state funding, and—especially—direct competition from film, which was more accessible and less expensive. Schoenberg, for example, noted in 1926 that “the theater crisis is, in part, caused by film: it can no longer take on the competition with film’s realism. Film has spoiled the eyes of the viewer...”¹⁴⁶ To address this threat, composers and intellectuals offered a number of solutions, such as incorporating cinematic techniques in opera and calling for operas that would appeal to the greatest number of people.¹⁴⁷ In his 1925 lecture “Music in the Present Day,” Krenek argued that operatic material should include “that all-encompassing circle of character types, facts, situations, and data that we can sagely assume will be well known and interesting to the greatest number of our contemporaries,” while the music should be “kept as simple as possible.”¹⁴⁸ Erich Doflein suggested borrowing elements from more popular forms of entertainment, as “the uncritical, always random mass public of bigger cities can only be won through the Americanized theater of topicality and through revue-type performances.”¹⁴⁹ Hans

¹⁴⁵ Cook, *Opera*, 9–12.

¹⁴⁶ Arnold Schoenberg, “Gibt es eine Krise der Oper?” 20. “Die Krise des Theaters ist zum Teil bewirkt durch den Film...die Konkurrenz mit dem dort gebotenen Realismus nicht mehr aufnehmen zu können. Der Film hat das Auge des Zuschauers verwöhnt...” See also Hans H. Stuckenschmidt, “Ist das Opera überlebt?” *Das Kunstblatt* 14 (1930): 225.

¹⁴⁷ Bryan Gilliam, “Stage and Screen: Kurt Weill and Operatic Reform in the 1920s,” in Gilliam, *Music and Performance*, 7. Alexandra Monchick has shown how Hindemith himself used filmic elements in his operas, such as the pantomime scene in *Cardillac*, in her article “Paul Hindemith and the Cinematic Imagination,” *The Musical Quarterly* 95, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 510–548.

¹⁴⁸ Krenek, “Musik in der Gegenwart,” presented on October 19, 1925, trans. in Cook, *Opera*, 201.

¹⁴⁹ Erich Doflein, “Kammeroper,” *Melos* 7, no. 7 (July 1928): 335. “Das kritiklose, immer zufällige Massenpublikum der größeren Städte aber ist nur durch das amerikanisierte Theater der Aktualitäten und durch den Revuestil zu gewinnen.”

Heinz Stuckenschmidt, in his 1930 essay “Is Opera Out-of-Date?,” also recognized the use “elements from the entertainment industry,” such as jazz and rapidly changing scenes, in order to “invigorate a genre congealed in lethargy and out-of-date pathos” and “establish a more intense contact with the public.”¹⁵⁰ For composers of *Zeitopern*, therefore, contemporary settings with elements taken from popular entertainment would bring opera into the twentieth century.¹⁵¹

Like these writers, Hindemith also perceived a crisis in the concert hall, and many of his experiments of the 1920s such as mechanical music, radio, and amateur music (discussed in the following chapters) were attempts to, as Kurt Weill described it, “draw an audience directly for the appreciation and encouragement of new music.”¹⁵² Thus, the modernity and *Alltäglichkeit* of *Neues vom Tage* was likely meant to appeal to a broader audience. Indeed, critic Fritz Stege recognized *Neues vom Tage* as an “attempt at a solution for the exceedingly important problem of reclaiming the genre of comic opera for the present day,” despite his verdict that the opera was ultimately “a contemporary reflection of people-entertaining superficiality” (*ein zeitgemäßes Spiegelbild volksunterhaltender Oberflächlichkeit*).¹⁵³ The critics for *Melos* also greeted the

¹⁵⁰ Stuckenschmidt, “Ist das Opera überlebt?” 232. “Das Bestreben, eine in Lethargie und zeitfremdem Pathos erstarrte Gattung in ihrer äußeren Erscheinung zu beleben, hat in einigen Fällen zur Verwendung von Mitteln der Amüsierindustrie geführt. Man sah in dem reizvollen Wechsel bunter Szenen, wie sie die Revue bietet, und in der Verwendung moderner technischer Requisiten Möglichkeiten, einen intensiveren Kontakt mit dem Publikum herzustellen.”

¹⁵¹ Cook notes that, “Between 1924 and 1926, Krenek, Weill, and Hindemith all demonstrated in either essays or compositions similar concerns for establishing new, useful relationships with a modern, larger audience. They also sought to put these ideas about music into practice through opera, a genre which needed to be reclaimed in the postwar age and a genre they already loved and for which they wanted to create a new audience. Such was the aesthetic basis for *Zeitoper*...” Cook, *Opera*, 21. Auner also notes how opera “seemed particularly in need of resuscitation through jazz.” Auner, *Music*, 100.

¹⁵² Kurt Weill, “Verschiebungen in der musikalischen Produktion,” *Berliner Tageblatt*, 1 October 1927, trans. in Kim H. Kowalke, *Kurt Weill in Europe* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979), 479.

¹⁵³ Fritz Stege, “Berliner Festspiele,” 398–399. Stege also sees Eugene d’Albert’s *Die schwarze Orchidee* as trying to accomplish the same goal. “Zwei Ereignisse stehen im

opera's borrowing of elements from the revue as "a basis of new material" as well as a "wholesome counter-effect against the psychology and illusion of the music drama."¹⁵⁴

Likewise, the contemporary English musicologist Marion Scott noted that the opera had been "hailed by Hindemith's followers as the only real solution of the problem of putting modern life into opera."¹⁵⁵

Of course, bringing people back into the opera house would mean financial success as well, which is possibly another reason Hindemith jumped on the Zeitoper bandwagon, especially after the phenomenal success of *Jonny*. Jeremy Zima has also noted the economic motives behind *Jonny* itself, calling its composition "a calculated move on Krenek's part, explicitly designed to score a commercial 'hit' with audiences who had little interest in his 'serious' atonal works."¹⁵⁶ One critic attributed such motivation to Hindemith, stating that *Neues vom Tage* "was plainly not about art, but rather about that famous, contemporary 'Gebrauchsmusik,' which lives off of the day, wants to exploit its newest sensation, and wants only to be current, amusing, and, of course, quite profitable."¹⁵⁷ An English critic in 1931 also opined that "young German

Vordergrund, die von besonderem kulturellen Interesse sind als Lösungsversuche des überaus wichtigen Problems, die Gattung der komischen Oper für die Gegenwart zurückzuerobern..."

¹⁵⁴ Hans Mersmann, Hans Schultze-Ritter, and Heinrich Strobel, "Paul Hindemith's 'Neues vom Tage,'" *Melos* 8, no. 8/9 (August/September 1929): 369. "Denn so sehr man es auch grundsätzlich begrüßen kann, dass Revueelemente als neue stoffliche Basis und zugleich als heilsame Gegenwirkung gegen die Psychologie und Illusion des Musikdramas in der Oper erscheinen..."

¹⁵⁵ Marion Scott, "Paul Hindemith: His Music and Its Characteristics," *Proceedings of the Musical Association* 56th Session (1929–1930): 101.

¹⁵⁶ Zima, 226. Taruskin also notes the commercial success of Krenek's *Jonny* and Berg's *Wozzeck* (perf. 1925). Taruskin, *Early Twentieth Century*, 548.

¹⁵⁷ Hugo Leichtentritt, review of *Neues vom Tage*, Kroll Opera, Berlin 8 June 1929, *Die Musik* 21, no. 11 (August 1929): 848. "Sie führt den bezeichnenden und tendenziösen Titel 'Neues vom Tage,' der wohl von vornherein allen Beteiligten klarmachen will, dass es hier nicht um Kunst schlechthin geht, sondern um jene berühmte, neuzeitliche 'Gebrauchsmusik,' die vom Tage zehrt, seine neuesten Sensationen auswerten will, nur aktuell und amüsant und natürlich recht gewinnbringend sein will."

modernist composers” had “gladly embraced” *Zeitoper* “as a means to acquire popularity—and royalties,” commenting that after Krenek’s *Jonny*, “innumerable have been the operas since written by minor German composers along contemporary lines.”¹⁵⁸ Stuckenschmidt commented that “after Krenek’s sensational success, revue-operas are springing up like mushrooms. From [Eugen] d’Albert to Hindemith, [operas] are *gejazzt* and *geshowt*—almost always without success or significance.”¹⁵⁹ Max Donisch in *Der Tag* criticized the Kroll Opera’s attempt to be “contemporary” (*zeitgemäß*) and railed against public funding of the institution, speculating that “perhaps the administration of the Kroll Opera thought to make a profit with the new Hindemith opera in order to offset their squandered debts a bit. Perhaps they were banking on the frivolous instincts of the masses.”¹⁶⁰

Looking past *Neues vom Tage*’s jazz-infused score, showcasing of technology, and conspicuous modernity, however, the work is a sharp satire, reflecting many of the anxieties surrounding modernity.¹⁶¹ Hindemith’s signature “objective” style (polyphony, driving rhythms, steady tempo), coupled with jazz’s alleged machine-like rhythms, could be interpreted as

¹⁵⁸ “Musical Notes from Abroad,” *The Musical Times*, January 1, 1931.

¹⁵⁹ Stuckenschmidt, “Ist das Oper überlebt?” 232. “Nach Kreneks Sensationserfolg schießen die Revue-Opern wie Pilze aus der Erde. Von d’Albert bis Hindemith wird gejazzt und geshowt, fast ausnahmslos ohne Erfolg und Bedeutung.”

¹⁶⁰ Max Donisch, *Der Tag*, 9 June 1929, quoted in Schubert, introduction to *Neues vom Tage*, xviii. “Vielleicht gedachte aber auch die Leitung der Krolloper mit diesem neuen Hindemith ein Geschäft zu machen, um die verspielten Schulden ein wenig auszugleichen. Vielleicht rechnet sie mit dem frivolen Instinkte der Massen.”

¹⁶¹ Jeremy Zima has noted a similar message in his exploration of the paradigmatic *Zeitoper*, Krenek’s *Jonny spielt auf*, stating that, “A closer look at the decidedly ambivalent stance toward the opera taken by both critics and by Krenek himself, however, reveals that *Jonny* was not intended to be a naïve celebration of modernity... *Jonny*, far from celebrating popular culture uncritically, displays several of the deep anxieties prevalent in Germany concerning the relationship of the artist to modern society.” Zima, 226.

representing the increased mechanization and depersonalization of modern life.¹⁶² Ruth Crawford Seeger, who saw the 1930 revival of the opera during her fellowship in Berlin, alluded to the machine-like quality of the music, noting that despite Hindemith's "awe-inspiring waves of technique," its "plicking, plucking and pattering" sounded like endless "machinations."¹⁶³ Likewise, Alfred Einstein also described the score as "mechanistic" (*mechanistisch*).¹⁶⁴ In Act I, Scene III, however, Hindemith made this connection explicit by musically depicting actual machines. This scene takes place in the Office of Family Affairs (where Herr Hermann works) and opens with a female chorus of typists singing lovingly about Herr Hermann. Hindemith mimics the women's unison typing through sixteenth-note passages in instruments capable of creating a particularly sharp staccato, including oboe, bassoon, xylophone, and two pianos.¹⁶⁵ Occasional punctuations by the glockenspiel echoed the typewriter's bell. As Heinrich Strobel noted in his biography of Hindemith, the scene's stylized music, piano, bell, and mechanical movement represented "the sound of the machine age turned into actual music."¹⁶⁶

While this scene was meant to parody the bureaucratization of modern life, it also resonated with debates about the increased mechanization of work. For many intellectuals, rationalization and assembly-line production had transformed workers—even white-collar

¹⁶² Maria Makela, "The Misogynist Machine: Images of Technology in the Work of Hannah Höch," in *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*, ed. Katharina von Ankum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 106.

¹⁶³ Ruth Crawford to Charles Seeger, 17 October 17, 1930, quoted in Judith Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer's Search for American Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 148.

¹⁶⁴ Alfred Einstein, *Berliner Tageblatt*, quoted in Schubert, introduction to *Neues vom Tage*, xx.

¹⁶⁵ This instrumentation also reinforces the idea of wind instruments as more "objective" than strings.

¹⁶⁶ Strobel, *Paul Hindemith*, 61. "Diesen Klang hat Hindemith in der Musik stilisiert, Klaviere, ein Glöckchen, mechanische Bewegung, aber ohne jede Schwere, und drüber der Frauenchor. Hier ist ein Klang des Maschinenzeitalters wirklich Musik geworden."

workers— from skilled individuals to anonymous, unskilled automatons who were simply cogs in the capitalist machine. In his book *The Salaried Masses (Die Angestellten, 1930)*, Siegfried Kracauer noted the orderly, disciplined, automated, and Americanized atmosphere of the modern office, with numerous, nameless employees laboring under a few managers. As he stated, the rationalization of 1925 – 1928:

has produced the irruption of the machine and “assembly-line” methods into the clerical departments of big firms. Thanks to this reorganization carried out on the American pattern—and which is still far from complete—large sections of the new salaried masses have a lesser function in the labor process than they had before. There are a great many unskilled and semi-skilled employees today performing mechanical tasks.¹⁶⁷

Kracauer detailed a fully automated workplace full of sorting and calculating machines, with workers spending hours feeding punch cards into tabulating machines, forerunners of the modern computer. In a grotesque inversion of Hindemith’s scene, Kracauer even described how

one industrial plant that hires girls straight from high school with a salary and lets them be trained at the typewriter by a teacher of their own. The wily teacher winds up a gramophone and the pupils have to type in time with its tunes...The rotation speed of the record is gradually increased, and without the girls really noticing it they tap faster and faster. In their training years they turn into speed typists—music has wrought the cheaply purchased miracle.¹⁶⁸

Artists also addressed this transformation of work and life. Scholar Janet Lungstrum notes that in Walter Ruttmann’s film *Berlin, die Sinfonie der Grossstadt* (1927), the main protagonist is “the body of mechanized Berlin” as the camera repeatedly crosscuts between images of Berlin’s inhabitants and their body parts (commuters’ legs, soldiers’ marching legs)

¹⁶⁷ Siegfried Kracauer, *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany*, trans. Quintin Hoare (London: Verso, 1998), 30.

¹⁶⁸ Kracauer, *Salaried Masses*, 43.

and the pistons of a machine.¹⁶⁹ Artists associated with the Dada movement also frequently took a critical stance towards technology and rationalization, often using the figure of the cyborg to represent the mechanization of life.¹⁷⁰ An example of this is John Heartfield's photomontage *Rationalization Marches. A Specter Goes Round Europe* (*Die Rationalisierung marschiert. Ein Gespenst geht um in Europa*, 1927), in which a mechanical figure, with a body made of a wage-cost analysis sheet and whose stopwatch head refers back to Frederick Taylor's efficiency tests, races across Europe (fig. 2.12).¹⁷¹ Likewise, George Grosz depicted himself as half-mechanical figure in a cityscape clutching an adding machine to his chest in his photomontage "*Daum*" *marries her pedantic automaton "George" in May 1920. John Heartfield is very glad of it.* (*Met.-mech. Constr. After Prof. R. Hausmann* (1920, fig. 2.13). The numbers being fed into the cyborg's head also suggest his mind is becoming programmed and standardized, losing his individuality. As art historian Matthew Biro notes, Grosz's self-depiction "anticipates this new mass figure while hinting at the transformation of the mind and the body as a result of modern technologies."¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Janet Lungstrum, "Metropolis and the Technosexual Woman of German Modernity," in Von Ankum, *Women in the Metropolis*, 136.

¹⁷⁰ Maria Makela notes that George Grosz, Otto Dix, and Georg Scholz were just a few of the many artists who "explicitly or implicitly denounced in their work a mechanized, industrial, capitalist society that oppresses the working class." Makela, "The Misogynist Machine," 111. See also Matthew Biro, *The Dada Cyborg: Visions of the New Human in Weimar Berlin* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

¹⁷¹ Makela, "The Misogynist Machine," 109.

¹⁷² Biro, 44. Hannah Hoch also created a linkage between the cyborg and metropolitan life in her *Cut with a kitchen knife*, as her cyborgs appear among images of skyscrapers and clouds. Biro, 71.

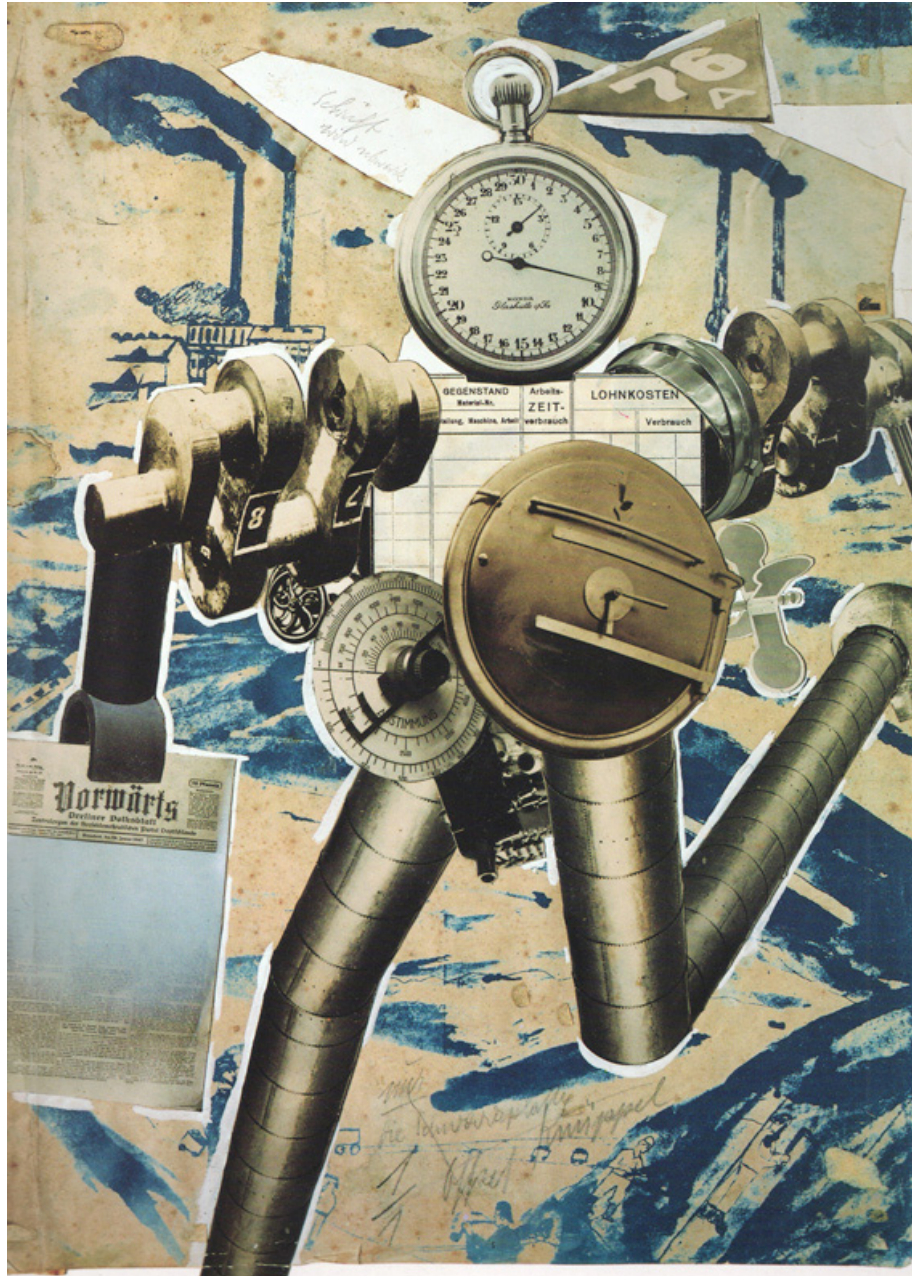


Figure 2.12. John Heartfield, *Rationalization Marches. A Specter Goes Round Europe* (*Die Rationalisierung marschiert. Ein Gespenst geht um in Europe*) (1927). *Der Knüttel* 2 (February 1927), 5.

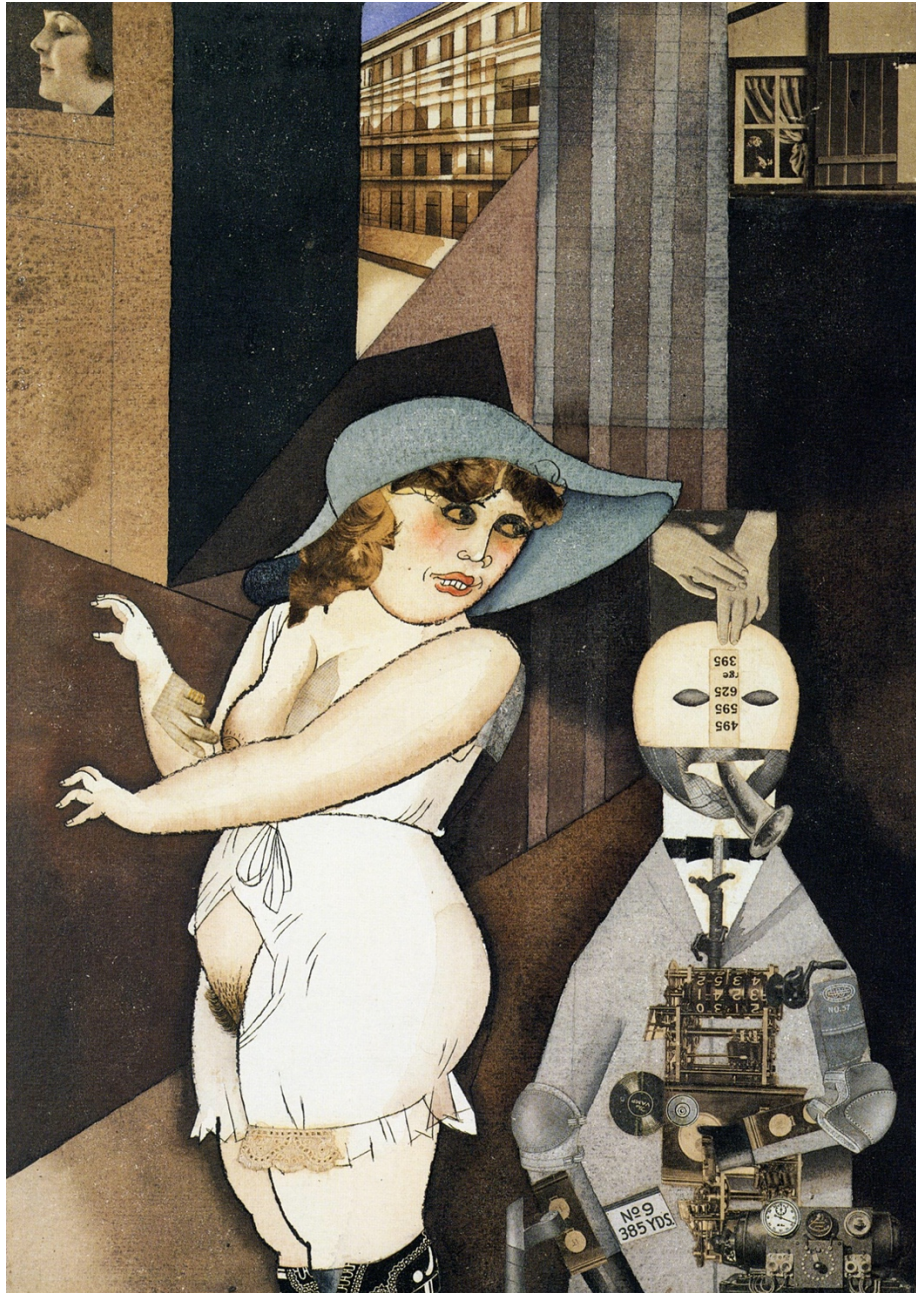


Figure 2.13. George Grosz, “Daum” marries her pedantic automaton “George” in May 1920. John Heartfield is very glad of it. (*Met.-mech. Constr. After Prof. R. Hausmann*) (1920). Watercolor, pencil, and ink on paper with photomontage and collage. 42 X 30.2 cm. Berlinsiche Galerie, Landesmuseum für Modern Kunst, Photographie, und Architektur, Berlin.

The office scene in *Neues vom Tage* arguably reproduced Kracauer’s and the Dada artists’ image of the depersonalized worker/automaton. Images from the original Kroll Opera

production show a row of typists all sporting bobbed hair, nylons, and modishly dressed (fig. 2.14).¹⁷³ In the staging for the 1930/31 production in Mannheim, they are even less individualistic, dressed in identical uniforms, wearing identical hairstyles, and are posed or move in identical ways, sitting behind rows of identical typewriters (fig. 2.15). Traugott Müller's scenic design for the Kroll opera echoed this depersonalization, featuring what theater scholar Geoffrey Eroe calls an "machine-like setting," with repetitive framed cloth panels, low-hanging office lights, and minimalist workstations (fig. 2.16).¹⁷⁴



Figure 2.14. Scene from the Kroll Opera's premiere of *Neues vom Tage* with Eric Wirl. *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* (1929).

¹⁷³ The stage directions for this scene call for a "bright, nice room with various glass doors. Twelve female typists sit at typewriters in a half-circle across the entire stage. The ladies sing tenderly and thus increase the soft and pleasant mood that prevails here" ("Ein heller, netter Raum mit verschiedenen Glastüren. Zwölf Tippfräulein sitzen an Schreibmaschinen im Halbkreis auf die ganze Bühne verteilt"). Hindemith, *Neues vom Tage*, 115.

¹⁷⁴ Geoffrey McCready Eroe, "The Stage Designs of Traugott Mueller in Relation to the Political Theater of Erwin Piscator and the Weimar Republic," (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1994), 360.



Figure 2.15. Scene from the 1930/31 Mannheim production of *Neues vom Tage*. “Neues vom Tage,” Hindemith-Institut, accessed 5 March 2019, <http://www.hindemith.info/en/life-work/biography/1927-1933/work/neues-vom-tage/>.

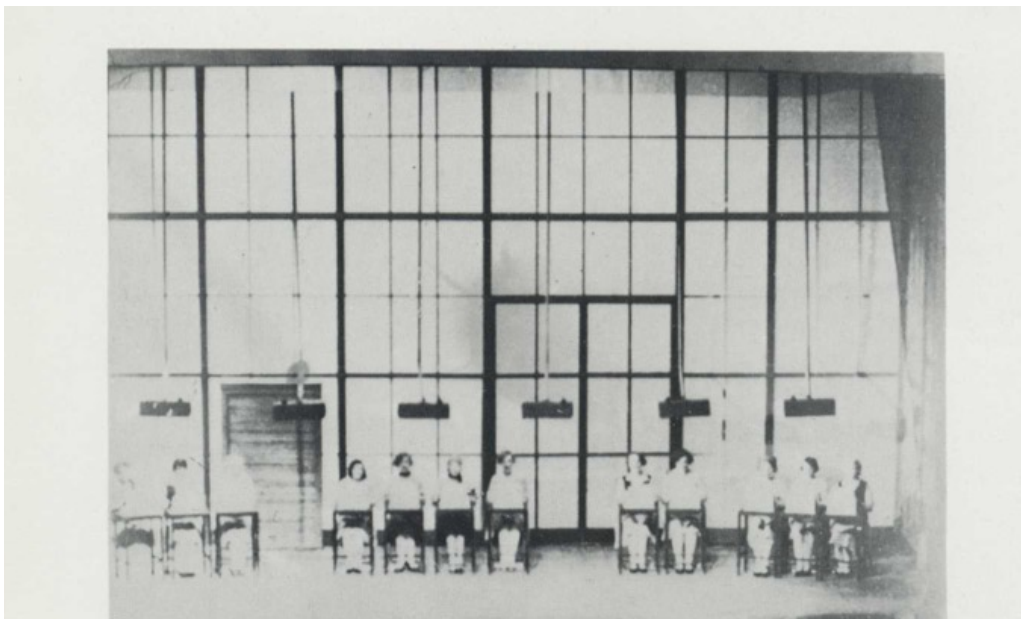


Figure 2.16. Traugott Müller’s stage design for the Kroll Opera production. Reproduced in Hans Curjel, *Experiment Krolloper 1927–1931* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1975).

The 1929 Darmstadt production's staging of Act I, Scene 2, which takes place in a registry office for marriage licenses, also picked up on these themes. The stage directions read "Registry Office. A room with doors and counters. A number of desks and tables. Many men are busy filling out forms."¹⁷⁵ The production featured anonymous men in identical offices, dressed the same way, standing the same way, and compartmentalized into separate offices (fig 2.17). While the music does not specifically reference a machine, as in the typewriter scene, the workers sing together about filling out forms in an emotionless, almost robotic way, using only fast syllabic quarter notes (quarter note = 168) all marked staccato without any expression or dynamic variance.

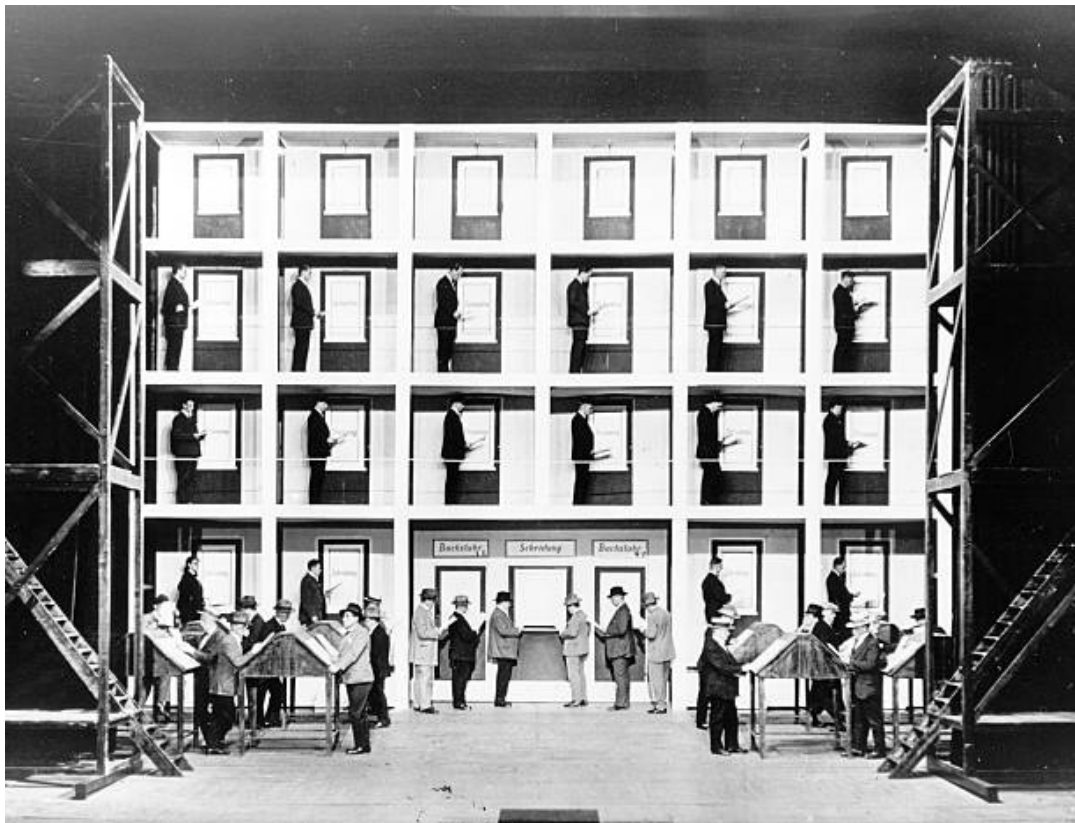


Figure 2.17. Scene from the Darmstadt production. Designs by Wilhelm Reinking.

¹⁷⁵ Hindemith, *Neues vom Tage*, 69. "Standesamt. Ein Raum mit Türen und Schaltern. Eine Anzahl Schreibpulte und Tische. Viele Männer sind damit beschäftigt, Formulare auszufüllen."

With its bevy of female typists, as well as its divorce-seeking heroine, *Neues vom Tage* may have also mirrored the larger fascination with, and anxiety surrounding, the so-called “New Woman” (*Neue Frau*). As Dorothy Price observes, this figure “remained ubiquitous in the visual consciousness of Weimar Berlin as both subject and object of representation and discourse. Allied to modern technology and an active agent within the structures of the metropolis, she was consumer and consumed, operating fluidly between fine art and mass culture.”¹⁷⁶ The New Woman was a young working woman with disposable income who was also sexually free, athletic, unmarried, and nonmaternal. She bobbed her hair, wore makeup, drove cars, and smoked cigarettes. This figure emerged after the war, coinciding with women’s suffrage and entrance into politics, as well as the rapid increase of women working in white collar jobs as secretaries, typists, stenographers, switchboard operators, and sale clerks.¹⁷⁷ While few women could afford to live up to this idealized image, the New Woman (like jazz) stood in for larger issues of modernization or Americanization.¹⁷⁸ Indeed, artist Hannah Höch tied this image together with technology in her collage *The Beautiful Girl* (*Das schöne Mädchen*, 1919-20, fig. 2.18), in which a female bather sits surrounded by markers of technology, including a stopwatch and BMW insignias. As Makela notes, the bather herself is “so dominated by the technological

¹⁷⁶ Dorothy Price, “The New Woman in 1920s Berlin,” in *Berlin Metropolis, 1918–1933*, ed. Olaf Peters (Munich: Prestel, 2015), 274. The lovesick typists also resonate with what Price calls a “frequently rehearsed” trope associated with the New Woman in popular culture, the “female longing for a male benefactor who would enable her to escape from the drudgery of daily existence.” Price, 279.

¹⁷⁷ Biro, 204–205; Weitz, 307; Widdig, 200–201. As Bernd Widdig notes, the number of young, female, white-collar workers (of all working women) rose from 6.5 percent in 1907 to 12.6 percent in 1935. Indeed, Kracauer almost always talks about female workers (“machine-girls”) in *The Salaried Masses*, overseen by a male supervisor.

¹⁷⁸ Biro, 204. See also Weitz, 308–309.

world around her that she is part mechanical herself, her head having been replaced by an incandescent lightbulb topped by a lace bow.”¹⁷⁹ As such, the larger ambivalence toward



Figure 2.18. Hannah Hoch, *The Beautiful Girl* (*Das schöne Mädchen*) (1919–1920). Photomontage and collage. 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{7}{16}$ inches (35 x 29 cm). Private collection.

¹⁷⁹ Makela, “The Misogynist Machine,” 114.

modernity translated into ambivalence toward her: she promised new possibilities for women, but at the same time, her deviation from gender norms was often seen as evidence of Germany's moral decay.¹⁸⁰ Or as Price notes, the New Woman “was deployed among other things as an interpretive lens on the era, a role model for aspirational young women, an ideological template, and a scapegoat for the various ills of modernity.”¹⁸¹

This nexus between the New Woman, rationalization, technology, and popular culture also appeared in the highlight of the final act: Laura and Eduard's cabaret act at the “world-famous” Alkazar theater. As the two characters begin to re-enact their fight, accompanied by jazzy instruments (banjo, saxophone, mandolin, prominent use of percussion) and a shimmy figure,¹⁸² a “line of Girls bounce” onto the stage,” singing to a dotted foxtrot rhythm and eventually dancing in a circle around the pair.¹⁸³ The term “girls” and their unison singing dancing indicate that Hindemith and Schiffer had a chorus line in mind, and indeed, the premiere featured a line of identically clad chorus girls. This was obviously a reference to the popularity of synchronized dance troupes such as the Tiller Girls, who were a staple of Berlin theaters and were prominently featured on the covers of newspapers and magazines. The youth, athleticism, and beauty of the Girls made them another version in the New Woman typology, one that according to contemporary *Girlkultur* author Fritz Giese was “synonymous with youthfulness,

¹⁸⁰ Bernd Widdig, for example, has noted that symbolic representations of the inflation years were frequently depicted as female. Widdig, 201–202

¹⁸¹ Price, 274. For a discussion on how images of the New Woman served as models for women, see Lynne Frame, “Gretchen, Girl, Garçonne? Weimar Science and Popular Culture in Search of the Ideal New Woman,” in Von Ankum, *Women in the Metropolis*, 13.

¹⁸² J. Bradford Robinson identifies this rhythm (two eighth notes followed by three quarter notes) as one used in many jazzy works of the interwar period meant to signify jazz. Robinson, 108.

¹⁸³ Hindemith, *Neues vom Tage*, 259, 270. “Eine Reihe Girls hüpfte hinein... die Girls umringen tanzend Laura und Eduard.”

freshness, naïveté, and cheerfulness.”¹⁸⁴ Moreover, although the Tiller Girls originated in England, according to Dorothy Price, they became a “metonymic for *Amerikanismus* in 1920s Germany... the Manchester-based dance school turned out an assembly line of de-individualized dancers who moved like clockwork with mathematical precision—interchangeable, multiple, and iconic.”¹⁸⁵ Siegfried Kracauer famously compared the anonymous body parts of the Tiller Girls to capitalist production process in his essay “The Mass Ornament” (1927), in which “everyone does their task on the conveyer belt, performing a partial function without grasping the totality.”¹⁸⁶ Traugott Müller underscored this connection between *Amerikanismus*, rationalization, and the New Woman in his design for the opera’s premiere by featuring an American flag as the background for the chorus line (fig. 2.19). One critic called the staging for this scene “an amusing cabaret stage, a mechanical looping the loop, a successful grotesque-dance of the pit with Girl-attendants.”¹⁸⁷

While critics did not comment on the stereotyped figure of the New Woman per se, many did notice how the opera reduced the characters into various “types” from contemporary society. Hugo Leichtentritt complained that “the individual roles are caricatures,” while Fritz Stege praised “brilliantly-observed” sketches of “the types of today’s social life.”¹⁸⁸ The critics in

¹⁸⁴ Giese, 18. Because of their visibility in the theater, Giese also suggested that the Girls had a better opportunity to climb the social ladder by marrying an “industrialist or millionaire’s son.”

¹⁸⁵ Price, 280. See also Lungstrum, 137; Wipplinger, 116–117.

¹⁸⁶ Siegfried Kracauer, “The Mass Ornament,” in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, 406.

¹⁸⁷ Review from the *Börsen-Courier*, 7 October 1929, quoted in Eroo, 364. “Dafür wird eine amüsante Kabarett gespendet, ein mechanischer Looping the loop, eine gelungener Grotesktanz der Grube mit Girlbedienung.”

¹⁸⁸ Leichtentritt, review of *Neues vom Tage*, 848. “die einzelnen Rollen [sind] Karikaturen”; Stege, “Berliner Festspiele,” 399, “geistvoll beobachtete Typen des heutigen Gesellschaftslebens zeichnet.”



Figure 2.19. Dress rehearsal for the Kroll Opera Production.

Melos observed how “types were formed from the run-of-the-mill people of our time... types that have lost any remnant of individual vitality and (partly exaggerated into the grotesque) act like marionettes.”¹⁸⁹ Alfred Einstein also believed that Hindemith’s musical style contributed to this depersonalization:

There are only more types, marionettes, figurines of a modern *Commedia dell’arte*... In the mirror of opera, we are all no longer individuals, but rather anonymous types who get into certain funny, unusual or ordinary situations of our lives that are busy in social and societal “inescapability”—situations on which one can hang a pure, performer-like,

¹⁸⁹ Mersmann, Schultze-Ritter, and Strobel, “Neues vom Tage,” 369. “Aus Dutzendmenschen unserer Zeit, die sich um das Thema einer Ehescheidung gruppieren, werden Typen geformt, Typen, die jeden Rest persönlicher Lebendigkeit verloren haben und, teilweise ins Groteske überspitzt, wie Marionetten agieren.”

mechanical music for playing. Jokes, satire, irony, without any deeper meaning; if this meaning appears, all the better.¹⁹⁰

As discussed earlier, this comparison of the characters to marionettes echoed fears of modern life turning people from individuals into automatons. The depiction of various “types” in the opera, however, also mirrored the postwar preoccupation with taxonomies of people, or what cultural historian Helmut Lethen has referred to as a “classification mania” (*Furor des Rasterns*).¹⁹¹ Newspapers and magazines during the time offered countless classification schemes of all sorts, ranging from physique, to head shape, to handwriting, to leg posture.¹⁹² Such typologies not only provided some sort of order during the social, political, and economic upheavals of the decade, they also provided a guide to help navigate an increasingly complex society; in the words of Lynne Frame, they gave individuals “means for differentiating and discriminating, for drawing new boundaries and putting up barriers for security.”¹⁹³ Examples of this classification include August Sander’s famous series of photographs *Citizens of the Twentieth Century*, which categorized professional and class types such as “student,” “artist,” and “working class mother.”¹⁹⁴ Hindemith’s own cover of *Suite “1922”* may also reflect this

¹⁹⁰ Einstein, *Berliner Tageblatt*, in Schubert, introduction to *Neues vom Tage*, xx. “Diesmal gibt es nur mehr Typen, Marionetten, Figurinen einer modernen Commedia dell’arte... Wir sind (im Spiegel der Oper) alle keine Individualitäten mehr, sondern anonyme Typen, die in bestimmte lustige, ungewöhnliche oder gewöhnliche Situationen unseres in soziale, gesellschaftliche ‚Zwangsläufigkeiten‘ eingespannten Lebens geraten—Situationen, an die man eine reine, musikantische, mechanistische Spielmusik hängen kann; Scherz, Satire, Ironie, ohne jede tiefere Bedeutung; wenn diese Bedeutung sich einstellt: um so besser.”

¹⁹¹ Maria Makela, “‘A Clear and Simple Style’: Tradition and Typology in New Objectivity,” *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 28, no. 1 (2002): 47. Lynne Frame also speaks of Weimar culture being “obsessed with taxonomies.” Frame, 113.

¹⁹² Frame, 13–14. See also Biro, 204–205.

¹⁹³ Frame, 13.

¹⁹⁴ Makela argues that this typecasting carried over into the work of Neue Sachlichkeit artists, and that its popularity helped boost that of Neue Sachlichkeit art. Makela, “Tradition and

typesetting, as the cover (like Grosz's drawings), portrays different "types" from Weimar society.¹⁹⁵

While critics clearly recognized the typesetting in *Neues vom Tage*, it is difficult to tell whether Schiffer and Hindemith were simply satirizing those stereotypes or the society responsible for reducing individuals to "types." The opera's harsh depiction of the press and mass media, however, suggests the latter (possibly in addition to the former). Indeed, the power of the press and its subsequent ills (tabloid journalism, celebrity culture, the loss of privacy) was a prime target of the opera, reflecting contemporary anxieties.¹⁹⁶ Despite the emergence of radio in 1924, newspapers were the dominant medium of mass communication in the 1920s, with total daily circulation in Germany reaching over 20 million in the early 1930s.¹⁹⁷ In Berlin alone, there were upwards of fifty daily papers that were published morning (*Berliner Tageblatt*), noon (*B.Z. am Mittag*), and night (*8-Uhr-Abendblatt*). Tabloids, i.e. newspapers that were sold on the street without a subscription, provided not only news but also entertainment, with articles on sports, fashion, gossip, and book, movie, and radio reviews. Increased competition among tabloids in the 1920s led to increased sensationalism. Even political papers resorted to including entertainment and gossip columns, along with sensationalist headlines that would attract readers as "eye-catching headlines, photos, and caricatures became increasingly common after 1925."¹⁹⁸

Typology," 47–51. Hindemith himself sat for Sander. Thank you to Christy Wahl for letting me know about this.

¹⁹⁵ Price speaks of the "flattened out types so preferred of the Weimar mass media" Price, 281. See also Biro, 204–205.

¹⁹⁶ See Taruskin, *Early Twentieth Century*, 530; Cook, *Opera*, 158.

¹⁹⁷ Bernhard Fulda, "Industries of Sensationalism: German Tabloids in Weimar Berlin," in Führer and Ross, *Mass Media, Culture and Society*, 183; Biro, 89.

¹⁹⁸ Fulda, 192–193. "Cut-throat competition... created a media culture of intense political and business rivalry which lent itself to the adoption of increasing sensationalism."

With the meteoric rise of the tabloid came complaints—especially from subscription newspapers—deploring its commercialization and sensation-mongering, its focus on sports, and its pandering to the masses through titillating content.¹⁹⁹ In his 1925 article “The Magazine as a Sign of the Times,” Edelf Köppen bemoaned the flood of magazines “spreading like pestilence” through Germany, interpreting their superficial content (pictures of naked women and sports figures, short stories, crossword puzzles) and easy digestibility as evidence of the “haste, hurry, nervousness” and superficiality of the current time.²⁰⁰ Köppen had a point; as Matthew Biro observes, the layout of periodicals changed during the Weimar Republic to appeal to the “new, supposedly less attentive reader” on the go (perhaps on a tram or subway), with reading materials becoming more “visual, fragmented, and emphatic,” such as shorter articles broken up by frequent illustrations, photographs, and captions.²⁰¹

Neues vom Tage reflected several of these critiques. The title of the opera itself, which was also the shout of newspaper boys on the streets, directly refers to the object of satire: what Taruskin describes as “the shallow stuff that passes for contemporary news in an age of burgeoning media.”²⁰² Schiffer had put forth two possibilities for the title, the other being the less-pointed *It Can Happen to Anyone* (*Das kann Jedem passieren*), which shifts the focus to the victimhood of the main couple.²⁰³ Willy Strecker was initially not happy with *Neues vom Tage* as a title but became “reconciled” to it after reading the final scene (discussed below). The critique of media sensationalism carried over to the design of the piano score as well. Willy had

¹⁹⁹ Fulda, 187–188, 190.

²⁰⁰ Edlef Köppen, “The Magazine as a Sign of the Times,” in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, 644–645. Köppen also noted that the “fathers” of the magazine are America and England.

²⁰¹ Biro, 91.

²⁰² Taruskin, *Early Twentieth Century*, 532.

²⁰³ G. Hindemith to W. Strecker, 29 November 1919.

suggested that, for the cover, Hindemith could create a collage of “the loveliest and stupidest news, between advertisements and maybe general, outrageously boring discourses on art or fashion shows, next to topical things” (fig. 2.20).²⁰⁴ His other suggestion also drew on mass

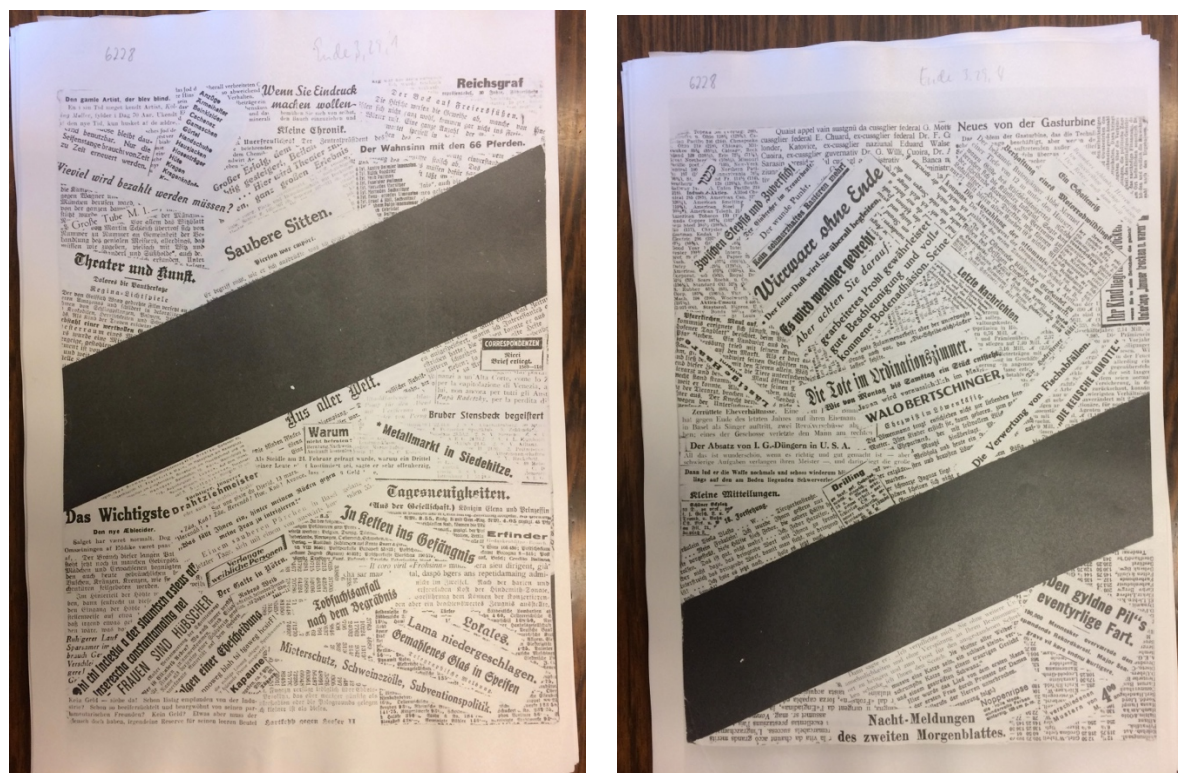


Figure 2.20. Cover design for the score of *Neues vom Tage*. Hindemith-Institut.

media for inspiration: a collage of photographs of the opera scenes in the manner of modern cinema advertisements (*Kinoprospekte*). Hindemith went with the first suggestion, and the result was a Dada-like decoupage of shocking headlines such as “Off to Jail in Chains” (*In Ketten ins Gefängnis*) or “Promiscuity without End” (*Wirrwarr ohne Ende*) mixed in with personal ads and fragments of articles. The impression is an overwhelming tide of information, with each headline

²⁰⁴ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 15 January 1929. “Gedacht ist eine Zeitung, evtl. Vor- und Rückseite des Auszuges... in der man die schönsten und blödesten Neuigkeiten zusammentragen könnte, da zwischen Annoncen und evtl. allgemeine, unerhört langweilige Abhandlungen über Kunst oder Modenschau, neben ganz Aktuellen.”

competing for attention. The montage also alludes to the faster pace of modern life, as people can now absorb information only in soundbites.

Sensationalist headlines are repeatedly satirized in the opera itself. In Act II, Scene 6, after Eduard's arrest for the destruction of the Venus statue and Laura's bathtub scandal, each character sits and reads the headlines about the other's scandal.²⁰⁵ The text of their duet clearly refers to the style of tabloid journalism in the choppy syntax, emphasis on scandal, and manufactured outrage:

Laura: First Morning Edition of the General Gazette. Local news. From our special correspondent. Vandalism punished. The museum-defiler behind bars. Widest circles of the population scandalized over such destructiveness. The inmate already completely despondent. Shows no sign of remorse.²⁰⁶

Eduard: The Latest News, Noon edition. News of the day. From our special correspondent. Scandal in the Savoy Hotel. Society lady surprised in bath. Compromising incident that is sure to draw in wider circles. Lady named Laura caught in the tub half-undressed. The unfortunate husband currently in jail. The hotel staff as accessories.²⁰⁷

During the duet, one piano plays a continuous one-bar canon with the voices as they read the headlines, echoing each shocking statement. Hindemith's scoring for this scene also calls to mind the clattering of the presses, as two pianos play staccato eighth notes in strict rhythm. This

²⁰⁵ Laura is in her hotel room while Eduard is in a jail cell. Simply the act of reading tabloids situates the opera in a contemporary metropolis, for as Fulda has observed, several authors prominently featured tabloids in their novels to set a metropolitan scene, such as in Alexander Döblin's *Berlin, Alexanderplatz*. Fulda, 188.

²⁰⁶ Hindemith, *Neues vom Tage*, 79–84. "Erstes Morgenblatt des Generalanzeigers. Lokales. Von unsrem Sonderberichterstatter. Bestrafter Vandalismus. Der Museumsschänder hinter Schloss und Riegel. Weitesten Kreisen der Bevölkerung entrüstet über solche Zerstörungswut. Der Häftling schon ganz niedergeschlagen. Zeigt keine Spur von Reue."

²⁰⁷ Hindemith, *Neues vom Tage*, 79–84. "Neueste Nachrichten, Mittagsausgabe. Tagesneuigkeiten. Von unsrem Sonderberichterstatter. Skandal im Savoyhotel. Dame der Gesellschaft im Bade überrascht. Ereignete sich ein kompromittierender Zwischenfall, der sicher weitere Kreise ziehen dürfte. In halbentkleidetem Zustande bei einer in der Wanne befindlichen Dame namens Laura ertappt. Der unglückliche Gatte zur Zeit im Gefängnis. Das Hotelpersonal als Mitwisser."

mechanical music actually begins immediately after the bathtub scene, insinuating that the press had already begun to generate stories about the scandal.

The next scene comments ironically of the result of such media sensationalism: instant fame and wealth. Six “excited and wildly gesticulating” managers offer Eduard contracts for “cinema, circus, theater” and even “contracts in America” (*Amerikakontrakte*) for, they note, “your divorce—enormous sensation. Newspapers full of it. Special editions, headlines. In every mouth!”²⁰⁸ They exclaim that “even boxers will envy you” to the tune of a triumphant military march, a reference to newspapers’ extensive sports coverage that helped turn athletes into celebrities.²⁰⁹

While these scenes can be read as a light-hearted parody of tabloid culture, the final scene of the opera takes a darker turn. Having finally earned enough money to pay for their divorce, Eduard and Laura decide to stay together after all. At this point the choir, representing the public, tells them “softly but emphatically”:

No, that won’t work. We won’t allow it... For eternity you will remain the man who smashed the Venus and for all time you will meet gentlemen callers in your bathroom... You are labeled. You are people no longer. You are the news of the day. You are only available in wires, type, chimes. You are delivered over to us. In your decisions, you are no longer free.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Hindemith, *Neues vom Tage*, 118–119. “Ihr Scheidungsprozess, ungeheure Sensation. Zeitungen voll davon. Extrablätter, Schlagzeilen. In Aller Mund!”

²⁰⁹ Hindemith, *Neues vom Tage*, 132–133. “Selbst Boxer werden Sie beneiden.” Boxing in particular benefitted from extensive newspaper coverage. Fulda, 187.

²¹⁰ Hindemith, *Neues vom Tage*, 288–294. “Nein, das geht nicht. Wir erlauben’s nicht... In Ewigkeit bleibst du der Mann, der die Venus zerschlug, und du empfängst für alle Zeiten Herrenbesuch im Bad... Ihr seid abgestempelt. Ihr seid keine Menschen mehr. Ihr seid das Neueste vom Tage. Im Drähten, Lettern, Tönen seid ihr nur noch vorhanden. Uns seid ihr überantwortet. In euren Entschlüssen seid ihr nicht mehr frei.”

After protesting, the pair are forced to acquiesce to the public, realizing, “We are disembodied, we no longer belong to ourselves, we are only a story. We only live in the mind of the reader; we are a commodity. But as such we are certainly now ‘in demand.’”²¹¹ The chorus’s music is homophonic with syllabic text-setting in order to convey the emphatic message. When Laura and Eduard “acquiesce,” their previous florid singing style transforms to blend with implacable voice of the chorus. Having given up their lives as private individuals, Laura and Eduard are literally engulfed in headlines, as oversized versions of the evening tabloids are distributed around the stage, seen in Figure 2.21. The four-part chorus begins reading the headlines, which range from the serious to the profane, including: “Bernhard Shaw swallowed by a shark while swimming,” crime (“Thursday evening one thousand baby buggies secretly stolen”), a runaway poodle, weather, stock reports, announcement of a Furtwängler concert, advertisements, society gossip (“Countess Kesselstein delivered healthy triplets”), fashion, and sports.²¹² These headlines are set in a lively four-part fugue in a bouncy compound meter, conveying a sense of competing headlines, or perhaps evoking the calls of newsboys on the streets.²¹³ (In one production, the headlines were actually projected onto a screen, adding visual chaos.²¹⁴) Laura and Eduard join in the singing, eventually reading about their own scandal. The rollicking tempo and triumphant

²¹¹ Hindemith, *Neues vom Tage*, 292–294. “Wir sind entleibt, gehören uns nicht selber, sind ein Bericht nur. Wir leben nur im Hirn des Lesers, sind eine Handelsware. Als solche sind wir allerdings jetzt ‘stark gefragt.’” One could see a more ambivalent message, that Eduard and Laura were complicit in their downfall, trading their private lives for fame.

²¹² Hindemith, *Neues vom Tage*, 294. “Die neuesten Abendzeitungen werden verteilt. Laura und Eduard sowie der ganze Chor haben die groß ausgebreiteten Blätter vor sich und lesen die letzten Berichte.”

²¹³ Cook, *Opera*, 159. As Cook notes, life imitated art, as the day before the premiere, the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* actually ran a story with the headline “Opera Singer in the Bathtub” (*Opernsängerin in der Badewanne*).

²¹⁴ Peter Epstein, “Paul Hindemiths Theatermusik,” *Die Musik* 23, no. 8 (May 1931): 586. “In einer Inszenierung, die es sich angelegen sein ließ, allen Zeitungsquatsch des letzten Finale einzeln im Lichtbild zu projizieren, wurde dies ganz deutlich.”

ending in a major key ironically belies the negative message: Laura and Eduard have been eternally reduced to caricatures of the “man who smashed a Venus to bits” and “Laura in the bath,” who “completely undressed, gives a man a rendezvous.”²¹⁵



Figure 2.21. Closing scene of the Darmstadt production. Design by Wilhelm Reinking. September 1929.

Several critics understood the opera as an ironic commentary and even critique of the times. Hindemith’s former composition teacher, Arnold Mendelssohn, recognized this intent in his journal entries before and after a performance:

²¹⁵ Hindemith, *Neues vom Tage*, 303–305. “Im Museum ein bekannter Herr, schlägt berühmte Venus kurz und klein. Laura im Bade gibt, total entkleidet, einem Herrn ein Stelldichein.”

Before: What Hindemith has in mind with “Neues vom Tage,” I assume, is something like Mozart’s “Figaro”: Persiflage on the social conditions of that time. Whether he succeeds will be shown tonight. After: It’s certainly a very amusing parody of our present lack of culture (*Kulturlosigkeit*).²¹⁶

Critic Max Donisch polemicized against the opera but still recognized the “attempt at a satirical stance” (*der Versuch einer satirischen Haltung*), while Max Marschalk, writing for the *Vossische Zeitung*, also believed Hindemith “ironizes and parodies” (*ironisiert und parodiert*).²¹⁷ Marion Scott likewise described it as a “tearing farce.” Alfred Einstein, citing the typewriter scene in particular, called the opera an “artistic portrayal of our situation, of our Americanization: portrayal and likewise critique.”²¹⁸ A review in the *Börsen-Courier* spoke of how Eduard and Laura were forced to “prostitute” (*prostituieren*) themselves for the public, “playing puppets of their own existence” (*als Puppen ihre eigne Existenz*).²¹⁹ Peter Epstein believed that, rather than merely a piece of ephemera, the opera was a larger social commentary on the press and contemporary society, stating that “Hindemith has written something that lifts him high above the daily production precisely in this piece dedicated to ‘the day’ and its sensations: instead of Schiffer’s novelties of 1929, he has composed the stock characters of the sensational.”²²⁰ Epstein

²¹⁶ Mendelssohn thought, however, that the music wasn’t witty enough for a two hour-long joke. Arnold Mendelssohn, *Gott, Welt und Kunst: Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Wilhelm Ewald (Wiesbaden: Inselverlag, 1949), 64. “Vorher: Dem Hindemith schwebt, wie ich vermute, in ‘Neues vom Tage’ etwas vor, das an Mozarts ‘Figaro’ gemahnt: Persiflage der derzeitigen gesellschaftlichen Zustände. Ob es ihm gelungen ist, wird sich heut Abend zeigen. Nachher: Ist allerdings eine sehr amüsante Verulkung unserer heutigen Kulturlosigkeit.”

²¹⁷ Donisch, in Schubert, introduction to *Neues vom Tage*, xviii; Max Marschalk, *Vossische Zeitung* 10 June 1929, in Schubert, introduction to *Neues vom Tage*, xix.

²¹⁸ Alfred Einstein, *Berliner Tageblatt*, in Schubert, introduction to *Neues vom Tage*, xx. “künstlerisches Abbild unserer Situation, unserer Amerikanisierung: Abbild und Kritik zugleich.”

²¹⁹ “Neues vom Tage. Oper am Platz der Republik.” *Börsen-Courier*, 7 October 1929.

²²⁰ Epstein, 586. “Hindemith dagegen hat etwas geschrieben, was ihn über die Tagesproduktion gerade in diesem dem ‘Tage’ und seinen Sensationen gewidmeten Stück hoch

argued that Hindemith's music for the last scene "intuitively captured the fate of the pair" and lifted the opera above any "flat jokes and robust satire" (*platten Ulk und robuste Satire*), while the librettist unfortunately seemed to "run out of steam."²²¹ Another critic agreed that the last scene was the strongest; with the "eerie staccato" of the chorus, "the music ruptures the backdrop, which Schiffer's material never foreshadowed."²²²

Epstein was not alone in observing the disconnect between Hindemith's serious music and Schiffer's libretto; many critics praised the music as some of Hindemith's finest, believing he had finally "loosened" up his strict polyphonic style, while pinpointing the libretto as the chief culprit behind the opera's problems.²²³ Adorno, for instance, lauded the "lucidity of the orchestra sound, the accuracy of the instrumental coloration, the clarity of the sung words, the undesigned as well as masterful counterpoint," but ultimately believed that Schiffer's "innocuous" (*harmlos*) and "flat" (*platt*) text "is not only not worth the artistic effort, but rather is actually opposed to Hindemith's true nature and therefore paralyzes his productive imagination."²²⁴ Like Adorno,

hinaushebt: statt Schiffers Neuigkeiten von 1929 hat er den Typus des Sensationellen komponiert."

²²¹ Epstein, 586. "in Wirklichkeit ist die 'Schicksalsverkündung' und die Ergebung in dieses Schicksal... in der Musik intuitive erfasst und folgerichtig vom Musiker bis zu Ende durchgeführt, während dem Librettisten die Puste, d.h. der Mut zur Ernsthaftigkeit noch während des kurzen Intermezzos abhanden kam."

²²² Strobel, "Neues vom Tage," 258. "Das plötzliche Stocken der Bewegung, das unheimliche Staccato—es klingt etwas Irrationales herein, hier reißt die Musik Hintergründe auf, die Schiffers Stoff nie ahnen lässt."

²²³ Hans Stuckenschmidt, for example, praised the music as some of the most charming (*reizendsten*) that Hindemith had written, but thought there was "too much Bach" where Offenbach was needed. Stuckenschmidt, *B.Z. am Mittag*, 10 June 1929, in Schubert, introduction to *Neues vom Tage*, xviii.

²²⁴ Adorno, review of *Neues vom Tage*, Darmstadt, August 1930, in *Musikalische Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1984), 6:187. "Die Luzidität des Orchesterklanges, die Treffsicherheit der instrumentalen Farbengebung, die Deutlichkeit des gesungenen Wortes, der ebenso absichtslose wie souveräne Kontrapunkt—all dies ist evident. Aber es wurde, wiederum, an einen Gegenstand gewandt, der nicht nur die artistische Mühe

Heinrich Wiegand believed that writing “light” music was not consistent with Hindemith’s temperament, as “even when Hindemith composes really funny music, the seriousness of his means of expression, his delicately flowing polyphony, encumbers the scene.”²²⁵ Hans Gutman opined that “a great deal of good music is wasted on a trifle, with the unique result that as a musician Hindemith has been reproached for putting too much ‘quality’ into his work.”²²⁶ Alfred Einstein noted that, in terms of orchestral music, Hindemith “had written nothing finer, more sophisticated, more transparent, more refined,” but he had not found the right “connection” to the text. Einstein noted the “disparity between the (light) aspirations of the text, this cabaret-like, dramatic sequence of pictures, and the (less light) aspiration of the music.”²²⁷ Ruth Crawford Seeger colorfully described the disparity between the music and text as a “‘sophisticated pekinese [sic] tied to a libretto that in itself was an impossible crossbreed of a dachshund and a chattering monkey.” Even Hindemith’s biographer (and stalwart champion) Heinrich Strobel asked whether the everydayness of the events on stage could do justice to Hindemith’s “rigorous, objective music”: “can this literary cabaret piece be represented by Hindemith’s artistic-intellectual musical language, or rather, does it lie beneath or at least outside of its realm?”²²⁸

nicht lohnt, sondern recht eigentlich Hindemiths wahren Wesen entgegen ist und darum seine produktive Phantasie lahmlegt.”

²²⁵ Heinrich Wiegand, *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 10 June 1929, in Schubert, introduction to *Neues vom Tage*, xix. “Auch wenn Hindemith sehr lustig musiziert, belastet die Ernsthaftigkeit seiner Ausdrucksmittel, seine delikate fließende Polyphonie die Szene.”

²²⁶ Hans Gutman, “Tabloid Hindemith,” 36.

²²⁷ Alfred Einstein, *Berliner Tageblatt* June 10, 1929, in Schubert, introduction to *Neues vom Tage*, xix. “Es besteht ein Missverhältnis zwischen dem (leichten) Anspruch dieses Textes, dieser kabarettistischen dramatischen Bilderfolge, und dem (weniger leichten) Anspruch der Musik.”

²²⁸ Strobel, “Hindemiths ‘Neues vom Tage,’” *Melos* 8, no. 5/6 (May/June 1929): 258–259. “Die aus einem persönlichen Instrumentalstil heraus entwickelte, bei aller Grazie doch strenge, objektive Musik, die tiefe Durchdachtheit der Anlage, die wiederum aus dem Instrumentalen abgeleitete Vokalmelodik—kann das alles überhaupt an der dünnen Alltäglichkeit dieses Bühnengeschehens zur Geltung kommen, kann diese literatenhafte

Ironically, given the opera's later condemnation by Goebbels, it was Herbert Gerigk, future compiler of the anti-Semitic *Lexicon of Jews in Music* (1940), who gave the most positive review, lauding the music and the humor and calling it "the comic opera of our times."

Of course, several critics panned the opera entirely, disliking the "stupid" (*dumm*) libretto and Hindemith's "outmoded" (*altbacken*) polyphony, or interpreting it as a paean to modern life. That many critics missed or misunderstood the satiric intent of the opera appears to have rankled Hindemith, or at least his publishers. (Ludwig appeared to anticipate such a problem, as he asked Hindemith for some explanatory notes to be published in the program so that "no nonsense will be written [very important!]." ²²⁹ Hindemith did not oblige.) Willy Strecker stressed the opera's anti-modern, anti-American message in a 1935 letter to Gustav Havemann defending Hindemith's fitness as a composer in the Third Reich. ²³⁰ Moreover, he submitted drafts of the letter to Hindemith for his final approval, meaning that Hindemith clearly agreed or signed-off on this interpretation of the opera. In the draft of the letter, Willy complained that "the tragic color of the ending, in whose light the entire work is identified as a condemnation of that epoch, is almost always overlooked." ²³¹ After Hindemith had a chance to edit the remarks, Strecker elaborated on the accusations against the opera:

In their judgment of the text to "Neues vom Tage," very few critics took the trouble to understand the actual meaning of this stage work. In no way is it a glorification of the Americanized activity of the time, but rather is a castigation and condemnation of this

Kabarettistik überhaupt mit der künstlerisch-geistigen Tonsprache Hindemiths dargestellt werden, liegt sie nicht vielmehr unter oder mindestens außerhalb ihrer Bezirke?"

²²⁹ L. Strecker to Hindemith, 4 May 1929. "kein Quatsch geschrieben wird (sehr wichtig!)"

²³⁰ Draft of a letter from W. Strecker to Gustav Havemann, ca. March 1935.

²³¹ Enclosed notes, W. Strecker to Hindemith, 9 March 1935. "Übersehen wird fast immer die tragische Färbung des Schlusses, in dessen Licht das Ganze als eine Verurteilung den damaligen Zeitepoche erkannt wird."

epoch, as the serious finale of the work shows, in which the tragedy of a private life jerked into the public sphere is identified.²³²

No doubt Willy emphasized the tragedy of the ending and the opera's castigation of the 1920s in order to put Hindemith in a good light, especially after Goebbels's derision of the opera's "atonality" and "salacious" bathtub scene in a speech on 7 December 1934.²³³ Nevertheless, taking Willms's essay regarding *Kammermusik Nr. 1* and *Suite "1922"* into account, this would be the second time that Hindemith insisted that he was actually mocking modernity. Yet while Strecker's defense of *Neues vom Tage* could be dismissed as pandering to Nazi authorities, Heinrich Strobel used this very same defense *after* the Second World War in his 1948 biography of Hindemith, when he would presumably want to absolve Hindemith of any such overtures. Strobel insisted that "this 'Zeitoper' is an opera against the time, an opera against the sensation-hungry bustle and against the overestimation of the public opinion. If one wants to go further, it's an opera for the freedom of personhood and of personal behavior."²³⁴ This "freedom of personhood" may refer to the central message of modern society's effects of stripping away individuality and privacy. In his 1975 biography of Hindemith, Geoffrey Skelton also took Hindemith at his word, stating that "Hindemith himself claimed that its picture of

²³² Draft of a letter from W. Strecker to Gustav Havemann, March 1935. "Bei der Beurteilung des Textes zu 'Neues vom Tage' haben sich die wenigsten Kritiker die Mühe genommen, den wirklichen Sinn dieses Bühnenwerkes sich klar zu machen. Es handelt sich keineswegs um eine Glorifizierung des amerikanisierten Zeitbetriebes, sondern um eine Geißelung und Verurteilung dieser Zeitepoche, wie der ernst ausklingende Schluss des Werkes zeigt, in dem die Tragik eines in die Öffentlichkeit gerzerzten Privatlebens gekennzeichnet wird."

²³³ Goebbels speech as reported in the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 7 December 1934, in *Musik im Dritten Reich: eine Dokumentation*, ed. Josef Wulf (Gütersloh: S. Mohn, 1963), 340.

²³⁴ Strobel, *Paul Hindemith*, 62. "An dieser Stelle öffnet sich ein geistiger Hintergrund, und an dieser Stelle begreift man, warum Hindemith dieses Werk überhaupt geschrieben hat. Diese 'Zeitoper' ist eine Oper gegen die Zeit, eine Oper gegen die sensationshungrige Betriebsamkeit und gegen die Überschätzung der öffentlichen Meinung, wenn man weiter will, eine Oper für die Freiheit der Persönlichkeit und des persönlichen Handelns."

cosmopolitan life in the Twenties was satirical and, if one takes into account his conviction that an artist has a moral responsibility to society, one can accept the satirical intention while questioning whether the satire effectively comes through.”²³⁵ Finally, Hindemith himself altered the opera in 1953 to make the tragic message come through more clearly by having Laura and Eduard regret their decision to divorce earlier in the opera, heightening their status as victims (rather than collaborators) of the press.²³⁶ And, as if responding to Goebbels over twenty years later, he changed the infamous bathtub scene: putting the “professional co-respondent” Herr Hermann in the bathtub rather than Laura.

Conclusion

Re-examining Hindemith’s jazz-influenced works disrupts the traditional image of him as the *enfant terrible* and/or consummate modernist. While professing it was strictly jazz’s musical properties that interested him, works such as *Kammermusik Nr. 1, Suite “1922”*, and *Neues vom Tage* drew on jazz’s extramusical associations of America, technology, urbanity, and modernity. Far from being expressions of the Golden Twenties, however, Hindemith’s contemporaries often understood these works as satirical, even negative, depictions of the current time. Statements by those close to Hindemith, Franz Willms and his publisher Willy Strecker, later confirmed this interpretation. This ambivalent stance toward modernity would reach its apogee in his next collaboration on the oratorio *Das Unaufhörliche* with the poet Gottfried Benn in 1930, discussed in Chapter Five.

²³⁵ Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 94.

²³⁶ Skelton, “Neues vom Tage,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed 21 November 2018. He also simplified some of the florid vocal lines, possibly in an attempt to minimize the discrepancy between the busy music and banal text.

Chapter Three:

Coming to Terms with Modernity

In recent years, Hindemith's experiments with new technologies during the interwar period have increasingly attracted scholarly attention. Alexandra Monchick and Francesco Finocchiaro have both written about the composer's engagements with film, focusing in particular on his early score for the film *Im Sturm und Eis* (*In Storm and Ice*, 1921).¹ Likewise, his works for the trautonium, an electronic instrument, were the subject of two papers at the 2017 meeting of the American Musicological Society, as well as lectures by historian of science Myles Jackson.² Hindemith's work with the player piano and trautonium also figures prominently in Thomas Patteson's 2016 book *Instruments for New Music: Sound Technology, and Modernism*.³ Finally, in his discussion of compositional trends of the interwar period, Joseph Auner highlights several examples of Hindemith's brush with technology in his textbook *Music in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* (2013). These includes his work for radio, *Der Lindberghflug* (*The Lindbergh Flight*, 1929), his trautonium works, and his famous instructions in *Suite 1922* to play

¹ Alexandra Monchick, "Paul Hindemith and the Cinematic Imagination"; Francesco Finocchiaro, *Musical Modernism & German Cinema from 1913 to 1933* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

² Alexandra Monchick, "The Craft of Paul Hindemith's Electronic Compositions," and Jennifer Iverson, "At the Intersection of Acoustics, Phonetics, and Music: The Mixtur-Trautonium as Boundary Object," (papers presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society, Rochester, NY, 9–12 November 2017); Myles Jackson, "Engineers, Scientists, Musicians, and the Trautonium in Berlin in the 1930s" (lecture, History of Science Brown Bag, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 17 November 2017).

³ Thomas Patteson, *Instruments for New Music: Sound, Technology, and Modernism* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016).

the piano “like a machine,” which Auner sees as indicative of composers’ interest in capturing the sounds and rhythms of the modern machine age.⁴

Despite this renewed attention, scholars continue to label these works as *Gebrauchsmusik*, the often-murky concept that is generally translated as “music for use” and applied to functional music not meant for the concert hall.⁵ While Hindemith rarely used this term himself, and later disavowed it, he is considered the “leading exponent” of this music and is even credited with coining the term.⁶ Moreover, scholars often frame Hindemith’s work with new technologies as experimentation for its own sake, or as an uncritical embrace of modern technology. This framing, in turn, resonates with the prevailing image of the Weimar Republic, and specifically Berlin, as a modern technological metropolis full of streetcars, subways, radio, cinemas, cars, electric lights; a place where, in the words of Nicholas Attfield, “scientific discovery marches lockstep with technological advancement.”⁷

This chapter investigates Hindemith’s experiments with various forms of “mechanical music” in the mid-1920s to the early 1930s, which included film, radio, player pianos, and electronic instruments. While Hindemith’s engagement with these technologies may demonstrate his genuine curiosity and interest in their possibilities, I suggest that it represented more of an

⁴ Auner, *Music*, 84–85, 92–93.

⁵ Patteson translates this concept as “everyday music” and associates the term with the development of the Volkstrautionium meant for amateur musicians. Patteson, 128–129. See also Taruskin, *Early Twentieth Century*, 527; Monchick, “Paul Hindemith,” 526; and Stephen Hinton, “Gebrauchsmusik,” *Grove Music Online*. 2001; accessed 10 Feb. 2020. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000010804>.

⁶ “Gebrauchsmusik,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed 3 January 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/art/Gebrauchsmusik>. Hinton notes that in a lecture delivered at Harvard in 1950, Hindemith both “appeared to take credit for coining the term” while also trying to distance himself from it. Hinton, “Gebrauchsmusik,” *Grove Music Online*. 2001.

⁷ Attfield, 1.

ambivalent coming-to-terms with the onslaught of this technology. Writing music for mass media and new instruments—like jazz, competitors to the concert hall—was a way to directly confront this threat, recognizing the changing societal and economic shifts in postwar Germany. Hindemith's measured response to new technologies, in turn, reflected the prevailing ambivalence and even hostility of Germans toward technology. Rather than a whole-hearted embrace and celebration of the machine age, enthusiasm and hopes for technology was mixed with anxieties about its effect on German society and *Kultur*.

Mechanical Music in Germany

Like jazz, “mechanical music” (a term broadly used to describe any music having to do with modern technology) had a prewar presence in Germany and experienced significant growth during the interwar period. After the introduction of the radio in October 1923, for example, nine broadcast zones had already been established by the end of the following year; by 1930, Germany was the second-largest radio market in Europe after Great Britain, with twenty-eight regional stations.⁸ Sales of gramophones also increased during the 1920s, from 196,000 in 1925 to 427,200 in 1929. At its peak in 1930, the size of the recording industry's workforce was estimated to be roughly that of the shoe industry, employing 40,000 laborers and 7,000 white-collar employees.⁹ The number of cinemas also rose dramatically: from 3,731 in 1920; to over 5,000 in 1930 and by 1939, 6,923.¹⁰ In addition to the growth of mass media, postwar Germany also saw the increased mechanization of musical instruments—both in the surging popularity of

⁸ Christopher Hailey, “Rethinking Sound: Music and Radio in Weimar Germany,” in Gilliam, *Music and Performance*, 14; Karl Christian Führer, “Broadcasting,” 722; Kater, *Drummers*, 12.

⁹ Ross, “Entertainment, Technology and Tradition,” 26–27.

¹⁰ Stephen Brockmann, *A Critical History of German Film* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010), 51, 144. Eric Weitz cites similar statistics: 2,400 cinemas in 1919 and 5,600 in 1929. Weitz, 236.

the player piano,¹¹ and in the development of electronic instruments such as the theremin and Ondes Martenot.¹²

With this surge in popularity, mechanical music more broadly became a prominent topic of interest during the interwar period. As with jazz, the new music journals *Musikblätter des Anbruch* and *Der Auftakt* devoted special issues to the mechanization of music, while the Berlin-based journal *Die Musik* created a special section devoted purely to “Mechanical Music” (*mechanische Musik*) that included articles on radio, records, film, and new instruments, as well as reviews of new recordings.¹³ Yet like jazz, mechanical music was also viewed with ambivalence, representing both a threat and promise to German cultural life. *Anbruch* editor Paul Stefan called its development “one of the most urgent of our time” (*eines der drängenden unsere Zeit*), while Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt described “the unprecedented upheavals that the machine has brought about in intellectual and social life.”¹⁴ In his 1926 essay, “Music on the Radio,” Frank Warschauer referred to a clash between *Kultur* and *Zivilisation*, stating that mechanical music was “a reflection of the fundamental problem of this entire culture (*Kultur*) in the area of music: the conflict with technological civilization (*Zivilisation*), which causes, with

¹¹ Player pianos also functioned in a way analogous to a gramophone in that people could hear “recordings” of famous musicians playing famous works. Patteson, 27.

¹² Patteson, 115; Hugh Davies, “Electronic instruments,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed 20 Jun. 2018, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000008694>.

¹³ *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 8, no. 8/9 (October/November 1926); *Auftakt* 6, no. 8 (1926). These years also saw the creation of journals devoted specially to new media, such as *AKI: Akustische Illustrierte*, a monthly journal “for all areas, especially for sound film, records, radio, television” (“Für alle Gebiete, bes. f. Tonfilm, Schallplatte, Radio, Fernsehen”). *Hofmeisters Jahresverzeichnis* (1931), 157.

¹⁴ Paul Stefan, “Musik und Maschine,” *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 8, no. 8/9 (1926): 343; Hans H. Stuckenschmidt, “Mechanisierung,” in *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 8, no. 8/9 (1926): 345. “Die beispiellosen Umwälzungen, die die Maschine im gesamten geistigen und sozialen Leben hervorgerufen hat...”

increasing decidedness, the revolutionizing and the re-organization of ways of life and with it—even of life itself.”¹⁵

For proponents, new technologies offered the capability of producing new timbres, rhythms, and even new types of music altogether. Music festivals and technology conventions frequently showcased composers’ experiments with new instruments, as well as with mass media. A 1932 Radio Exhibition (*Funkaufstellung*) in Berlin, for example, featured an “electric orchestra” with instruments such as the theremin and Oskar Vierling’s electric violin and cello.¹⁶ Similarly, the New Music Berlin festival of 1930 presented original music for gramophone, in which the playback speed of a recording was adjusted to alter the original pitch and speed; the modified output was then recorded onto a separate disc.¹⁷

Mechanical music—especially the radio—also promised to help elevate the nation’s cultural level or *Bildung*. Classical music would now be available to all, serving as a tool for educating the public and improving taste—despite the fact that radios and gramophone players were too expensive for most working-class households.¹⁸ Weimar-era radio executives often put this belief into practice by devoting the better part of most evening programs to highbrow music

¹⁵ Frank Warschauer, “Musik im Rundfunk,” *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 8, no. 8/9 (1926): 374. “Die Frage der Mechanisierung in der Musik ist keine periphere, sondern vielmehr die Spiegelung des Grundproblems dieser gesamten Kultur im Bereich der Musik: der Auseinandersetzung mit der technischen Zivilisation, die mit steigender Entschiedenheit die Revolutionierung und Umorganisation der Lebensformen und damit des Lebens überhaupt bewirkt.”

¹⁶ Patteson, 125.

¹⁷ Patteson, 91, 125. Hindemith’s works for this festival included two recordings labeled “Song over Three Octaves” and “Xylophone.” Ernst Toch also submitted his three-movement *Gesprochene Musik* (Spoken Music), which featured a chorus pronouncing text.

¹⁸ Ross, “Entertainment, Technology, and Tradition,” 28; Führer, “Medium of Modernity,” 746. On the idea of the “democratization” of culture, see Kate Lacey, “The Invention of a Listening Public: Radio and its Audiences,” in Führer and Ross, *Mass Media, Culture, and Society*, 61–79.

(operas, symphonies, Lieder) and lectures on music. Ernst Hardt, director of the Westdeutsche Rundfunk (WERAG) station, believed that listeners had “no will of their own to ask for the cultural and aesthetic better things,” but felt sure that deep down they wanted “to be led... to be forced” to hear such programs and that they would “be thankful later on.”¹⁹ Through this programming, proponents argued, technology even had the potential to help Germany’s struggling concert halls and opera houses, as radio and records could first familiarize a mass (presumably working-class) audience with classical genres and then eventually lure them to the live performance itself. Frank Warschauer referred to this complementary relationship between the radio and live concerts, calling radio “a pure and very compliant mechanism for dissemination and as such... not only not the enemy, but rather... the most faithful servant of the human artist, whose sphere it in no way injures.”²⁰ Ernst Latzko in 1928 also believed that the radio should not be considered a competitor to concerts and the theater, but rather a “complement” (*Ergänzung*) to them.²¹ Some, like Kurt Weill, even believed that technology would be the savior of musical life; since traditional concerts had already become “superfluous,” only radio “can guarantee that widest dissemination which will produce the artistic public of the future.”²²

¹⁹ Ernst Hardt, quoted and translated in Führer, “Medium of Modernity,” 746.

²⁰ Warschauer, “Musik im Rundfunk,” 374. “Rundfunk ist ein reiner und sehr willfähriger Verbreitungsmechanismus und als solcher nicht nur nicht der Feind, sondern der treueste Diener des Menschlich-Künstlerischen, dessen Sphäre er überhaupt an keiner Stelle verletzt.”

²¹ Ernst Latzko, “Rundfunk und neue Musik,” *Melos* 7, no. 4 (April 1928): 194. “Der Rundfunk, der seine Sendung richtig erfasst, kann sich nicht als Konkurrenz der Konzerte und Theater betrachten sondern als eine Ergänzung...” Wilhelm Heinitz noted that gramophone records could serve as a “musical-cultural stimulus” (*musikkulturelle Anregung*). Heinitz, “Musikpädagogik und Grammophon,” *Die Musik* 17, no. 3 (December 1924): 204.

²² Quoted in Auner, *Music*, 90.

New music in particular stood to benefit from radio. Warshauer posited that since the government-run radio stations were “independent from commercial considerations,” they were “more likely to enable the performance of works that are not yet generally accepted by the broad public, and still reach the listener much more easily, because he’s not risking time and money.”²³ Ernst Latzko, noting radio’s “duty to educate the people” (*volkerzieherischen Aufgabe*), repeated these claims in the journal *Pult und Taktstock*, adding that composers could explain their works in lectures and interviews:

The radio could be the most effective type of propaganda for new music, because here (as rarely happens), material and ideological resistance could be cleared away. Not only does the financial risk disappear (because the radio organization has—so to say—a sold-out house every evening), but with the help of some explanatory words, the difficulties that prevent understanding [of new music] could be entirely or partly remedied.²⁴

Once again, some radio stations enacted these suggestions; the Berlin station under the leadership of Adolf Weißmann broadcast an “Hour of Living Composers” (*Stunde der Lebenden*) on Sunday afternoons.²⁵ In 1927, Mitteldeutsche Rundfunk AG (MIRAG), broadcasting from Leipzig, transmitted around 575 hours of serious music (*ernste Musik*), which included twenty-

²³ Warschauer, “Musik im Rundfunk,” 379. “Die Programmbildung im Rundfunk ist im gewissen Sinne besonders frei, weil sie, im Einzelfall, von kaufmännischen Berechnungen unabhängig ist... Ebenso ist auch viel eher die Aufführung von Werken zu bewerkstelligen, die bei dem breiten Publikum noch nicht durchgesetzt sind und trotzdem den Hörer viel leichter, weil ohne Risiko an Zeit und Geld für ihn, erreichen.”

²⁴ Ernst Latzko, “Rundfunk und Neue Musik,” 191. “Schon damals wurde darauf hingewiesen, dass der Rundfunk ein Propagandamittel wirksamster Art für die neue Musik sein könnte, weil hier auf selten glückliche Weise materielle und ideelle Widerstände aus dem Weg geschafft werden können. Hier fällt nicht nur das finanzielle Risiko weg, weil die Sendegesellschaft sozusagen allabendlich ein ausverkauftes Haus hat, hier können durch Zuhilfenahme des erklärenden Wortes dem Verständnis entgegenstehende Schwierigkeiten ganz oder teilweise behoben werden.”

²⁵ Warschauer, “Musik im Rundfunk,” 379. “In Berlin wird sie vor allem in der ‘Stunde der Lebenden’ an Sonntagsmatineen gepflegt, deren Leitung neuerdings Adolf Weissman übernommen hat.”

five broadcasts of contemporary music with works by Stravinsky, Honegger, and others.²⁶ Moreover, echoing Latzko's suggestion, composers such as Schoenberg took to the airwaves to explain their works.²⁷ Eberhard Preussner, in perhaps an example of wishful thinking, observed in 1929 that "already among those who earlier could not afford to visit a concert, and those who can no longer afford it, there are enough music-lovers who want to hear music, even new music, on the radio."²⁸

Many, however, viewed these technologies as a threat to, rather than a savior of, *Kultur*. In contrast to the art-for-art's sake view that prevailed in the concert hall, radio, recordings, and film were often associated with commercialization, or with popular culture. Historian Corey Ross has observed how "the commercial orientation of the German entertainment industry at large—with the notable exception of radio—constituted a fundamental threat to the role of the educated middle classes as the principal arbiters of cultural value."²⁹ Light or popular music made up the bulk of sales in the gramophone industry; in fact, it was the sale of popular music that enabled firms to offer recordings of art music. As one writer for the *Phonographische Zeitschrift* stated in 1930, "Every record company has in its catalogue recordings that never cover their own costs and that are included only in order to ensure that the company is not

²⁶ Führer, "Medium of Modernity," 744.

²⁷ Schoenberg lectured on his *Four Orchestral Songs*, op. 22 in 1932 on Frankfurt Radio. Jack Boss, "Schoenberg's Op. 22 Radio Talk and Developing Variation in Atonal Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 14, no. 2 (Fall 1992): 130. See also Auner, "Proclaiming the Mainstream: Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern," in Cook and Pople, *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, 234–235.

²⁸ Eberhard Preussner, "Gemeinschaftsmusik 1929 in Baden-Baden," *Die Musik* 21, no. 12 (September 1929): 900. "Und schon gibt es gerade in den Kreisen, die sich früher den Besuch eines Konzertes nicht leisten konnten, und in den Kreisen, die ihn sich nicht mehr leisten können, genug Musikliebhaber, die Musik, auch neue Musik, im Radio hören wollen."

²⁹ Ross, "Entertainment, Technology and Tradition," 33.

perceived as a gang of un-artistic and uncultured philistines.”³⁰ And despite radio executives’ determination to educate listeners and cultivate a love for the German classical legacy (if against their will), working-class audiences still overwhelmingly preferred to listen to light or entertaining programs instead of serious music.³¹ Moreover, entertainment music was more suited for gramophone and radio, as hit songs were short and did not necessarily need to rely on the accurate replay of timbre or dynamics, in contrast to serious music’s long works and dependence on nuance, timbre, and dynamics.³²

Technology also threatened to degrade the quality of serious music, both in terms of its production and consumption. In 1930, Schoenberg worried over how the poor broadcast quality of the radio “accustoms the ear to an unspeakably coarse tone, and to a body of sound constituted in a soupy, blurred way, which precludes all finer differentiation. One fears, as perhaps the worst thing of all, that the attitude to such sounds will change...”³³ The democratization (or for some, the socialization) of culture through mass media also sparked fears about having to pander to a mass audience, thus lowering standards for serious music. As musicologist Christopher Morris notes, the concept of mass culture (*Massenkultur*) often carried “pejorative connotations of the rise of new faceless hordes whose numbers and tastes [would] have a leveling, perhaps degenerative, effect on cultural production.”³⁴ After a lackluster performance of radio plays at

³⁰ *Phonographische Zeitschrift* 31 (1930): 160, quoted in Ross, “Entertainment, Technology and Tradition,” 31.

³¹ According to a 1933–1934 poll, only 7.9 percent of unskilled workers and 10.5 percent of skilled workers liked classical programming. Führer, “Medium of Modernity,” 750. See also Kater, *Drummers*, 12.

³² Ross, “Entertainment, Technology and Tradition,” 29–30.

³³ Arnold Schoenberg, “The Radio: Reply to a Questionnaire,” in *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 147–48.

³⁴ Christopher Morris, “From Revolution to Mystic Mountains: Edmund Meisel and the Politics of Modernism,” in *Composing for the Screen in Germany and the USSR: Cultural*

the New Music Berlin festival, critics for *Melos* commented that the daily radio programs had already shown “how far the tendency for levelling in the radio is going, without needing the New Music 1930 to confirm it for us.”³⁵

Most pressing, however, was the fear that new technologies would destroy traditional concert life altogether. As cheaper, more accessible forms of entertainment, film, gramophone, and radio had the potential to wipe out opera houses and concert halls and, with that, the livelihoods of those who worked in the business: musicians, composers, publishers, conductors, and so on. Moreover, this technology was consumed across the social spectrum, drawing away what remained of the traditional bourgeois and upper-class audiences.³⁶ Warschauer referred to these fears when he observed that “the word ‘mechanization’ today still has for many the same terror that the word ‘machine’ had for the labor force 100 years ago, who felt their existence threatened by it.”³⁷ Erwin Felber also noted the use of cheaper “surrogates” for live performance:

the cinema is, for the broad masses, a welcome emergency replacement for live theater, the phonograph is, for study purposes (especially for singing instruction) and despite all technical shortcomings, a valuable, indispensable method for the conservation of live music, of its presentation and of its technical reproduction; the radio is already today a valuable replacement for theater and concerts.³⁸

Politics and Propaganda, ed. Robynn J. Stilwell and Phil Powrie (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 87.

³⁵ Mersmann, Schultze-Ritter, and Strobel, “Neue Musik Berlin 1930,” *Melos* 9, no. 7 (July 1930): 306. “Wie weit die Tendenz zur Nivellierung im Rundfunk geht, sehen wir aus den täglichen Programmen, ohne dass uns die Neue Musik 1930 gerade dies zu bestätigen brauchte.”

³⁶ As Weitz observes, “by the late 1920s, millions of Germans went to the movies. Tickets were inexpensive enough that only the very poor were excluded and films had become suitably artistic and reputable to attract at least segments of those more educated and wealthy.” Weitz, 236.

³⁷ Warschauer, “Musik im Rundfunk,” 374. “Das Wort Mechanisierung hat heute noch für viele den gleichen Schrecken wie das Wort Maschine vor hundert Jahren für eine Arbeiterschaft hatte, die sich dadurch in ihrer Existenz bedroht fühlte.”

³⁸ Erwin Felber, “Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten der mechanischen Musik,” *Die Musik* 19, no. 2 (November 1926): 77. “das Kino ist für die breiten Massen ein willkommener Notersatz für das lebendige Theater, der Phonograph ist trotz aller technischen Mängel ein wertvolles, für Studienzwecke—namentlich des Gesangeleven—unentbehrliches Konservierungsmittel der

Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt treated the replacement of live musicians by machines as inevitable, given the current “crises of the orchestra and theater, the crises of contemporary composition styles, the economic crises of musicians, the perfection of the speech-machine [phonograph], and the other music machines... One can either celebrate this present state or hate it, but one cannot change the course of history.”³⁹ While perhaps exaggerated, these fears were not unfounded; radio and film did take audiences away from traditional cultural institutions, while the introduction of sound film wreaked havoc among cinema musicians: out of 183 German films produced in 1929, 175 were silent and 8 had sound; in 1931, only 2 were silent and 142 had sound.⁴⁰

The ambivalences surrounding mechanical music during the interwar years, like jazz, reflected larger anxieties about modernity and its signifiers: industrialization, mechanization, urbanization, and globalization. Historians have frequently commented on the fraught relationship of Germans with modernity, noting that the conditions of modern life spurred by the industrial revolution were simultaneously embraced and rejected in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Walter Frisch, for examples, uses the term “ambivalent modernism” to describe Germans’ tendency for “admiring and fostering the new, at the same as clinging fervently to the past out of a sense that the past (especially the German past) was an essential part

lebendigen Musik, ihres Vortrages und ihrer technischen Wiedergabe, das Radio ist schon heute hochwertiger Ersatz für Theater und Konzert...”

³⁹ Stuckenschmidt, “Mechanisierung,” 345. “Wer der tiefen Kausalität dieser Dinge sich bewusst wird, wer begreift, dass die Krisen der Orchester und Theater, die Krisen des heutigen Kompositionsstils, die wirtschaftlichen Krisen der Musiker, die Vervollkommnung der Sprechmaschine und der anderen Musikautomaten... Man kann diese Gegenwart bejubeln oder hassen—verändern wird man den Gang der Geschichte nicht.”

⁴⁰ Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 14–15; Potter, *Most German*, 26; Brockmann, 55; Ross, “Entertainment, Technology and Tradition,” 32.

of the German character that could not be abandoned.”⁴¹ Thomas Patteson has referred to the “duality” in the early twentieth-century Germany consisting of “an infatuation with modern life and an idealistic quest for alternatives to a disenchanted reality.”⁴² David Blackbourn also notes this Janus-faced view towards modernity, stating that, “Antimodernism was probably more pronounced in Germany; but so was the fervent embrace of science and technology,” while observing that “some of the central symbols of progress generated anxiety as well as pride” in industrialized Germany, such as the railway or telephone.⁴³ Finally, Pamela Potter observes how “modernization wrought radical transformations in all corners of German society, creating an unsettling and unpredictable state of modernity and generating ‘troubled and fluctuating’ reactions.”⁴⁴ Although mixed reactions towards modern life could be found in other European countries, it seems to have been especially intense in Germany. One possible reason for this exceptionality is that Germany experienced industrialization much later, and at a much faster pace than France and Great Britain. Scholars also cite the lack of a bourgeois revolution as a reason for Germany’s intense ambivalence (or distrust) of modernity; unlike France and Great Britain, Germany’s modernization was not accompanied by a corresponding change in the social and political structure.

⁴¹ Walter Frisch, *German Modernism: Music and the Arts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 8. Frisch borrows the term from historian Marion Deshmukh, who understands it as “a generally positive outlook toward the rapidly changing social, economic, and scientific German landscape, but tempered by an occasional nostalgia for features of a preindustrial community in which quality workmanship and value were recognized.”

⁴² Patteson, 6.

⁴³ David Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 304, 396.

⁴⁴ Potter, *Suppression*, 177–178.

Sites of Experimentation

This ambivalence characterized Hindemith's own engagements with these technologies, which he primarily carried out in two—often overlapping—sites: the new music festivals held in Donaueschingen (followed by Baden-Baden, then Berlin); and the Radio Research Center (Rundfunkversuchsstelle).⁴⁵ Prince Max Egon zu Fürstenberg and his music director Heinrich Burkhard founded the former in 1921, intending it to be a platform for modern music by up-and-coming composers.⁴⁶ It was here that Hindemith himself sealed his reputation as a composer with the premiere of his String Quartet op. 16 in 1921. Two years later, he joined the music selection committee and eventually became involved in planning the event, along with Joseph Haas and Burkard. Around 1925, Hindemith, Haas, and Burkard began to shift the focus of the festival from modern chamber music to issues surrounding music and its role in postwar society. The committee addressed this shift in 1926, noting that while the festival would continue to “introduce little-known talents to the critical world,” it “also seems important to us, in our performances, to bring up for discussion special problems of new composition.”⁴⁷ The nature of the event thus began to change from a traditional music festival with concerts of serious works to evenings showcasing specific kinds of music thought to better serve the needs of the public, such as children's operas, radio plays, military music, short operas, and music for amateurs (discussed

⁴⁵ The festival was moved from Donaueschingen to Baden-Baden in 1927 as a result of the cost of the event and lack of places to stay. It then moved to Berlin in 1930.

⁴⁶ Hindemith himself described the first years of the Donaueschingen Festival as a “performance site for works by unknown composers” (*eine Aufführungsstätte für Werke bis dahin unbekannter Komponisten*). Hindemith, “Berlin 1930,” in *Aufsätze, Vorträge, Reden*, edited by Giselher Schubert (Zurich: Atlantis Musikbuch-Verlag, 1994), 45.

⁴⁷ Hindemith, “Zu unserem Programm,” in Schubert, *Aufsätze*, 16. “Das Ziel, das wir uns gesetzt haben, noch nicht oder nur wenig bekannte Talente der kritischen Welt vorzustellen, werden wir weiter verfolgen... Es scheint uns auch wichtig, bei unseren Aufführungen Sonderprobleme der neuen Tonkunst zur Diskussion zu stellen.”

in the next chapter). By 1927, Hindemith now described the purpose of the festival as “seizing upon ideas that are in the air today (the chamber symphony, madrigal, chamber opera, mechanical music, youth music) and starting to put them into practice.”⁴⁸ Between 1925 and 1928, concerts of new chamber works steadily decreased; by the 1929 festival, according to critic Eberhard Preussner, “no single work for the concert hall or opera house was performed,” transforming the previous “intimacy of peaceful chamber music making” into a “public appeal for sound film, radio music, and community music for a wide musical public.”⁴⁹ A shift in the language describing the essence of the festival accompanied the move from art music to functional music. Rather than aspiring to a metaphysical experience of art, critics now used the language of production, industry, and research to discuss the festival. Preussner stated that his article was not a concert review but more like a “progress report” (*Arbeitsbericht*).⁵⁰ Hugo Leichtentritt also believed that “efforts of the predominating artists” had transformed the festivals into a “type of experimental workshop.”⁵¹ In 1928, Hindemith himself described the event as “a type of material test site and basis for all fruitful experiments [and] music

⁴⁸ Hindemith to Otto Ernst Sutter, 5 January 1927 in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 130.

“Donaueschinger Tradition ist, dass der Musikausschuss (Haas, Burkard und ich) Ideen, die heute in der Luft liegen (Kammersymphonie, Madrigal, Kammeroper, mechanische Musik, Jugendmusik), aufgreifen und sie zu verwirklichen beginnen.”

⁴⁹ Preussner, “Gemeinschaftsmusik 1929 in Baden-Baden,” 895, 902. “In Baden-Baden wurde kein einziges Werk für Konzert oder Oper aufgeführt... Aus der Intimität friedlichen Kammermusikens ist ein öffentlicher Appell von Tonfilm, Radiomusik und Gemeinschaftsmusik an eine breite musikalische Öffentlichkeit geworden.”

⁵⁰ Preussner, “Gemeinschaftsmusik 1929 in Baden-Baden,” 895.

⁵¹ Hugo Leichtentritt, “Neue Musik 1930” in Berlin,” *Die Musik* 22, no. 11 (August 1930): 834. “Nach und nach haben sich die Bestrebungen der die Feld beherrschenden Künstler zur Schaffung einer Art Experimentier-Werkstatt gewandelt.”

demonstrations of all genres, from chamber music to *Gebrauchsmusik*.”⁵² Only two years later, it had developed into something quite different:

Berlin 1930. The event has removed everything music “festival-ish.” It completely displays the character of a workshop, which (analogous to a material test site in industry) is to research there new artistic, technical, and sociological ideas in the area of musical labor and its applicability in everyday musical life. As a consequence, a particular artwork will not be up for “discussion” primarily because it is new or “interesting,” but rather, so that each performed work can be considered only in regard to its programmatic function.⁵³

The New Music Berlin festival (the successor to Donaueschingen and Baden-Baden) represented the pinnacle of the event’s transformation from a chamber music festival to musical laboratory. The festival also fell under the auspices of another major site of experimentation for Hindemith: the Radio Research Center at the Berlin Hochschule, an electronic music studio created for researching the technical and artistic possibilities of radio, as well as other new technologies such as film and electronic instruments (discussed below). The center was established in May 1928 under the direction of Georg Schünemann, assistant director of the Hochschule, one year after Hindemith’s appointment as professor of theory and composition. As a faculty member at the Hochschule, as well as a committee member for the Donaueschingen Festival and its successors, Hindemith’s experiments at one site would frequently bleed over to

⁵² Hindemith, “Texte zur Filmmusik,” *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 19 (1990): 79. “eine Art Materialprüfstelle und Basis für alle fruchtbaren Experimente Musikkundgebungen aller Gattung von der Kammermusik bis zur Gebrauchsmusik.”

⁵³ Hindemith, “Berlin 1930,” 46. “Berlin 1930. Die Veranstaltung hat alles Musik‘festliche’ abgestreift. Sie trägt durchaus den Charakter einer Arbeitstagung, die (analog einer Materialprüfstelle in der Industrie) dazu da ist, neue künstlerische, technische und soziologische Ideen auf dem Gebiet musikalischer Arbeit auf ihre Verwertbarkeit im allgemeinen Musikleben zu untersuchen. Daraus folgt, dass nicht in erster Linie das einzelne Kunstwerk, weil es neu oder ‚interessant‘ ist, zur ‘Diskussion’ gestellt wird, sondern dass jedes aufgeführte Werk erst in Bezug auf die allgemeine programmatische Tendenz betrachtet werden kann.”

the other.⁵⁴ After the 1929 festival featuring sound film, for example, Hindemith taught a course on film music during the 1929–1930 year.

Scholars have frequently focused on the modern innovations carried out at these sites, contributing to a misleading picture of experimentation for its own sake. Rather than a flurry of modernist élan, however, the activities at both were a direct response to the perceived crisis in German musical life. Competition from mass media, popular music, and other forms of entertainment, coupled with diminished support for musical institutions from the middle class and local and state governments, made engaging with mass audiences, technology, and mass media a necessity—or necessary evil. Several critics acknowledged this in their discussions of the metamorphosis of the festival’s programming. Critic Heinrich Strobel, for one, observed that the new forms of music at the 1929 Baden-Baden festival were a result of “dubiousness and unproductivity of our music and opera organizations on one hand, and the appreciative complacency and artistic lack of receptivity of those we’ve labeled our music public on the other.”⁵⁵ Another writer in 1932 acknowledged that “economic reasons have combined with changes in taste and structural changes in an unfortunately-timed amalgamation. Even in normal times, it would have been really hard to carry out necessary-emerging adaptations caused by mechanical music (especially sound film and radio). We are sticking our heads in the sand if we deny these transformations.”⁵⁶ Hindemith himself referred to the need for change in 1929 as:

⁵⁴ Schenk, “Paul Hindemith und die Rundfunkversuchsstelle,” 180, 187.

⁵⁵ Heinrich Strobel, “Die Baden-Badener Kammermusik 1929,” *Melos* 8, no. 8/9 (August/September 1929): 395. “Die Fragwürdigkeit und Unproduktivität unseres Musik- und Opernbetriebes auf der einen Seite, die genießerische Bequemlichkeit und künstlerische Erlebnisunfähigkeit unseres abgestempelten Musikpublikums auf der anderen...”

⁵⁶ “Musik in Not,” 217. “Wirtschaftliche Ursachen haben in unglücklicher zeitlicher Verquickung mit Geschmackswandlungen und Strukturveränderungen zusammengewirkt. Schon in normalen Zeiten hätte es große Schwierigkeiten gemacht, die durch die mechanische Musik, im besonderen den Tonfilm und den Rundfunk, notwendig werdenden Umstellungen

the old public is dying off; how and what must we write in order to acquire a bigger, different, new public; where is this public?... We must come to another form of music-making and of music enjoyment. The sooner the concert in its present form dies out, the faster we will have the possibility to renew musical life.⁵⁷

Like the experiments carried out at the Donaueschingen and Baden-Baden festivals, the Radio Research Center was created specifically to deal with the challenges that new technologies posed for musicians.⁵⁸ Schünemann outlined several of these challenges and the goals of the center in addressing them in his 1929 article “The Tasks for the Rundfunkversuchsstelle.” One primary task included improving the quality of radio technology in order to benefit the broadcast of serious music. According to Schünemann, musicians would no longer stand passively on the sidelines, the victims of poor broadcasts, but “should and will help technicians to carry out experiments, play and listen, will collaborate productively on [creating] a musically flawless broadcast and a new kind of radio music.”⁵⁹ Schünemann also stressed the radio’s use in

durchzuführen. Es hieße die Köpfe in den Sand stecken, wenn man diese Wandlungen leugnen wollte.”

⁵⁷ Hindemith, “Über Musikkritik,” *Melos* 8, no. 3 (March 1929): 106. “das alte Publikum stirbt ab; wie und was müssen wir schreiben, um ein größeres, anderes, neues Publikum zu bekommen; wo ist dieses Publikum?... Wir müssen zu anderen Formen des Musizierens und des Musikgenusses kommen. Je eher das Konzert in seiner heutigen Form abstirbt, desto schneller werden wir die Möglichkeit haben, das Musikleben zu erneuern.”

⁵⁸ As Dietmar Schenk observes, “The upheaval in forms of media and communication had profound consequences on musical life: the professional field for musicians (and implicitly, the career prospects for the students at the conservatory) changed rapidly and seriously. The research center was a prompt answer to these challenges; at any rate, it came into being as quickly as it was possible under the constraints of a bureaucratic organization” (“Der Umbruch in den Medien und Kommunikationsformen hatte tiefgreifende Auswirkungen auf das Musikleben; das Berufsfeld für Musiker, eingeschlossen die Karriereaussichten der Studierenden an der Hochschule für Musik, änderte sich rasch und gravierend. Die Versuchsstelle war eine prompte Antwort auf diese Herausforderungen; jedenfalls entstand sie so zügig, wie es unter den Bedingungen bürokratischer Organisation eben möglich war”). Schenk, *Die Hochschule*, 257.

⁵⁹ Georg Schünemann, “Die Aufgaben der Funkversuchsstelle,” in *49. Jahresbericht* (1 October 1927 – 30 September 1928), 7. “Sie sollen und wollen dem Techniker helfen, Versuche machen, spielen und abhören, wollen produktiv mitarbeiten an einer musikalisch einwandfreien Übertragung und an einer neuen Funkmusik.”

Bildung, educating people across Germany to appreciate “good” music and articulated the goal of the center to help composers create music that would appeal to a wide audience.⁶⁰ The idea of *Bildung* was also behind the center’s work with “distance learning” in 1932, which began through music lessons broadcast from the Hochschule over the radio. This eventually stopped because of protests from the post office (who distributed licenses for broadcast) and music teachers, who worried about the competition and feared for their livelihoods.⁶¹ Finally, the Radio Research Center was meant to give students at the Hochschule practical skills for working with technology in order to prepare them for the demands of a twentieth-century musical career.⁶² Schünemann made this pedagogical intent clear in the school’s annual reports (*Jahresberichten*), stating in the 1929 that “every musician in our time should get to know the basic premises of mechanical music broadcasting, because he must be able to play or sing in front of the microphone, must know how to adapt [his] tone and technique to the special sort of electrical recording and playback.”⁶³

Mechanical Instruments

It was in this atmosphere of musical crisis that Hindemith’s encounters with technology unfolded, beginning with his music for mechanical instruments at the 1926 Donaueschingen Festival.⁶⁴ At a concert dedicated to “original compositions for mechanical instruments”

⁶⁰ Schünemann, “Die Aufgaben der Funkversuchsstelle,” 10.

⁶¹ Schenk, *Die Hochschule*, 271.

⁶² Schenk, *Die Hochschule*, 257.

⁶³ Georg Schünemann, “Tonfilm und Rundfunk im Musikunterricht,” in 50. *Jahresbericht* (1. Oktober 1928–30 September 1929), 7. “Jeder Musiker sollte in unserer Zeit die Grundbedingungen mechanischer Musikübertragung kennen lernen, denn er muss vor dem Mikrophon spielen oder singen können, muss Ton und Technik der Sonderart der elektrischen Aufnahme und Wiedergabe anzupassen wissen.”

⁶⁴ I base my definition of “mechanical instrument” on *Grove Music Online*, which defines it as “a musical instrument which is enabled to play music automatically from a predetermined and repeatable mechanical programme.” Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume, “Mechanical

(*Originalkompositionen für mechanische Instrumente*), he premiered three works for mechanical piano and organ: *Rondo* from his piano work *Übung in drei Stücken*, op. 37, a toccata, and most famously, *Das triadische Ballett*. The latter was a collaboration with Bauhaus artist Oskar Schlemmer that featured dancers in abstract, geometric costumes who performed marionette-like choreography (fig. 3.1).⁶⁵ The 1927 festival at Baden-Baden also included an evening of new



Figure 3.1. Cast of *Das triadische Ballett*. 1926 performance at the Metropol Theater in Berlin.

instrument,"" *Grove Music Online*. 2001; accessed 4 Mar. 2020. <https://www-oxfordmusiconlinecom.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000018229>.

⁶⁵ The music for the ballet is, unfortunately, lost. For information on Schlemmer's contributions, see Dirk Scheper, *Oskar Schlemmer: Das triadische Ballet und die Bauhausbühne* (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1988), as well as Glenn Watkins, *Pyramids at the Louvre: Music, Culture, and Collage from Stravinsky to the Postmodernists* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1994), 310–320.

compositions for mechanical instruments, featuring works by Nicolai Lopatnikoff, Hanns Haass, Ernst Toch, and Hindemith's *Suite für mechanische Orgel*, which simply reused music from *Das triadische Ballett*. Hindemith also supplied music for mechanical organ for the cartoon "Felix the Cat at the Circus" (*Felix der Kater zum Zirkus*) at the "Film and Music" demonstration.

Mechanical instruments were also present at the 1928 and 1929 festivals in Baden-Baden but, like "Felix the Cat," appeared under the category of film music (discussed below).

Unfortunately, the music for almost all these works is lost.⁶⁶

By including concerts for mechanical instruments, Hindemith and the festival committee chose to highlight a topic that was indeed, in his words, "in the air"—and highly controversial. Composer and writer Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt had polemically championed mechanical instruments as superior to human performers in his article "Mechanization of Music" in August 1924 in the Hungarian journal *Ma* (Today).⁶⁷ Over the next two years, this essay appeared in various forms in at least six different journals, prompting a flurry of reactions. Supporters lauded the instruments' ability to create a "objective" performance that would stay true to the composer's intentions, free from any pesky human error or interpretation.⁶⁸ Composer Ernst Toch, for instance, believed that mechanical music offered a "degree of exactitude that can never be attained by human agency; the complete factualization, the complete de-personalization of

⁶⁶ For a transcription of the *Toccata*, see Rex Lawson, "Hindemith: Toccata for Mechanical Piano, Specially Transcribed for the Pianola Journal," *The Pianola Journal* 9 (1996): 19–28.

⁶⁷ Patteson, 30. There had been some initial exploration of player pianos and their capabilities in England around 1917, culminating in a concert featuring original music for the instrument on 13 October 1921.

⁶⁸ This could be considered an extension of the nineteenth-century idea of total musical autonomy—that a composition is completely self-sufficient. We see this trend in the increasing control composers would exert over their works, such as more nuanced and precise dynamic and tempo markings, written-out embellishments, descriptions of how the piece should be performed, and so on.

performance, nothing slips in by way of pitch, meter, rhythm, tempo, or dynamics that is not fixed in the *notes*: every trace of spontaneity, of sentiment, of impulse is driven out.”⁶⁹ This depersonalization of a performance by the machine was yet another example of the postwar reaction against prewar romantic subjectivity, as Erwin Felber recognized when he attributed the rise of mechanical music not only to the current “machine age” (*Maschinenzeitalter*), but also the fact “that the art of today—or at least a branch of artistic development—has an anti-romantic streak and that musical means of expression are today in many ways different from that of the previous generation.”⁷⁰ Mechanical instruments also promised the creation of an entirely new type of music, one beyond the capabilities of human performers. Finally, composers could create music by punching holes into piano rolls in the manner of a painter applying paint directly to a canvas, thus bypassing notation and interpretation.⁷¹ Hindemith himself laboriously hand-punched the piano rolls for the Welte-Philharmonie mechanical piano for his festival works,

For opponents, the interpretative skills and artistry of a performer were an essential part of a performance; music without people was just a play of sounds. Composer Heinrich Kaminski, for one, called the human performer a “membrane (physically, psychically, and intellectually), and thus an indispensable factor of the genuine creation of music.”⁷² Moreover, Stuckenschmidt’s assertion that “mechanical orchestras” would inevitably replace live ones, as

⁶⁹ Toch, “Musik für mechanische Instrumente,” *Musikblätter des Anbruch* (October/November 1926): 348, quoted and translated in Hailey, “Rethinking Sound,” 26.

⁷⁰ Felber, “Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten,” 77. “die Kunst von heute—oder doch zumindest ein Zweig der Kunstentwicklung—einen antiromantischen Zug hat und dass die musikalischen Ausdrucksmittel heute vielfach andere sind als in der vorhergehenden Generation.” Patteson also notes that some writers linked mechanical aesthetics, and machines themselves, with the term *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Patteson, 36–37.

⁷¹ Patteson, 40.

⁷² Heinrich Kaminsky, “‘Mechanisierung’ der Musik?” *Pult und Taktstock* 2, no. 3 (1925): 36, quoted and translated in Patteson, 33.

orchestras were already “parasites” on taxpayers, spoke directly to fears of machines replacing musicians and humans in general.⁷³ In response to these fears, proponents such as Ernst Toch and Erwin Felber took pains to reassure musicians that mechanical music “wants to neither imitate nor supplant live music, but rather wants to fully exploit everything that it’s able to do and that is denied live music.”⁷⁴ Rather, Toch asserted, it was simply a new, ancillary sort of music, comparable to the rings of development encircling an old city center.⁷⁵ Yet their constant reassurances in the music press only underscored the palpability of this threat. (In his program notes, Hindemith indirectly acknowledged the problem by refusing to discuss any “concerns of a purely economic sort—including the unemployment of musicians” since the topic “has no influence on [finding] the artistic solution to the problem [of mechanical music].”⁷⁶)

Hindemith was well-aware of the debates surrounding mechanical music, which was precisely why he was addressing the matter at the summer festivals. In the program for the 1926 Donaueschingen Festival, for example, he asserted that “the lively arguments for and against the problem of composition for mechanical instruments proves its topicality.”⁷⁷ Hindemith reiterated

⁷³ Stuckenschmidt argued that by cutting out the cost of using an orchestra of live musicians and switching to a “mechanical orchestra,” the profits from recordings and performances would go “straight to the composer and would of course bring him royalties considerably higher than those he now enjoys.” Stuckenschmidt, “Machines—A Vision of the Future,” *Modern Music* 4, no. 3 (March/April 1927): 13.

⁷⁴ Felber, “Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten,” 77. “Die mechanische Musik will die lebendige Musik weder nachahmen noch gar verdrängen, sondern sie will alles das voll ausschöpfen, was ihr gegeben und der lebendigen Musik versagt ist.”

⁷⁵ Ernst Toch, “Musik für mechanische Instrumente,” *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 8, no. 8/9 (1926): 349. “Sie erschließt ganz einfach einen neuen oder wenig bebauten Bezirk der musikalischen Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten.”

⁷⁶ Hindemith, “Zur mechanischen Musik,” in Schubert, *Aufsätze*, 20. “Die Einwände rein wirtschaftlicher Art—Brotloswerden der Musiker u. a.—dürfen wir hier übergehen, da sie auf die künstlerische Lösung des Problems ohne Einfluss bleiben.”

⁷⁷ Hindemith, “Zu unserem Programm,” 16. “Das lebhaftes Für und Gegen, welches das Problem der Komposition für mechanische Instrumente gefunden hat, beweist seine Aktualität.”

the subject's divisiveness in the program for the 1927 Baden-Baden festival, stating, "In recent years, no other area of our public musical life has been so contentious as music that is heard with the help of mechanical instruments,"⁷⁸ while in a letter from the same year, he observed that "mechanical music has today become a matter of vital concern. Open any music periodical and you will find this view confirmed... Mechanical music is, for 99 out of 100 musicians, like a red cape to a bull."⁷⁹ The contentiousness of the topic at the Donaueschingen festival itself may be surmised from Hindemith's hope that the 1927 mechanical music demonstrations would "not be confronted with as much lack of understanding and lack of judgment from the public and critics as last year in Donaueschingen."⁸⁰

For his own part, Hindemith took a decidedly neutral stance, summarizing the pros and cons of mechanical instruments (based on others' talking points) before concluding that "the accusations [against mechanical music] are as unwarranted as the excitement."⁸¹ He also sidestepped taking a position by repeating Toch's and Felber's reassurances that mechanical music was "harmless," posing no threat to traditional, live music-making and was simply another option.⁸² The only positive advantages he granted the player piano were in "its absolute

⁷⁸ Like his contemporaries, Hindemith defined mechanical music as recordings or machines that reproduce music. Hindemith, "Zur mechanischen Musik," 19. "Über kein anderes Teilgebiet unseres öffentlichen Musiklebens ist in der letzten Zeit so viel gestritten worden wie über die Musik, die man mit Hilfe mechanischer Musikinstrumente zu Gehör bringt."

⁷⁹ Hindemith to Sutter, 5 January 1927, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 131. "Die mechanische Musik ist heute eine brennende Sache geworden. Schlagen Sie irgendeine Musikzeitung auf, um diese Ansicht bestätigt zu finden... [mechanische Musik] für 99 von 100 Musikern das rote Tuch ist."

⁸⁰ Hindemith, "Zur mechanischen Musik," 24. "so ist zu hoffen, dass wir mit unseren diesjährigen Vorführungen mechanischer Musik nicht so viel Verständnis- und Urteilslosigkeit auf der Seite des Publikums und der Kritik gegenüberstehen werden, wie im letzten Jahre in Donaueschingen."

⁸¹ Hindemith, "Zur mechanischen Musik," 21. "Die Vorwürfe sind ebenso unberechtigt wie die Begeisterung."

⁸² Hindemith, "Zur mechanischen Musik," 21.

unambiguity, its clarity, cleanness, and in the possibility of the highest precision—features that human performance does not possess but also does not need.”⁸³ Yet despite acknowledging the technical capabilities of the instrument, he nevertheless warned against the “senseless burst of technical difficulty” at the cost of quality, as “it is completely uninteresting if a piece is more or less brilliantly written if the musical content is worthless.”⁸⁴

This neutral stance carried over into Hindemith’s explanations of why the topic had been included in the festival’s lineup. Along with its buzz-worthiness, the mechanical music concert was a way to gain more knowledge about this type of music in order to make an informed pronouncement on it. Presenting works specifically tailored to the instruments and their abilities was a way to put ideas into actual practice, rather than simply theorizing endlessly about it in music journals.⁸⁵ In the 1926 program, for instance, he noted that there first needs to be “independent, specific literature” (*selbständige, spezifische Literatur*) and “original compositions of quality” for these instruments before there can be any serious debate about them, hoping that the “examples by a few composers requested by the committee” could “contribute to the illumination” of the questions surrounding the topic.⁸⁶ The following year, he once again stressed

⁸³ Hindemith, “Zur mechanischen Musik,” 22. “Die Vorzüge des Apparates liegen lediglich in seiner absoluten Eindeutigkeit, seiner Klarheit, Sauberkeit und in der Möglichkeit höchster Präzision—Eigenschaften, die das menschliche Spiel nicht besitzt, deren es auch nicht bedarf.”

⁸⁴ Hindemith, “Zur mechanischen Musik,” 22. “Man kann gar nicht genug vor der sinnlosen Häufung technischer Schwierigkeiten warnen... Es ist vollkommen uninteressant, ob das Stück mehr oder weniger brillant geschrieben ist, wenn der musikalische Inhalt wertlos ist.”

⁸⁵ As he wrote to Sutter, one should “write for mechanical instruments, not just about them” (“Es soll endlich für mechanische Instrumente geschrieben werden, nicht nur darüber”). Hindemith to Otto Ernst Sutter, 5 January 1927 in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 130.

⁸⁶ Hindemith, “Zu unserem Programm,” 16. “Erst wenn eine selbständige, spezifische Literatur vorhanden ist, wird man die Möglichkeit zu ernsthafter Debatte haben. Vielleicht tragen die vom Musikausschuss bei einigen Komponisten bestellten Beispiele zur Mechanisierungsfrage zur Erhellung des vorliegenden Problems bei.”

the need for understanding and familiarity with the music before any judgment could be made, writing that “the angry agitation against mechanical music certainly stems in part from unfamiliarity and in part from one’s own uncertainty.”⁸⁷ The inclusion of original music for mechanical instruments may have been a response to an open letter to Stuckenschmidt from Dietrich von Strassburg published in *Musikblätter des Anbruch* before the Donaueschingen festival. In it, Strassburg opined that Stuckenschmidt, in his various essays, had focused too much on the reproductive qualities of mechanical instruments and not enough on the creative possibilities, calling for the creation of a “music that, by virtue of its style and its technical features, has to be played by machines.”⁸⁸ Stuckenschmidt agreed in his response to Strassburg that “original literature for mechanical instruments is still vanishingly small... We will have to wait until composers recognize the plethora of possibilities that awaits them.”⁸⁹

Hindemith also called for the creation of original compositions for mechanical instruments, but what he had in mind was not a new, exciting type of art music beyond the capabilities of human performers. Instead, he stated that these instruments should be used for *Gebrauchsmusik* (one of the few instances Hindemith ever used this term), which he defined as background music for “folk festivals, balls, elevators, coffee houses, and cinemas.”⁹⁰ For

⁸⁷ Hindemith, “Zur mechanischen Musik,” 21. “Die wütende Agitation gegen die mechanische Musik entspringt sicher zu einem Teil der Unkenntnis, zum anderen eigener Unsicherheit.”

⁸⁸ Dietrich von Strassburg, “Offener Brief an H. H. Stuckenschmidt,” *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 8, no. 2 (February 1926): 81. “Wichtiger aber ist es, die Notwendigkeit einer Produktion zu beweisen, respektive eine Musik zu schaffen, die kraft ihres Stils, ihrer technischen Besonderheiten die Wiedergabe durch Maschinen erfordert.”

⁸⁹ Hans H. Stuckenschmidt, “Antwort,” *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 8, no. 2 (February 1926): 82. “Die Original-Literatur für mechanische Instrumente ist noch verschwindend klein... Man wird also warten müssen, bis die Komponisten erkennen, welche Fülle von Möglichkeiten ihrer harzt.”

⁹⁰ Hindemith, “Zur mechanischen Musik,” 23. “Volksfeste, Bälle, Aufzüge, Kaffeehäuser und Kinos sind ohne Musik gar nicht denkbar.”

Hindemith, relegating mechanical instruments to this task (a sort of early elevator music) would prevent the current “corruption of the great masters,” such as “the *Eroica* arranged for five players (with harmonium)” or “Bach set to a silly film or in a packed coffeehouse.”⁹¹ Musicians themselves would be saved from playing such degrading music, as “it is not necessary that manpower is placed again and again in the service of music for entertainment, despite the fact that the public has become so sentimental, expecting soul, personality, deepness even from this music.”⁹² In contrast, “How clean, honorable, orderly, and artistically worthy can mechanical music satisfy these different needs!”⁹³ Moreover, Hindemith indicated that the only reason mechanical music was included in the 1927 program was because of the sorry state of entertainment music, stating:

We can argue whether a chamber music festival is the place for mechanical music. I’m aware that many are against it. But if our Gebrauchsmusik had not reached its current miserable low point, frankly, we wouldn’t need to concern ourselves with these artistically less distinguished branches of our musical life. However, with this dismal state of affairs, we cannot miss any opportunity to oppose harm, decrease social ills, and encourage improvements.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Hindemith, “Zur mechanischen Musik,” 23. “Die *Eroica* für fünf Mann bearbeitet (mit Harmonium), die Parsifalphantasie mit Kirchenglockengeläute, ganze Mozartsymphonien, Streichquartette, Lieder (Der Lenz!), das sind beliebte ‘Piecen.’ Bach zu einem albernen Film oder in einem vollbesetzten Kaffeehaus—ist das unmöglich?” Alfred Baresel makes a similar complaint in his article “Jazz als Rettung,” believing that jazz could be used in place of “the most dreadful” (*das Greulichste*) arrangements of classical music found in cinemas, coffeehouses, and dance halls. Baresel, “Jazz als Rettung,” *Auftakt* 6, no. 10 (1926): 214.

⁹² Hindemith, “Zur mechanischen Musik,” 23–24. “Es ist nicht nötig, dass immer und immer wieder Menschenkraft in den Dienst der Unterhaltungsmusik gestellt wird, trotzdem das Publikum heute so sentimental ist, auch hier Seele, Persönlichkeit, Tiefe zu verlangen.”

⁹³ Hindemith, “Zur mechanischen Musik,” 23. “Wie sauber, ehrlich, ordentlich und künstlerisch wertvoll kann die mechanische Musik diese verschiedenen Bedürfnisse befriedigen!”

⁹⁴ Hindemith, “Zur mechanischen Musik,” 23. “Man kann darüber streiten, ob ein Kammermusikfest Raum für mechanische Musik haben darf. Ich bin mir bewusst, dass Viele dagegen sind. Hätte unsere Gebrauchsmusik nicht den heutigen jämmerlichen Tiefstand erreicht, so brauchten wir uns freilich nicht mit dem künstlerisch weniger bedeutenden Zweige unseres Musiklebens zu beschäftigen. Bei diesem trostlosen Zustande darf man jedoch keine Gelegenheit

This application of mechanical music to the “artistically less distinguished branches of our musical life” draws a very clear line between it and art music; with mechanical music ranking considerably lower. Ultimately, despite his faint praise of the instruments’ precision, and his experimentation with a few works, his suggestion for their use (playing lower-quality entertainment music, thus “saving” the great masterworks from bad arrangements) did not appear to be a ringing endorsement of the technology.

Despite the attention lavished on mechanical instruments in the press and at these festivals in 1926 and 1927, interest in it dropped significantly the following year.⁹⁵ The performances at Donaueschingen and Baden-Baden in those two seasons had turned theories and speculations into actual practice—with the result that critics soon focused on the instruments’ shortcomings. As Thomas Patteson has observed, “the unique technical affordances offered by the instruments—extreme speed, sustained volume, and sheer mass of musical activity—quickly wore thin.”⁹⁶ Eberhard Preussner in *Die Musik* acknowledged that mechanical instruments may be fine as a pedagogical tool, but the 1926 festival already showed that “one significantly overestimated the prospects of the mechanical instrument.”⁹⁷ Even compositions tailored to the

vorübergehen lassen, Schäden zu bekämpfen, Übelstände zu verringern und Verbesserungen anzuregen.”

⁹⁵ Andreas Maul, “Die Idee einer ‘mechanischen Musik.’ Über Experimente von Hindemith und Toch mit dem Welte-Mignon-Klavier und der Welte-Philharmonie-Orgel,” *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 145, no. 9 (September 1984): 6; Patteson, 48–49. The instruments themselves were increasingly losing ground to a cheaper and better source of sound reproduction in the form of the gramophone. The Welte company, whose instruments were used at the festivals, would eventually stop producing mechanical instruments in the 1930s.

⁹⁶ Patteson, 49.

⁹⁷ Eberhard Preussner, “Das sechste Donaueschinger Kammermusikfest,” *Die Musik* 18, no. 12 (September 1926): 900. “Dass man die Aussichten dieses mechanischen Instrumentes erheblich überschätzte, zeigte bereits diese erste Aufführung.”

instruments proved that the possibilities for expression were “slight” (*gering*) and their style reminiscent of “increasingly annoying etude music.”⁹⁸ Hans Haass, who had contributed a work for the 1927 festival, complained only a few months later that the player piano’s limitations (fluctuations in the spinning roller, mistakes in the roll itself, effects of humidity on the paper) prevented a truly “objective” performance free from imperfections.⁹⁹

Music and Film

With mechanical instruments on the way out, film was the next technology to be featured at the 1927–1929 Baden-Baden festivals.¹⁰⁰ For these events, Hindemith contributed music for mechanical piano to accompany the cartoon “Felix the Cat at the Circus” (1927) and Hans Richter’s film *Vormittagsspuk* (1928, repeated 1929). The introduction of sound film (*Tonfilm*) into Germany in January 1929 led the Baden-Baden committee to include it in that year’s festival, which showcased various approaches such as using silent film with synchronized music or using the new sound-on-film technology.¹⁰¹ Like mechanical music before it, film music was

⁹⁸ Preussner, “Das sechste Donaueschinger Kammermusikfest,” 900. “Schon die wenigen praktischen Beispiele bewiesen es, dass die neuen Ausdrucks- und Stilmöglichkeiten gering sind und dazu noch durch die Kühle einer auf die Dauer unerträglich wirkenden Etüdenmusik reinsten Wassers erkaufte werden.”

⁹⁹ Hans Haass [*sic*], “Über das Wesen mechanischer Klaviermusik,” *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 9, no. 8/9 (1927): 352.

¹⁰⁰ The 1927 festival had a “Film and Music” concert with works by Hanns Eisler, Hindemith, and Guido Bagier; 1928 featured an “Experimental Demonstration” of live film music by Milhaud, Toch, Hugo Herrmann, Wolfgang Zeller, and Hindemith; the 1929 festival had a “Tonfilm” (Sound film) concert with music by Paul Dessay, Hugo Herrmann, Hindemith (repeating music from the previous year’s concert), Milhaud, Rudolf Wagner-Régeny, Zeller, and Walter Gronostay.

¹⁰¹ Hindemith, “Neue Aufgaben,” in Schubert, *Aufsätze*, 35. The technique of recording sound directly on film (known as the Tri-Ergon method) began in Germany around 1918 and had a disastrous premiere in 1925. Tobis (Ton-Bild-Syndikat AG) patented the Tri-Ergon method, and 16 January 1929 saw the premiere of two of their sound films: *Ich küsse Ihre Hand, Madame* and *Ein Tag Film*. “The Emergence of German Sound Film,” Film Portal.de, accessed 9 July 2019, <https://www.filmportal.de/en/topic/the-emergence-of-german-sound-film>.

featured because it was, as Hindemith described it, “in the spotlight” (*im Brennpunkt des Interesses*).¹⁰² Moreover, the concerts seemed to further his goal to improve the quality of Gebrauchsmusik. As he had called for original mechanical music to replace bad arrangements of classical music, he now described the main question surrounding film as “how can good, original music for film be achieved?”¹⁰³ His own solution was to advocate for original film scores, in place of the usual practice of cobbling together different classical and popular works, often with the help of cue sheets.¹⁰⁴ Even existing original scores did not escape criticism, however, as he complained that they often mimicked the actions on the screen too closely, with the result that “uninterrupted illustrating is comical, has the effect of being obtrusive, and, in the end, ridiculous.”¹⁰⁵ Hindemith’s calls for a more autonomous score echoed Kurt Weill’s own demand for “an objective, simultaneous *konzertante* film music, an [autonomous] creation under the influence of film and not literal illustration.”¹⁰⁶ This, in turn, stemmed from the move away from Wagnerism in postwar opera; according to Bryan Gilliam, Weill also called for “musical autonomy for the orchestra and a return to the stage—as opposed to the opera pit—as the focus for the drama” in his essay *Die neue Oper* (1926).¹⁰⁷ Hindemith followed this principle in his

¹⁰² Hindemith, “Neue Aufgaben,” 35.

¹⁰³ Hindemith, “Zu unserer Vorführung ‘Film und Musik’,” in Schubert, *Aufsätze*, 29. “Wie kann eine gute Originalmusik zum Film beschaffen sein.”

¹⁰⁴ Hindemith, “Zu unserer Vorführung,” 29. “Hoffen wir, dass der Zeitpunkt nicht allzu fern ist... dass es ein Unding ist, einen Film ohne die für ihn geschriebene Musik (die selbst an den kleinsten Theatern gut aufzuführen sein müsste) hinauszuschicken.”

¹⁰⁵ Hindemith, “Zu unserer Vorführung,” 29–30. “Der bisher eigens für den Film komponierten Musik kann man leider den Vorwurf nicht ersparen, dass auch sie sich lediglich damit befasst hat, die Vorgänge im Film zu untermalen... Ununterbrochenes Illustrieren entbehrt jedoch nicht der Komik, wirkt penetrant und schließlich albern.”

¹⁰⁶ “Musikalische Illustration oder Film Musik?” an interview with Lotte H. Eisner (1927) in *Kurt Weill: Musik und Theater. Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Stephen Hinton and Jürgen Schebera (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1990), 297–99.

¹⁰⁷ Gilliam, “Stage and Screen,” 5.

1926 opera *Cardillac* and in *Neues vom Tage*, in which the music served as a counterpoint to the onstage action, rather than supporting or interpreting it.¹⁰⁸ Thus, both Weill and Hindemith called for musical autonomy in media that were dependent on a visual component.

In addition to elevating the quality of film music, the festival concerts were meant to test out the possibilities and limitations of the medium. Hindemith clarified this in the program for the 1928 event, warning the audience that it was “neither a concert, nor a film screening. It is an experiment.”¹⁰⁹ One problem in particular was the synchronization between silent film and live music. As Hindemith put it, “The listener consistently hovers in fear whether the music will actually coincide with the picture—it’s ridiculous when a drum struck from below comes too late for the cannon shot [seen] above; when it comes at the right time, it is hardly any less ridiculous.”¹¹⁰ The 1928 festival featured the use of a “music chronometer” (*Musikchronometer*) invented by C. R. Blum, while M. Welte Söhne firm had created a synchronization machine to line up a piano roll with the film projector. Yet Hindemith’s preferred solution was the use of a mechanical instrument, since it “always preserves the same quality of the playback and is not dependent on the chance of a good- or poorly-chosen conductor.”¹¹¹ Moreover, Hindemith seemed to dislike what he saw as an incongruity of live music with a mechanical film, stating in the 1928 program that he continued to use a player piano “not only so an exact synchronization

¹⁰⁸ Schubert, “Paul Hindemith,” *Grove*.

¹⁰⁹ Hindemith, “Zu unserer Vorführung,” 29. “Diese Veranstaltung ist weder ein Konzert, noch eine Filmvorführung. Sie ist ein Versuch.”

¹¹⁰ Hindemith, “Zur mechanischen Musik,” 24. “Der Zuhörer schwebt beständig in der Angst, ob die Musik wirklich mit dem Bild übereinstimmt—es ist lächerlich, wenn zum Kanonenschuss oben der Paukenschlag unten zu spät kommt; kommt er zur richtigen Zeit, ist es kaum weniger albern.”

¹¹¹ “Hindemith, “Texte zur Filmmusik,” 81. “die stets die gleiche Qualität der Wiedergabe bewahrt und nicht von den Zufällen eines gut oder schlecht gewählten Kapellmeisters abhängig ist.”

can be achieved, but because I'm firmly convinced that mechanically reproduced music belongs to a mechanically unfolding sequence of pictures."¹¹² Indeed, he saw the relationship between live music and mechanical music as analogous to that of pantomime and film: anyone who expects the mechanical form to live up to its live counterparts will be disappointed.¹¹³ Finally, assigning mechanical instruments to film music would, once again, save trained musicians from wasting their talents on accompanying a mere reproduction of performance, as opposed to a live opera or play. In 1927, for example, he complained of how "a number of musicians (in good and fully staffed orchestras in big theaters) sit there and deliver—with a considerably demanding expenditure of effort, intelligence, and concentration—music for a completely mechanical sequence of pictures."¹¹⁴

This rather equivocal view about silent film music (its low quality, the need for musical autonomy, and the use of mechanical instruments for synchronization) likely stemmed from his own firsthand experience as a performer, playing kitsch or a patchwork of excerpts from masterpieces, all while attempting to keep up with a film. There may even be a touch of resentment about having spent his own time and talents accompanying what he viewed as copy

¹¹² Hindemith, "Zu unserer Vorführung," 31. "Ich habe vorgezogen, die Musik für ein mechanisches Instrument zu schreiben, nicht nur, weil nur damit ein genaues Zusammenlaufen erreicht werden kann, sondern weil ich der festen Überzeugung bin, dass zu einer mechanisch abrollenden Bildfolge auch eine mechanisch zu reproduzierende Musik gehört."

¹¹³ Hindemith, "Zur mechanischen Musik," 22. "Man wird entdecken, dass sie zu der durch Menschen reproduzierten Musik etwa im gleichen Verhältnis steht wie ein guter Film zur Pantomime... Wer vom Film künstlerische Wirkungen verlangt, die ihm nicht adäquat sind, wird von ihm enttäuscht sein. Wer von der mechanischen Musik Wirkungen erwartet, die nur die durch Menschen wiedergegebene Musik haben kann, wer sie lediglich als eine unlautere Konkurrenz dieser Musik betrachtet, wird natürlich nichts mit ihr anzufangen wissen."

¹¹⁴ Hindemith, "Zur mechanischen Musik," 24. "Eine Anzahl Musiker (in großen Kinos gut und stark besetzte Orchester) sitzen da und verabreichen mit einem verhältnismäßig ungeheuren Aufwand an Kraft, Intelligenz und Konzentration Musik zu einer vollkommen mechanisch abrollenden Bildfolge."

of a live performance. Indeed, Hindemith addressed these issues in his first—and only—orchestral film score, *Im Sturm und Eis (Kampf mit dem Berge)* (*In Storm and Ice, Struggle with the Mountains*) (1922). In 1921, Hindemith vacationed at the Freiburg villa of Arnold Fanck, at the invitation of Fanck's brother-in-law, the composer Stefan Temesváry. Fanck is known today as the pioneer of the genre of *Bergfilme* or “mountain films,” described by scholar Stephen Brockmann as “a specifically German genre that celebrated the romanticism of the Alps and the heroism of the people who live in and climb them.”¹¹⁵ This genre, popular during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, featured spectacular cinematography, daring stunts, and melodramatic, if relatively unimportant, storyline. During Hindemith's stay at the villa, Fanck screened his recent film, *Im Sturm und Eis*, which featured the scaling of a mountain peak in the Pennine Alps by a man and woman.¹¹⁶ Fanck recalled Hindemith's excitement about the film: “What I do in pictures, [Hindemith] said, was indeed pure music—and [asked] if he could be allowed some time to convert this film into music.”¹¹⁷

The score for the film demonstrated Hindemith's concern for accurate synchronization, as he provided numerous written cues and metronome markings to help the conductor line up the orchestra with the film, along with indications of where to vamp, cut, or take repeats. Likewise, musicologist Alexandra Monchick has observed how the “modular” music construction, consisting of short, rather simple themes that are strung together by brief transitions, would

¹¹⁵ Brockmann, 152. See also Eric Rentschler, “Mountains and Modernity: Relocating the Bergfilm,” *New German Critique* 51 (Autumn 1990): 137–161.

¹¹⁶ The movie was the first of a planned trilogy titled *Im Kampf mit dem Berge* (*Struggle with the Mountains*).

¹¹⁷ All the information regarding the creation of the film score comes from a letter Fanck wrote to the Hindemith Institute in 1970, in response to the Institute's inquiry about the film. Christoph Hust, “Paul Hindemith als Filmkomponist,” *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 32 (2003): 149.

enable conductors to lengthen, shorten, or even cut modules as necessary.¹¹⁸ Despite these precautions, music directors at multiple theaters rejected Hindemith's score owing to the difficulty of syncing his complex music to the film. In fact, the score appears to have been performed only once in Dusseldorf, with most directors preferring to compile music for the film themselves.¹¹⁹ This inability to sync his original score to the film, despite his careful attention to the problem, may have contributed to his later suggestion that composers write for mechanical instruments in order to achieve synchronization.

The idea of an autonomous film score also comes through in his approach to *Im Sturm und Eis*. While there are some moments where the music imitates the actions of the climbers, Hindemith's music is mostly quite detached from the action on the screen.¹²⁰ Scholar Francesco Finocchiaro points out that that Hindemith's division of the score into six parts with alternating tempi, corresponding to the six reels of the film, recalls that of a multi-movement symphony. The symphony-like repetition of themes and formal units even works against the logic of the film in several places.¹²¹ The paradox of engaging with modern mass media (out of curiosity or necessity) yet adhering to the romantic value of musical autonomy exemplifies the tensions described in Chapter One between prewar ideals and postwar economic realities, or in the words of musicologist Christopher Morris, between "the individualized, heroicized notion of the artist on the one hand and mass production and consumption on the other."¹²² Furthermore, it resonates within the genre of the *Bergfilm* itself. Numerous film scholars have singled out the *Bergfilm* as

¹¹⁸ Monchick, "Paul Hindemith," 517.

¹¹⁹ According to Monchick, the director at the Tauentzienpalast in Berlin wrote his own accompaniment. Monchick, "Paul Hindemith," 515.

¹²⁰ Finocchiaro, 58, 65. The few instances of "Mickey Mousing" include a tremolo and drumroll illustrating the protagonists' leaps.

¹²¹ Finocchiaro, 49, 63.

¹²² Morris, 87.

encapsulating the tensions between modernity and the longing for pre-industrial life. Sabine Hake, for example, speaks of the *Bergfilm*'s combination of modern elements (the embrace of cinema and the prominent use of technology in the films) with "the glorification of primordial nature, the metaphysics of place and belonging, and the idealization of pre-industrial communities."¹²³ Similarly, Eric Rentschler places the genre within what he calls "Weimar Germany's complex interplay between modern and anti-modern sensibilities," believing that the genre's appeal "lay in primal nature explored with advanced technology, in pre-modern longings mediated by modern machines."¹²⁴ While Hindemith's decision to write this score was the result of a coincidence, his (alleged) description of Fanck's mountain footage as "pure music" resonates with his decision to write autonomous music for the film. Hindemith was not the only composer to make the link between the pristine, remote mountaintops of the Alps and autonomous art music, untouched by any whiff of the commercial. Ernst Krenek also referenced the Alps in *Jonny spielt auf*, with the introverted classical composer Max retreating in solitude to a mountain glacier. According to Jeremy Zima, "The glacier in *Jonny* functions not only as a biographical reference [he had lived in Switzerland] but also as a symbol of the detached German modernism of which Krenek was so enamored in his early compositions."¹²⁵ The remote glacier, according to Zima, represents "the art of musical composition in its purest and most abstract form."¹²⁶

Hindemith's later calls for autonomous, serious music for film, while consistent with a rejection

¹²³ Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 43. Christopher Morris also describes the genre as constructing a "dialectic between nature and technology." Morris, 79.

¹²⁴ Rentschler, 150, 160. Both Hake and Rentschler argue against Siegfried Kracauer's influential interpretation of the *Bergfilm* as a precursor to National Socialism in his book, *From Caligari to Hitler*.

¹²⁵ Zima, 258.

¹²⁶ Zima, 259.

of the Wagnerian music drama and general reorientation toward objective music, may have also been a way to elevate the medium from its problematic commercial roots and to retain some element of artistic integrity.¹²⁷

Just as the buzz surrounding mechanical music quickly faded after 1927, the introduction of sound film to Germany in 1929 made experiments with synchronization technology obsolete. Hindemith did, however, teach a course on film music in 1929–1930 under the auspices of the Radio Research Center. The course was largely concerned with giving students an overview of “the artistic possibilities” of film music and developing practical skills.¹²⁸ His lectures consisted of nuts-and-bolts information, addressing the machines used in the cinema (synchronization devices and sound-film systems), instrumentation of film music, musical forms, and viewings of different kinds of film music. He also gave his students hands-on experience by having them compose an accompaniment to the abstract film *Studie 6*.¹²⁹ Unfortunately, Hindemith’s report on the course also refers to the lack of good equipment, or the equipment breaking down. In the end, Hindemith’s total output in this area remained limited to the scores for *Im Sturm und Eis*, *Felix the Cat at the Circus*, *Vormittagsspuk*, and exercises for his class.

Radio

¹²⁷ In his article on Berlin theater composer Edmund Meisel’s score for Fanck’s *Bergfilm Der heilige Berg* (1926) and Meisel’s subsequent article “How is Film Music Written?” (1927), Christopher Morris sees a similar need to “‘redeem’ film music from its suspect origins” and “carve out a space among a critical establishment suspicious of cinema and the aesthetic values of film music.” Like Hindemith, Meisel called for original scores for movies and equality of the music with the visual element. Morris, 85.

¹²⁸ Hindemith, “Texte zur Filmmusik,” 92. “Das Ziel des Kursus muss sein, dem mit der Filmmusik sich Beschäftigenden eine genaue Übersicht über die künstlerischen Möglichkeiten seines Arbeitsgebietes zu geben und ihm die Beherrschung der technischen Möglichkeiten beizubringen.”

¹²⁹ Schenk, *Die Hochschule*, 268. For a reproduction of the proceedings of his course, see Paul Hindemith, “Texte zur Filmmusik,” 90–92.

Radio soon followed in the footsteps of mechanical instruments and film as a central interest at the music festivals, featured in two separate concerts of “Original Music for Radio” at the 1929 Baden-Baden festival and in the two radio plays (*Rundfunk-Hörspiel*) at the New Music Berlin event.¹³⁰ As before, Hindemith specified two problems in particular at the 1929 festival: creating music suitable for the technical limitations of broadcasting and creating music that could appeal to a mass audience. Regarding the former, Christopher Hailey has enumerated the challenges facing radio in the 1920s, such as limited broadcast range or frequent signal interference from weather or even passing streetcars. The microphones in radio stations also contributed to the poor quality of broadcasts, having a hard time picking up higher frequencies, making instruments indistinguishable from one another, and losing the sound of low-pitched instruments.¹³¹ These limitations meant that nineteenth-century music, with its full textures, dense chords, and emphasis on timbre, was particularly ill-suited for broadcast. In contrast, the thinner textures of classical music—and neoclassical music in vogue after the First World War—fared better.¹³²

In response to these challenges, the Reich Broadcasting Company (Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft) authorized funds in 1928 for individual stations to commission works written

¹³⁰ Peter Andraschke, “Paul Hindemith und der Beginn der Musik im deutschen Rundfunk,” in *Paul Hindemith: Komponist zwischen Tradition und Avantgarde: 10 Studie*, ed. Norbert Bolin (Mainz: Schott, 1999), 117. At the 1929 festival, the concerts were broadcast through loudspeakers in order to simulate a radio broadcast.

¹³¹ Hailey, “Rethinking Sound,” 24. Microphone placement also affected broadcast quality.

¹³² Hailey, “Rethinking Sound,” 25; Andraschke, 120. Hindemith seemed to keep these limitations in mind in his *Kammermusik Nr. 7*, written specifically for the Frankfurt Radio. The work featured the soloistic treatment of prominent voices (mostly winds), transparent scoring, and clear differentiation between legato and staccato articulations; and avoided loud volumes. Hindemith also wrote *3 Anekdoten für Radio* (1925) for clarinet, trumpet, violin, double bass, and piano, which he dedicated to his brother-in-law Hans Flesch, who worked for Frankfurt Radio. The work was later published as *Drei Stücke für fünf Instrumente*.

specifically to meet the challenges of radio broadcast, resulting in dozens of works from composers such as Franz Schreker, Paul Graener, and Ernst Toch.¹³³ The 1929 Baden-Baden festival was an extension of this call for radio-specific works, with the organizers asking composers to use “clear structures, open textures, well-spaced chords, and restraint in the use of the horns and large percussion instruments” in their musical submissions.¹³⁴ Hindemith elaborated on this mission, observing that the German radio “actively intervenes as stimulator and customer of special literature composed for broadcast in the production of our time. Alongside the existing musical art created under different conditions, it wants to put original music on the radio.”¹³⁵ In fact, German radio was a joint organizer of the concerts, and the program included statements by Dr. Hans Bredow, the Staatssekretär a.D. and Rundfunkkommissar of the Reichspostminster, and Hans Flesch, the Intendant of the Berlin Funk-Stunde (and Hindemith’s brother-in-law).¹³⁶

In addition to testing out works that could bypass the technical limitations of radio, the second goal of the Baden-Baden festival was, in Hindemith’s words, “the creation of a specific radio music ‘for all.’”¹³⁷ By this, he was referring to music that would be accessible to a mass

¹³³ Hailey, “Rethinking sound,” 26. And as Andraschke observes, these commissions also helped “social-economic fostering of young talent” (*die sozial-wirtschaftliche Förderung von jungen Talenten*). Andraschke, 118.

¹³⁴ Published in *Anbruch* (January 1929), 36, quoted in Hailey, “Rethinking sound,” 27.

¹³⁵ Hindemith, “Neue Aufgaben,” 34. “Er greift seit einiger Zeit als Anreger und Besteller einer für die Übertragung zu schaffenden Spezialliteratur aktiv in die Produktion unsere Tage ein. Er will neben die vorhandene, unter anderen Bedingungen geschaffene musikalische Kunst eine Originalmusik für den Rundfunk setzen.”

¹³⁶ Andraschke, 118. Hindemith referred to the “association” (*Zusammengehen*) of German radio with the festival. Hindemith, “Neue Aufgaben,” 34.

¹³⁷ Hindemith, “Neue Aufgaben,” 34. “Schaffung einer spezifischen Rundfunkmusik ‘an Alle.’” This cultivation of a widely accessible style dovetails with Hindemith’s simplified style for amateurs and his development of a more accessible style in general in his *Konzertmusik* works of 1930, discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

audience, adding that “radio music does not appeal to a specific social class, but simply to people—it also embraces a listenership in whose lives spiritual and artistic values are only carried through the radio.”¹³⁸ The focus on original music for the radio that appealed to all people, rather than just the educated middle class, suggests that both the radio executives and the festival committee recognized that the economic situation of the 1920s necessitated appealing to a wider audience. In his preview of the festival, Ernst Schoen confirmed this view, noting that rather than treating the radio as “a new instrument with new challenges,” the festival composers, in choosing texts to set, should consider what would be easily comprehensible to the public and choose musical forms that would accommodate the radio’s limitations.¹³⁹ Critics approved of this goal; an article from *Melos* 1929, for example, stated that radio was “obliged to focus its programming on the widest audience.”¹⁴⁰ Likewise, Karl Laux, reporting on the 1929 festival for the *Zeitschrift für Musik*, noted the impact of societal changes on music: “With the affordability of consumption, something like a new community of radio listeners arises. The circle is big. It is composed of the most diverse people, classes, professions, philosophies, opinions. The thing that

¹³⁸ Hindemith, “Neue Aufgaben,” 34. “Die Rundfunkmusik wendet sich nicht an eine bestimmte Gesellschaftsschicht, sondern an den Menschen schlechthin—sie erfasst auch eine Hörerschaft, in deren Leben erst durch den Rundfunk geistige und künstlerische Werte getragen wurden.”

¹³⁹ Ernst Schoen, “Die Rundfunkkompositionen für Baden-Baden,” *Melos* 8, no. 7 (July 1929): 313. “Allerdings haben die Kompositionsaufträge des Rundfunks, die für Baden-Baden ausgeschriebenen Rundfunkaufträge und schließlich das Rundfunkinteresse der jungen Komponisten selbst einen besonderen Rundfunkkompositionsstil gezeitigt, der aber nicht den Rundfunk als neues Instrument mit neuen Forderungen betrachtet, sondern der einmal, soweit es eine Texthandlung zu wählen gibt, diese Handlung den beschränkten Assoziationsfähigkeiten des bloßen Hörens anpasst, und der im Musikalischen gleichfalls eine Form sucht, die selbst nach der klanglichen wie vorstellungsmäßigen Reduktion durch die Rundfunkapparatur noch befriedigend bleibt.”

¹⁴⁰ Mersmann, Schultze-Ritter, and Strobel, “Neue Rundfunkmusik,” *Melos* 8, no. 7 (July 1929): 319. “so ist der Rundfunk gezwungen, sein Programm auf einen breitesten Hörerkreis einzustellen.”

can unify them is a music that speaks the language of the time.”¹⁴¹ In order to create this music for a mass public, “the composer must be aware that he’s not speaking to concert subscribers or to a society of music listeners, but rather to his fellow human beings—no more and no less.”¹⁴² Strobel in *Melos* viewed radio music as accommodating “the tendency that new music has pursued for years—the tendency of the broadening of the foundation [of music] and of the universality of form.”¹⁴³ Eberhard Preussner, on the other hand, agreed that while radio seemed the ideal instrument for creating “Gemeinschaftsmusik” as it reached so many people, “it’s almost impossible to create a universal music for radio programs.”¹⁴⁴

Hindemith’s contribution to the 1929 Baden-Baden festival was the radio play *Der Lindberghflug* (*The Lindbergh Flight*), a collaboration with Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill.¹⁴⁵ The work, based on Lindbergh’s own account of the event, dealt with his psychological and physical

¹⁴¹ Karl Laux, “Zweckformen der heutigen Musik. Die deutsche Kammermusik Baden-Baden 1929,” *Zeitschrift für Musik* 96, no. 9 (September 1929): 539. “In der Billigkeit des Konsums entsteht so etwas wie eine neue Gemeinschaft der Rundfunkhörer. Der Kreis ist groß. Er ist zusammengesetzt aus den unterschiedlichsten Menschen, Ständen, Berufen, Weltanschauungen Meinungen. Das, was sie einigen kann, ist eine Musik, die die Sprache der Zeit spricht.”

¹⁴² Laux, 539. “Und der Komponist muss sich bewusst sein, dass er nicht zu Konzertabonnenten oder zu einem Verein der Musikhörer, sondern zu Mitmenschen—und nicht weniger und nicht mehr—spricht.”

¹⁴³ Strobel, “Die Baden-Badener Kammermusik 1929,” 396. “Die Idee der Rundfunkmusik kommt den Tendenzen entgegen, welche die neue Musik seit Jahren verfolgt—den Tendenzen nach Verbreiterung der Basis und nach Allgemeingültigkeit der Gestalt.”

¹⁴⁴ Preussner, “Gemeinschaftsmusik 1929,” 900. “Der größte aller Gemeinschaftskreise scheint gegeben, das Instrument idealster Gemeinschaftsmusik erfunden, und doch ist es fast unmöglich, eine gemeingültige Musik für die Programme des Rundfunks zu schaffen.”

¹⁴⁵ Hindemith composed the parts in which Lindbergh struggles with the elements (fog, snow, and sleep), the flight over Europe, and the closing chorus. For a full account of the work’s creation, see Giselher Schubert, “Der Lindberghflug von Weill, Hindemith, und Brecht: Konzeption und Funktion,” in *Amerikanismus, Americanism, Weill. Die Suche nach kultureller Identität in der Moderne*, ed. Hermann Danuser and Hermann Gottschewski (Schliengen: Argus, 2003), 258–70.

struggle of during his thirty-three-hour solo flight from New York to Paris in May 1927.¹⁴⁶ The work also served a companion piece to Hindemith's and Brecht's *Lehrstück* (discussed in the following chapter), which was also performed at the festival.¹⁴⁷ It was performed twice: a broadcast over speakers for the audience, with the performers in a neighboring room, and a second, live performance the following evening.¹⁴⁸ The instrumentation followed the "rules" set down by the committee with a wind-heavy instrumentation, which, according to Ernst Schoen, both Weill and Hindemith used effectively.¹⁴⁹ For critics, the topical subject, the feat of technology, and the American protagonist all seemed appropriate for the modern medium of radio, as well as for a broad audience. Laux, for one, called the work "a manifestation of the time; a time in which motor, sport, and [world] records mean a lot. A new "American" romanticism can be seen. But that also belongs to our time."¹⁵⁰ Heinrich Strobel also called Brecht's depiction of the Lindbergh flight as "suitable for the radio—an event in which everything is contemporary..."¹⁵¹ Even Preussner, who ultimately panned the work, still

¹⁴⁶ Lindbergh had published an autobiography detailing his experience titled *WE* (1927), which appeared in Germany the same year as *Wir zwei. Im Flugzeug über den Atlantic*.

¹⁴⁷ Schubert, "Der Lindberghflug," 261. Both works deal with the theme of flying and were meant to impart a pedagogical message.

¹⁴⁸ This live performance was part of Brecht's pedagogical intent of the work, as he imagined that the listener at home, provided with a script, could sing and read aloud the Lindbergh part accompanied by the music on the radio. Josef Häusler, *Spiegel der deutschen Musik: Donaueschingen. Chronik—Tendenzen—Werkbesprechungen* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1996), 104–105; Schubert, "Der Lindberghflug," 262.

¹⁴⁹ Ernst Schoen, "Die Rundfunkkompositionen für Baden-Baden," 314. Weill used a "jazzy" style reminiscent of his *Dreigroschenoper*, while Hindemith's music was more contrapuntal. See also Andraschke's description of the music, 122.

¹⁵⁰ Laux, 540. "eine Erscheinung unserer Zeit gestaltet wird, der Zeit, der Motor, Sport und Rekord viel bedeuten. Eine neue, 'amerikanische' Romantik ist zu erkennen. Auch das gehört zu unserer Zeit."

¹⁵¹ Strobel, "Die Baden-Badener Kammermusik 1929," 396. "Brechts Darstellung des Lindberghfluges ist im höchsten Grade rundfunkgemäß—ein Vorgang, der allen gegenwärtig ist..."

acknowledged that the nexus of America, machines, and modern music should have been successful, as “the music catches up to the technology, an exciting musical report from the American pilot, music and sport, machine and man, Hindemith and Weill, Brecht and Lindbergh, musician, poet, pilot, everything is reconciled.”¹⁵² The other entries for the radio concert of the festival also tapped into this nexus: according to Strobel, Lion Feuchtwanger’s *Amerikanisches Liederbuch* poked fun at “empty Americanism” (using jazzy or popular music by Walter Goehr), while Hans Eisler’s *Tempo der Zeit* was a sharp social commentary that only the rich could enjoy modern life.¹⁵³

The New Music Berlin festival the following year would shift the focus of radio music slightly, moving from “original music for radio” to featuring two “radio plays” (*Rundfunk-Hörspiele*): Paul Dessau’s *Orpheus 1930-31* and Hindemith’s *Sabinchen*, both on texts by Robert Seitz. *Sabinchen*, based on the German ballad *Sabinchen war ein Frauenzimmer*, was a continuation of the previous year’s goal of composing music for a broad audience. In a radio magazine, Seitz clarified how the work specifically targeted a wide listenership who simply wanted to relax at the end of a workday:

For people who are convinced that “art” always has to strut along ponderously in monumental boots, the content of the radio plays will be a disappointment. But we are today, after the day’s exertion and stress, afflicted by so many profound books and problematic theater pieces, that maybe it is pleasant for once to be reminded again of cheerfulness and playfulness. In my opinion, this way seems also to suit the radio and its many listeners.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Preussner, “Gemeinschaftsmusik 1929,” 900. “Die Musik holt die Technik ein, spannender Musikbericht vom Amerikaflieger, Musik und Sport, Maschine und Mensch, Hindemith und Weill, Brecht und Lindbergh, Musiker, Dichter, Flieger alles ist versöhnt.”

¹⁵³ See Strobel, “Die Baden-Badener Kammermusik 1929,” 396; Preussner, “Gemeinschaftsmusik 1929,” 900.

¹⁵⁴ Robert Seitz, “Zwei Rundfunk-Hörspiele,” *Frauen- und Jugendfunk. Beilage zum Funk* 24 (13 June 1930): 96, quoted in Luitgard Schader, introduction to *Sing- und Spielmusik II*, by Paul Hindemith, vol. 8, no. 2 of *Paul Hindemith: Sämtliche Werke*, edited by Ludwig Finscher and Gisela Schubert (Mainz: B. Schott’s Söhne, 1975–), xxx. “Für Menschen, die

Hindemith also stated in the program that “instead of a senseless stringing-together of acoustic impressions, the listener is offered a composition that satisfies his artistic needs.”¹⁵⁵ However, similar to his demands on film music, Hindemith seemed to still strive for some sort of artistic autonomy within the commercial medium, as his colleague Heinrich Burkard emphasized that:

the music does not appear as ornamental, mood-setting, or more or less deepening element of the text (like most radio plays with music); but rather, the music determines the entire form of the artwork by following its own rules. The text merely serves as scaffolding for a composition created from a purely musical standpoint. Text and music here stand in the same relationship as in the opera.¹⁵⁶

Unfortunately, in his attempt to satisfy the artistic needs of listeners, music critics felt that Hindemith had simply lowered his musical standards to pander to the masses. For Fritz Stege, Hindemith’s effort “to delight the public” (*das Publikum zu begeistern*) only called up “the feeling of sincere pity, that someone has come to this, who sins against his talent and whose ambition extends no further than to play the role of a buffoon courting the base goodwill of the

davon überzeugt sind, dass ‘Kunst’ immer in gewaltigen Stiefeln gewichtig einherzuschreiten hat, werden die Hörspiele inhaltlich eine Enttäuschung sein. Wir werden aber heute nach des Tages Last und Mühe so viel von tiefgründigen Büchern und problematischen Theaterstücken heimgesucht, dass es vielleicht einmal angenehm ist, sich wieder an Heiterkeit und fröhliches Spiel zu erinnern. Meiner Ansicht nach scheint dieser Weg auch im Sinne des Rundfunks und seiner vielen Hörer liegen zu müssen.”

¹⁵⁵ “Statt einer sinnlosen Aneinanderreihung akustischer Eindrücke soll dem Zuhörer eine seine künstlerischen Bedürfnisse befriedigende Komposition geboten werden.” Quoted in Leichtentritt, “Neue Musik 1930,” 835.

¹⁵⁶ Heinrich Burkard, “Die Probleme der ‘Neuen Musik Berlin 1930’ (18.–21. Juni),” *Die Sendung* 7 (1930): 381, quoted in Schader, introduction to *Sing- und Spielmusik II*, xxx. “Die Musik tritt nicht als schmückendes, stimmunggebendes oder den Inhalt mehr oder weniger vertiefendes Element zum Text (wie bei den meisten Hörspielen mit Musik), sondern die Musik bestimmt nach ihren eigenen Gesetzen die Gesamtform des Kunstwerks. Der Text dient lediglich als Gerüst für eine nach rein musikalischen Gesichtspunkten geschaffene Komposition. Text und Musik stehen hier also in ähnlichem Verhältnis wie in der Oper.”

public.”¹⁵⁷ Hugo Leichtentritt in *Die Musik* believed that Hindemith had “lowered himself” to the level of the public, dishing out “unspeakably coarse music in barrel organ style.”¹⁵⁸ He also called Hindemith’s statement about the piece “very revealing” (*sehr aufschlussreich*), adding that:

now at least we know how famous composers value the artistic needs of the radio public. It certainly remains questionable whether, with such inferior pieces like *Orpheus* and *Sabinchen*, the much-lauded cultural purpose of the radio—educating the masses in art music—will be strengthened or, more likely, sabotaged.¹⁵⁹

The sense that Hindemith was wasting his talents on such experiments would be a running theme in the late 1920s and early 1930s—one that would contribute to his eventual turn back to the concert hall (discussed in Chapter Five). Moreover, Hindemith himself appeared to regard the work as a onetime experiment.¹⁶⁰ A year later, regarding a proposed recording of *Sabinchen* for broadcasting, Ludwig Strecker questioned “how much interest” there would be in it, warning

¹⁵⁷ Stege, “Neue Musik Berlin 1930,” *Zeitschrift für Musik* 97, no. 8 (August 1930): 644. “Der einzige nachhaltige Eindruck ist das Gefühl herzlichen Mitleides, das jedem zukommt, der sich an seiner Begabung versündigt und dessen Ehrgeiz nicht weiter reicht, als die Rolle eines um niedere Publikumsgunst buhlenden Bajazzos zu spielen.”

¹⁵⁸ Leichtentritt, “Neue Musik 1930,” 835. “Der berühmte Meister und Führer der modernen deutschen Musik steigt hier zum Publikum des Rummelplatzes hinab und tischt ihm eine zwar nicht witzlose, aber unsäglich ordinäre Musik im Leierkastenstil auf.”

¹⁵⁹ Leichtentritt, “Neue Musik 1930,” 835. “Nun wissen wir wenigstens, wie berühmte Komponisten die künstlerischen Bedürfnisse des Rundfunkpublikums einschätzen. Sehr fraglich bleibt dabei allerdings, ob mit so minderwertigen Stücken wie *Orpheus* und *Sabinchen* die so vielgerühmte Kulturaufgabe des Rundfunks, die Erziehung der Massen zur künstlerischen Musik, gefördert oder nicht vielmehr sabotiert wird.”

¹⁶⁰ Luitgard Schader believes that the “imprecise markups of the voices in the context of a predominantly *ad libitum*-conceived composition” is a result of the “experimental environment” and character of the work. (“Diese ungenaue Auszeichnung der Stimmen im Rahmen einer überwiegend *ad libitum* konzipierten Komposition kann jedoch auch durch das experimentelle Umfeld der Uraufführung verursacht sein”). Schader, introduction to *Sing- und Spielmusik II*, xxx.

Hindemith that he would not receive royalties for the broadcast.¹⁶¹ Hindemith responded that a recording was “definitely out of the question. The piece was already recorded on the radio, but only for the archive and is, of course, not permitted to be performed.”¹⁶² The work, which remained unpublished until the 2008 critical edition, would be Hindemith’s last foray into composing for “the masses.”

Trautonium

In addition to the radio plays, the New Music Berlin festival also featured a concert of original compositions for electronic instruments. For this, Hindemith wrote seven short movements for the debut of the trautonium, an electronic instrument developed by Friedrich Trautwein, his colleague at the Hochschule.¹⁶³ Once again, the festival committee had seized on a new trend, for after mechanical music peaked in 1927, electronic instruments appeared to be the next big thing. The Radio Corporation of America (RCA), for instance, had unveiled a mass-produced version of Léon Theremin’s eponymous instrument in 1929, while a series of electronic instruments also appeared in Paris, including the Dynaphone (1927), the Ondium Péchadre (1920), and most significantly, Maurice Martenot’s Ondes Martenot (1928). In Germany, Jörg Mager constructed a series of instruments that used beat-frequency oscillators between 1921 and the early 1930s, such as the Sphärophon (which debuted at the 1926

¹⁶¹ L. Strecker to Hindemith, 9 June 1931. “Ich weiß selbst nun nicht, wie weit hierfür noch Interesse besteht... Öffentliche Aufführungen von Platten sind im allgemeinen nach unserem famosen Urhebergesetz gebührenfrei.”

¹⁶² Hindemith to L. Strecker, 13 June 1931. “Die Plattensache ‘Sabinchen’ kommt natürlich gar nicht in Frage. Das Stück ist zwar vom Rundfunk aufgenommen, aber nur für’s Archiv und darf natürlich nicht aufgeführt werden.”

¹⁶³ *Des kleinen Elektromusikers Lieblinge* (Favorites of the little electro-musician), which was performed by Hindemith, Sala, and the pianist Rudolf Schmidt. Trautwein was appointed to the Hochschule in 1930 as a lecturer in acoustics and immediately starting working in the Radio Research Center. Patteson, 121.

Donaueschingen Festival), the Kaleidophon (1927), the Klaviartursphärophon (1928), and the Partiturophon (1930).¹⁶⁴ In contrast to the depersonalization of mechanical instruments, inventors of electronic instruments touted their creations as a more “organic” technology that was simply an extension of the performer’s body and soul.¹⁶⁵ As Trautwein stated in a 1930 interview:

While electroacoustics has occupied itself in the last few years primarily with the problems of reproduction, I want to provide new expressive possibilities for the creative musician. Mechanical music has not enriched art as such, but rather has primarily disseminated it. Above all, however, I hope through my work to serve creative art and thus to contribute to the reconciliation of the two artificially opposed branches of the human spirit: art and technology.¹⁶⁶

Critic Arnold Huth also asserted that electronic instruments like the theremin and spherophone, “do not numb and kill aesthetic sensitivity but, on the contrary, allow them in the greatest degree to act more directly than before.”¹⁶⁷ (The New Music Berlin festival also included a concert of original works for records featuring works by Hindemith and Ernst Toch. In 1927, Hindemith had dismissed the idea of this type of music, not believing that “this type of recording will ever

¹⁶⁴ Hugh Davies, “Electronic instruments.” Berlin was an important center for the research and development of electronic (and electric) instruments in the interwar years. The Heinrich Hertz Institute for Oscillation Research (Heinrich-Hertz-Institut für Schwingungsforschung) was established at the Technische Hochschule in Berlin in 1928, and under its director Karl W. Wagner, the institute “was wholly or partly responsible for about half of the electronic instruments built in Germany up to the mid-1930s.”

¹⁶⁵ Patteson, 66–67.

¹⁶⁶ Quoted in Hans Mersmann, “Dr. Trautweins elektrische Musik,” *Melos* 9, no. 5/6 (May/June 1930): 229. “Während die Elektro-Akustik sich in den letzten Jahren vorzugsweise mit Problemen der Reproduktion beschäftigt hat, will ich für den schaffenden Künstler neue Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten bereitstellen. Die mechanische Musik hat die Kunst als solche nicht bereichert, sondern in erster Linie verbreitert. Ich aber glaube durch meine Arbeiten vor allem der schöpferischen Kunst zu dienen und damit zur Versöhnung der beiden fälschlicherweise in Gegensatz gedrängten Zweige menschlichen Geistes: Kunst und Technik beizutragen.”

¹⁶⁷ Arno Huth, “Elektrische Tonerzeugung: Zu den Erfindungen von Jörg Mager und Leo Theremin,” *Die Musik* 20, no.1 (October 1927): 45. “die künstlerische Empfindung nicht erstarren lassen und töten, sondern im Gegenteil in stärkstem Maße unmittelbarer als bisher auswirken lassen.”

be useful for musical practice.”¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, he and Toch altered instrumental sounds by adjusting the playback speed of recordings, then recorded the modified sounds onto another gramophone machine.¹⁶⁹ This remained a onetime experiment and was largely rejected by the audience.¹⁷⁰)

As the first prominent composer to write original works for the trautionium, Hindemith’s name is indelibly linked with the instrument’s creation and early history. But like his other works utilizing new technology, his engagement with it was brief and limited to a handful of works performed at festivals. To be sure, he did play a small role in the instrument’s design, suggesting that Trautwein retain the original string manual (a metal wire) rather than use a keyboard as an interface.¹⁷¹ He also was responsible for introducing his student Oskar Sala to the instrument, who would become one of its most significant promoters and performers.¹⁷² His most concrete contribution, however, was his three compositions.¹⁷³ In addition to his work for the New Music Berlin festival, he also composed the *Concert Piece for Trautonium with String Orchestra Accompaniment* (*Konzertstück für ein Trautonium mit Begleitung des Streichorchesters*), which premiered at the second Radio Music Convention in Munich on 7 July 1931 with Sala as soloist

¹⁶⁸ Hindemith, “Zur mechanischen Musik,” 20. “Ich glaube nicht, dass diese Aufzeichnungsart jemals für die musikalische Praxis verwendbar zu machen ist.”

¹⁶⁹ Patteson, 91.

¹⁷⁰ Leichtentritt, “Neue Musik 1930,” 836.

¹⁷¹ Schenk, “Paul Hindemith,” 191; Patteson, 122. Trautwein does mention the “cooperation” (*Mitarbeit*) of Hindemith in the improvement of the instrument. Trautwein, “Bedeutung und Wesen der elektrischen Musik,” 51. *Jahresbericht* 1929–1930.

¹⁷² Patteson, 122; Schenk, “Paul Hindemith,” 191. Sala later created the non-musical soundtrack for Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Birds* (1963).

¹⁷³ Most composers did not engage with these new instruments, forcing players to simply play classical music standards. The lack of original music suited for new instruments was a continual complaint dating back to the mechanical music phase.

and Hindemith conducting the orchestra.¹⁷⁴ Hindemith composed his final work, *Langsames Stück und Rondo für Trautonium* (written early August 1935) to “baptize” a new version of the instrument that featured a second fingerboard and two pedals to modify the volume and pitch.¹⁷⁵

Hindemith’s primary interest in the instrument, however, seemed to be in its practical, rather than artistic, applications. The trautonium’s ability to produce subharmonics and combination tones, for example, made it an ideal tool for exploring the properties of sound. Hindemith had noted the “strange possibilities” produced by the 1935 model, which produced subharmonics that would double the original voice.¹⁷⁶ Several scholars have suggested that Hindemith’s use of the instrument to investigate acoustic phenomena contributed to the development of his harmonic theories, which he eventually codified in his treatise *Unterweisung im Tonsatz* (1937).¹⁷⁷ Indeed, Hindemith thanked both Trautwein and Sala in the preface to the 1937 edition of *Unterweisung*.¹⁷⁸ Musicologist Alexandra Monchick has even suggested that he put his theories, including the concept of “harmonic fluctuation,” into practice in the composition of these three works.¹⁷⁹

Hindemith also expressed some interest in the idea of the trautonium as a new instrument for *Hausmusik*. As a cheap form of musical entertainment, *Hausmusik* (amateur music making in

¹⁷⁴ Hindemith reused some of the music from these works. A theme from the sixth movement of *Des kleinen Elektromusikers Lieblinge* was used in *Mathis der Maler* while part of the second movement from the *Konzertstück* was recycled for *Das Unaufhörliche*.

¹⁷⁵ Patteson, 133. The Reich Radio Society (*Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft*) commissioned the new version of the instrument.

¹⁷⁶ According to Patteson, not only could the instrument produce a series of whole number multiples above the fundamental tone, it also creates a “chain of divisors (1/2, 1/3, 1/4, etc.) below the note, providing new timbral coloration. Patteson, 133.

¹⁷⁷ Patteson, 159; Desbrulais, 49.

¹⁷⁸ Desbrulais, 49. Hindemith also seems to have used an audio record of combination tones to demonstrate the basis of this theory.

¹⁷⁹ Monchick, “The Craft of Paul Hindemith’s Electronic Compositions,” 85–86

the home) was one of the few areas of musical growth during the Weimar Republic (discussed in the next chapter). Yet even this sort of musical activity seemed to be under threat from film and radio, while sales of traditional bourgeois instruments like pianos were down owing to the economic crisis.¹⁸⁰ As an electronic instrument, the trautionium seemed able to bridge the gap between traditional amateur music making and the radio age. Moreover, just one year after the introduction of the instrument in 1930, a do-it-yourself guide to build your own instrument appeared. Hoping to take advantage of this interest, Trautwein and Sala started to develop a new, more user-friendly version with support from the radio and electronics firm Telefunken.¹⁸¹ This new instrument, dubbed the *Volkstrautionium* (People's trautionium), debuted at the 1933 Radio Exhibition and went on the market that August, advertised as easy to play and capable of playing music written for any other instrument. As head of the Radio Research Center, Georg Schünemann naturally endorsed this use for the trautionium, stating that when placed on a table and plugged into a radio receiver, "it would be easy, with this electric instrument, to play songs and to accompany and possibly to arrive at a new kind of Hausmusik that is played on several instruments."¹⁸² Likewise, Walter Gronostay, a former Schoenberg pupil who taught at the Radio Research Center, observed that traditional *Hausmusik* instruments such as the violin, piano, and cello were now an "unattainable luxury" (*unerschwinglichen Luxus*), both in terms of cost and

¹⁸⁰ In contrast, the production of cheaper instruments such as the recorder, harmonica, and guitar significantly increased.

¹⁸¹ Patteson, 125–126. The new version had an improved interface for users (knobs and switches) and could be plugged into the radio for amplification.

¹⁸² Georg Schünemann, "Produktive Kräfte der Mechanischen Musik," *Die Musik* 24, no.1 (January 1932): 248. "Dann aber, so kann ich mir denken, wird es ein Leichtes sein, mit diesem elektrischen Musikinstrument Lieder zu spielen und zu begleiten und womöglich auch zu einer Art von neuer Hausmusik zu kommen, die auf mehreren Instrumenten gespielt wird."

the time to learn them. In contrast, he argued that mass-produced “electric musical instruments—and the trautionium in particular—offer a new opportunity for making one’s own music.”¹⁸³

Hindemith shared his colleagues’ opinion on the Volkstrautionium’s suitability for *Hausmusik*, describing it to his publishers as a “really practical thing” that “will soon have a wide distribution.”¹⁸⁴ Once again, as with mechanical instruments, he relegated this technology to the “less-distinguished” branches of music making, far from the concert hall. In fact, he had promoted Jörg Mager’s Sphärophon in 1926 for the same purpose, arguing that “violins, wind instruments, and even pianos and organs are, for the majority of our people, prohibitively (expensive).”¹⁸⁵ In order to capitalize on the trautionium’s potential popularity, he suggested that his publisher partner with Telefunken in order to gain the rights to produce guides and music for it.¹⁸⁶ As he wrote to Schott:

This morning I met with the trautionium men from Telefunken who were awkwardly sitting around trying to figure out an instruction guide for the instrument... I have just advised with the people that the guide may only be released by you, and I would recommend (if you’re interested) that you write at once to Dr. Trautwein at the Academy of Music. Maybe I’ll also collaborate on the thing, a few of my students, too. One thought at any rate to produce a cheap guide (about 1.50) for beginners, which then should be complemented by a series of books with solo and ensemble pieces.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ Walter Gronostay, “Die klingende Elektrizität und der Komponist,” *Die Musik* 24, no. 11 (August 1932): 810. “Das elektrische Musikinstrument—in diesem Zusammenhang sei besonders an das Trautionium gedacht—bot jedoch erneut die Möglichkeit zu eigenem Musizieren.”

¹⁸⁴ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 3–4 May 1933. “Das Instrument kommt jetzt in den Handel. Es ist wirklich ein sehr brauchbares Ding geworden und ich glaube, dass es bald eine weite Verbreitung erlangen wird.”

¹⁸⁵ Hindemith, quoted in Peter Donhauser, *Elektrische Klangmaschinen: die Pionierzeit in Deutschland und Österreich* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2007), 245–246. “Geigen, Blasinstrumente, gar Klaviere und Orgeln sind für den größten Teil unseres Volkes unerschwinglich.”

¹⁸⁶ Publishers frequently teamed up with instrument-makers to synergetically push each other’s products.

¹⁸⁷ Hindemith to Willy, 3–4 May 1933. “Heute früh traf ich die Trautioniummänner von Telefunken, die gerade unbeholfen darüber saßen, eine Schule für das Instrument auszuknobeln... Ich habe den Leuten gleich eingeratet, dass die Schule nur bei Ihnen erscheinen

Willy Strecker also appeared to view the instrument as a new possible source of revenue, stating that, “I immediately wrote to Dr. Trautwein and am happy that the instrument can now enter the market in a usable form.” He even suggested that to maximize sales, the firm should market music to the widest possible audience:

1.50 Marks seems really cheap to me and would only be justified by a real mass marketing (*Massenabsatz*). On the other hand, with mass marketing, the taste of the larger public has to be accommodated on the largest scale and unfortunately the level of the guide should just about match the level of folk, piano, and zither guides. Maybe even two parallel guides could be considered: a popular (folksy) kitsch-series with folk songs, little salon pieces, march and hit music for content; and a collection based on art music. If it's to be used as a folk-instrument, unfortunately the popular content probably can't be avoided.¹⁸⁸

Similar to their previous letters regarding jazz and “kitsch,” the Streckers were able to overcome their distaste for popular music and publish it anyway because of the dependence of publishing firms of the sales of amateur and popular music.¹⁸⁹ These negotiations came to fruition, as Schott

dürfte und ich würde Ihnen raten, falls Sie Interesse daran haben, gleich einmal an Dr. Trautwein, Hochschule für Musik zu schreiben. Vielleicht arbeite ich auch an der Sache mit, ein paar Schüler von mir auch. Man dachte jedenfalls eine billige Schule (1.50 etwa) für Anfänger herzustellen, die dann durch eine Reihe von Heften mit Solo- und Ensemblestücken ergänzt werden soll.”

¹⁸⁸ Willy to Hindemith, 5 May 1933. “Ich habe sofort an Dr. Trautwein lt. einliegender Kopie geschrieben und freue mich, dass das Instrument jetzt in brauchbarer Form in den Handel kommen soll. Die Verbreitung hängt natürlich wesentlich vom Preis ab und von der Absatzmöglichkeit des Instrumentes hängt natürlich auch wieder die Verbreitung der Schule und anschließenden Hefte ab. Mk. 1.50 scheint mir allerdings sehr billig und wäre nur bei einem wirklichen Massenabsatz zu rechtfertigen. Andererseits muss bei einem Massenabsatz auch dem Geschmack des großen Publikums in weitestem Maße Rechnung getragen werden und leider das Niveau der Schule etwa dem Niveau der Volks- Klavier- und Zitherschulen angepasst sein. Vielleicht könnte an sogar zwei Parallel-serien ins Auge fassen, eine volkstümliche Kitsch- Serie mit Volksliedern, Salonstückchen, marsch- und schlagerartigem Inhalt und eine Sammlung auf künstlerisch musikalischer Grundlage. Ist es geeignet ein Volk-Instrument zu werden, so lässt sich leider wahrscheinlich das volkstümliche Niveau nicht vermeiden.”

¹⁸⁹ Willy's suggestion of two series of publications, one for kitsch and one for more artistically minded music, calls to mind Celia Applegate's discussion of the *Hausmusik*

did end up publishing a guide in 1933 titled *Trautonium School* (*Trautonium Schule*) that coincided with the instrument's release. The guide featured "an overview of playing technique by Sala and compositional examples by Hindemith, including arrangements of Corelli and Mozart for two trautioniums and piano."¹⁹⁰ Despite its promise, however, the launch of the trautionium was a failure. The price, at 400 Reichsmarks, was too expensive for most Germans; it was certainly more expensive than the People's Radio (Volksempfänger) that also made its appearance at the 1933 exhibition, priced at 76 Reichsmarks.

A "Chilling Influence"? Hindemith's Cessation of Experimentation

Hindemith's works for the trautionium ultimately represented the end of his experiments with new technology. As musicologist Thomas Patteson states, Hindemith "was conspicuous in his absence from the technological experiments of the 1950s," having become "a vociferous opponent of what he saw as the ungrounded capriciousness of modernist tendencies in music."¹⁹¹ Monchick also notes that "it seems that Hindemith did an about-face sometime between 1935 and 1937, turning away from technology towards naturalism."¹⁹² It is difficult, however, to pin down a concrete reason, or reasons, for this abrupt cessation.¹⁹³ The most common consensus among scholars is that the National Socialist's rise to power in 1933, and subsequent reorganization of the Hochschule, cut off any further development in this area, including

community's divisions between its "serious and frivolous manifestations." Applegate, "Hausmusik," 143.

¹⁹⁰ Patteson, 132.

¹⁹¹ Patteson, 159.

¹⁹² Monchick, "The Craft of Paul Hindemith's Electronic Compositions," 86.

¹⁹³ Schenk also expresses puzzlement, stating, "While Hindemith's practical examination of the new technical media in the years 1930 and 1931 contributed essentially to the development of the new types of musical instruments, this phase was thereafter broken off. The reasons for this are hard to specify" ("Während Hindemiths praktische Auseinandersetzung mit den neuen technischen Musikinstrumenten wesentlich beitrug, brach dieser Strang seiner Tätigkeit danach ab. Die Gründe hierfür sind schwer anzugeben"). Schenk, "Paul Hindemith," 193.

Hindemith's own contributions. Patteson, for example, states that "the cultural pressures applied by the Nazis within Germany... exerted a decidedly chilling influence on the experimental arts of the time," implying that Hindemith stopped composing for the *trautonium* as he "would soon become ensnared in the political webs of the Third Reich."¹⁹⁴ Dietmar Schenk also attributes the cessation of Weimar-era experimentation to the Nazis, specifically the "coupling of technical experimentation with free, unthreatened and creativity encouraged by the *Zeitgeist*, and especially in the case of the composer, joy of discovery. All that belonged to the program and practice of new music found no place in the Nazi state."¹⁹⁵ Skelton also (indirectly) links the *trautonium*'s failure to launch to the Nazis' assumption of power, noting that Hindemith never "was conscious of a connection" between this failure and Hitler's rise to power.¹⁹⁶

At first glance, the impression that the Nazis were responsible for Hindemith's ceasing any further work in this area is understandable. The Propaganda Ministry under Goebbels ordered dramatic budget cuts to the Radio Research Center in 1933 (sound film by 82 percent; electric music by 59 percent, and money for staff by 75 percent) as part of "mandated cost cuts" (*angeordneter Sparmaßnahmen*).¹⁹⁷ Fritz Stein, the Hochschule's new director, finally shut down the center in 1935, remarking that the "once lavishly-supported" institution was "no longer viable and hardly has the right to exist."¹⁹⁸ A closer look at the closure, however, reveals a more

¹⁹⁴ Patteson, 133, 154. Patteson also believes that the emigration of figures such as Hindemith and Stuckenschmidt contributed to the lack of further development of electric instruments. Finocchiaro also asserts that the rise of Nazism "would drastically disrupt the musical and cinematic avant-garde" following the exile of different artists, including Hindemith. Finocchiaro, 2.

¹⁹⁵ Schenk, *Die Hochschule*, 272.

¹⁹⁶ Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 109.

¹⁹⁷ Donhauser, 129.

¹⁹⁸ Fritz Stein, "Vier Jahre Aufbau," in *58. Jahresbericht* (1 October 1936–September 1937), 5. "die einst mit großen Mitteln unterhaltene Rundfunkversuchsstelle," "nicht mehr lebensfähig und kaum noch lebensberechtigt."

complex situation than simply a presumed Nazi hatred of experimental music and technology. Despite the ideological slant of Stein's remarks, the technical problems that had plagued radio in the early and mid-1920s had improved, making the creation of radio-specific compositions and training no longer necessary.¹⁹⁹ The creation of the first mass-produced condenser microphone, the CMV 3 "bottle mic" by Georg Neumann in 1928, for example, had significantly improved sound quality in radio broadcasts.²⁰⁰ Stein specifically referred to these reasons in his announcement about the closure, adding that sound engineers had made the necessity of musicians' work in this area redundant:

It has become clearer that a radio-specific education has become more and more superfluous, since radio technology has made progress toward allowing musical recording and broadcast to be produced under normal conditions, so that a special placement of the microphone is no longer necessary. As far as technical requirements are concerned, they are controlled by the sound editor, who by now relieves the musician or the singer from worrying about producing a technically perfect broadcast of their performance.²⁰¹

The budget cuts and eventual shuttering of the Radio Research Center may have also been a commonsense action taken during a time of economic crisis. Because the center was financially dependent on grants from the Prussian culture ministry and federal radio

¹⁹⁹ Schenk, *Hochschule*, 272. "Die diffuse Problemlage der Rundfunkmusik, die in den Anfängen des neuen Mediums zu bestehen schien, war um die Mitte der dreißiger Jahre einer größeren Übersichtlichkeit gewichen."

²⁰⁰ "Couple's Custom Microphones Carry Colorful Past," National Public Radio, accessed 20 July 2019, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89705610>.

²⁰¹ Stein, "Vier Jahre Aufbau," 15. "Seither ist immer deutlicher geworden, dass eine spezifische Rundfunk-Pädagogik immer überflüssiger wird, da die Rundfunktechnik in fortschreitendem Maße sich bemüht, ihre musikalischen Aufnahmen und Sendungen unter normalen Wiedergabebedingungen vorzunehmen, sodass eine besondere Einstellung auf das Mikrophon schon jetzt kaum noch nötig ist. Soweit die technischen Bedingungen noch einen Einfluss haben, werden sie von dem Tonmeister geregelt, der nunmehr also dem Musiker oder dem Sänger die Sorge um eine möglichst vollendete technische Übertragung seiner Leistung abnimmt."

organization, it increasingly suffered from financial constraints after 1929.²⁰² These restrictions had directly impacted Hindemith's own film course, as he complained about lack of materials and the difficulty of getting synchronizing equipment on loan.²⁰³ Furthermore, Stein believed that a research lab at the Berlin Hochschule was superfluous, as technical experiments were already being carried out in radio stations and industrial firms.²⁰⁴ Indeed, while the center differentiated itself from other sites by training musicians to work together with technicians, similar experiments with radio technology were being run at the Heinrich Hertz Institute for Oscillation Research at the Berlin Institute of Technology (Technische Hochschule), which was also founded in 1928. Finally, in Stein's view, the limited results coming out of the center did not justify the cost of running it; as he observed, "Despite a considerable financial cost, the successes [of the center] don't seem to have been considerable; at any rate, when the question of the continuation of its work was posed in 1933, the experts showed no great enthusiasm."²⁰⁵ The center's hosting of the New Music Berlin festival may have inadvertently contributed to this impression. During the radio play portion of the event, the broadcast suffered from embarrassing technical difficulties, forcing Hindemith's *Sabinchen* to be performed live and causing many critics to question the purpose of the taxpayer-funded center. As Fritz Stege reported:

²⁰² Schenk, "Paul Hindemith," 185. "So virulent sich die Anfänge der Rundfunkversuchsstelle darstellen, sie blieb als Institution ephemere, vor allem verursacht durch die sozioökonomische und politische Krise zu Beginn der dreißiger Jahre."

²⁰³ Hindemith, "Texte zur Filmmusik," 91–92.

²⁰⁴ Stein, "Vier Jahre Aufbau," 15. "Andererseits sind die technischen Versuche ganz und gar in die rundfunkeigenen oder in die industriellen Betriebe verlegt worden, sodass die sachliche Existenzberechtigung einer Rundfunkversuchsstelle bei der Hochschule verneint werden musste."

²⁰⁵ Stein, "Vier Jahre Aufbau," 14. "Die Erfolge scheinen trotz eines erheblichen finanziellen Aufwandes nicht beträchtlich gewesen zu sein, jedenfalls zeigte sich im Jahre 1933, als die Frage der Weiterführung dieser Arbeit aufgeworfen wurde, in den Fachkreisen keine allzu große Neigung hierzu."

“New Music Berlin 1930” is hosted by the *Rundfunkversuchsstelle* of the Hochschule, whereby the emphasis is placed on the word “attempt” (*Versuch*)... [The fact that] the radio broadcast that was presented was so bad, that the entire radio play had to be repeated with the visible performers, doesn’t exactly offer the best testimony for the “Radio Research Center.”²⁰⁶

The critics from *Melos* also saw the original pieces for gramophone and trauteonium as “for now, nothing more than experiments,” complaining that:

when the festival in its new form is combined with the Radio Research Center of the state conservatory of music, then one should be able to expect a useful broadcast and not be faced with the fact that Hindemith’s radio play, with all the trappings of the radio studio, had to be staged on the podium (which was admittedly amusing).²⁰⁷

Critic Leichtentritt in *Die Musik* also snidely commented how “Donaueschingen and Baden-Baden lost their taste for problematic music, and the now-homeless ‘New Music’ is now granted asylum at the Radio Research Center of the Berlin State Conservatory of Music.”²⁰⁸ Even Kurt Weill argued against the center as a site for experimental music, believing that such music needed independence from government control.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ Stege, “Neue Musik Berlin 1930,” 643–644. “Die ‘Neue Musik Berlin 1930’ unterstand der Rundfunkversuchsstelle der Hochschule, wobei der Schwerpunkt auf den Wortbestandteil ‘Versuch’ zu legen ist... Dass die dargebotene Rundfunk-Übertragung so unzureichend war, dass das gesamte Hörspiel diesmal mit sichtbaren Mitwirkenden wiederholt werden musste, stellt der ‘Rundfunkversuchsstelle’ nicht gerade das beste Zeugnis aus.”

²⁰⁷ Mersmann, Schultze-Ritter, and Strobel, “Neue Musik Berlin 1930,” 305. “Wenn sich das Unternehmen in seiner neuen Form mit der Rundfunkversuchsstelle der Staatlichen Hochschule für Musik verbindet, dann sollte man doch wohl eine brauchbare Übertragung erwarten dürfen und sich nicht vor die Notwendigkeit gestellt sehen dass Hindemiths Hörspiel mit allen Zutaten des Senderraums (was freilich amüsant war) auf das Podium gestellt werden musste.”

²⁰⁸ Leichtentritt, “Neue Musik 1930,” 834. “Donaueschingen und Baden-Baden haben den Geschmack an der problematischen Musik jetzt verloren, und der heimatlos gewordenen ‘Neuen Musik’ gewährte nunmehr die Rundfunkversuchsstelle der Berliner Staatlichen Hochschule für Musik ein Asyl.”

²⁰⁹ Kurt Weill, “Musikfest oder Musikstudio?” *Melos* 9, no. 5/6 (May/June 1930): 230–232.

Despite the closure of the Radio Research Center, engagement with technology at the Berlin Hochschule did continue, albeit in a more limited fashion, in the Music and Technology Study Group (Fachgruppe Musik und Technik). The creation of this “study group” was part of a general restructuring of the school into fourteen different groups (organ, chamber music, dramatic arts, string instruments, wind instruments, and so on), which replaced the former departments (*Abteilungen*). This restructuring was meant to provide a more well-rounded education for the students, for, as Stein noted, “The time of the exclusive specialization of the musician is over. That will mean, most likely, that the more you free yourselves from the narrow bonds of a specialty and broaden your horizon beyond a single instrument, the more you will become better and more useful musicians for the present and future.”²¹⁰ While certainly a downgrade from its former position as an independent center for research, the study group was arguably a way of better integrating technology into the general curriculum. As such, the activities of the group were meant to fulfill educational goals and “constructive and experimental work” would be performed, “insofar as they establish specific pedagogical prospects in the areas of microphone technique, recording, and electronic music.”²¹¹ Stein also announced the creation

²¹⁰ Fritz Stein, “Rückblick und Ausblick,” in 55. *Jahresbericht* (1 October 1933–30 September 1934), 13. “... dass die Zeiten des ausschließlich betriebenen Spezialistentums für den Musiker vorbei sind. Das will besagen, dass Sie aller Voraussicht nach ein umso besserer und brauchbarer Musiker der Gegenwart und Zukunft sein werden, je mehr Sie sich aus der engen Fessel eines Einzelfaches befreien und Ihren Gesichtskreis über das Einzelinstrument hinaus erweitern.”

²¹¹ Stein, “Vier Jahre Aufbau,” 15. “Konstruktive und experimentelle Arbeiten werden in den nach wie vor verfügbaren Laboratorien jetzt nur insoweit ausgeführt, als sie auf den Gebieten der Mikrophontechnik, der Schallaufnahme und der Elektromusik spezifisch pädagogische Aussichten eröffnen.”

of a film and electronic music section during the 1939-1940 school year, whose goal was the education of film composers, music directors, and sound editors (*Tonmeisters*).²¹²

Finally, although Hindemith may have given up his own engagements with technology, mass media obviously did not shut down with the start of the Third Reich. As numerous scholars have pointed out, National Socialism was characterized by what Jeffrey Herf has described as a “reactionary modernism,” a melding of *Technik* and *Kultur* through the “reconciliation between the antimodernist, romantic, and irrationalist ideas present in German nationalism and... modern technology.”²¹³ The number of cinemas and moviegoers continued to rise after 1933, as did the number of radio owners, thanks in part to the inexpensive *Volksempfänger*. And in contrast to the common assumption that the Nazis exerted full control to silence the modernism of the 1920s, mass media in the Third Reich continued trends that had already begun during the Weimar Republic. Radio stations in the 1920s, for instance, had already begun to program more popular music, a trend that continued until it was the focal point of radio programming by 1942.²¹⁴ And although the creation of the *Reichssendeleitung* (Reich Broadcasting Management) was supposed to unify various regional stations under Goebbels and the Ministry of Public Education and Propaganda, regional stations largely continued to control their own programming.²¹⁵ As Conrad Dussel observes, “Goebbels therefore never had sole authority over what programs were

²¹² Fritz Stein, “Neueinrichtungen,” *60., 61. und 62. Jahresbericht* (1 October 1938–30 September 1941), 13–14.

²¹³ Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1. See also Patteson, 135–136.

²¹⁴ Konrad Dussel, “Radio Programming, Ideology and Cultural Change: Fascism, Communism and Liberal Democracy, 1920s–1950s,” in Führer and Ross, *Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany*, 85. Programming popular music was a way to compete with foreign broadcasts. Potter also notes that “over the course of the 1920s music programs came to consist increasingly of popular fare.” Potter, *Most German*, 26.

²¹⁵ Dussel, 84.

broadcast on German stations. He had even less power over what the audience chose to hear.”²¹⁶

The National Socialist government had even less control over the recording industry, as they were hesitant to interfere with its commercial interests and, in the end, generally catered to the tastes of the masses.²¹⁷ Regarding film music, scholars such as Robert E. Peck and Reimar Volker have noted how many composers, even those who dabbled in experiments such as Werner Egk and Winfried Zillig, maintained musical careers before, during, and even after the Third Reich with no discernable changes in their styles.²¹⁸ In the end, as Pamela Potter has observed, “giving in to the forces of technology and popular entertainment had gained momentum in the Weimar Republic and persisted after 1933.”²¹⁹

Even the trautionium continued to live on during the Third Reich. Trautwein, a member of the Nazi party, kept his position at the Hochschule and even rose to the rank of full professor, while Sala was, according to Patteson, “substantially supported” during the Third Reich.²²⁰ Moreover, Trautwein and Sala demonstrated the trautionium to Goebbels in April 1935, there were fifty-four radio broadcasts between January 1938 and September 1939 of Sala playing the instrument, and group lectures and demonstrations of it were sponsored by Nazi-affiliated leisure program for workers, *Kraft durch Freude*. The trautionium also was featured at important events,

²¹⁶ Dussel, 84. It was who was making the music, rather than the music itself, that was an issue, as Jewish composers such as Mendelssohn were purged from broadcast.

²¹⁷ Ross, “Entertainment, Technology, and Tradition,” 37–38. Ross notes that it was also harder to exact control over something that was experienced privately.

²¹⁸ As Robert E. Peck notes, the biggest impact of the Nazi government on film music was the purging of Jewish composers. Peck, “Film Music in the Third Reich,” in Stilwell and Powrie, *Composing for the Screen in Germany and the USSR*, 33; Reimar Volker, “Herbert Windt’s Film Music to *Triumph of the Will*: Ersatz-Wagner or Incidental Music to the Ultimate Nazi-Gesamtkunstwerk?” in Stilwell and Powrie, *Composing for the Screen in Germany and the USSR*, 39–53.

²¹⁹ Potter, *Most German*, 29.

²²⁰ Patteson, 134.

including the 1936 Berlin Olympics (played three times on official radio programming) and at the 1936 Nuremberg Party Rally.²²¹

Conclusion

Given these continuities in electronic music and mass media after 1933, it is difficult to attribute Hindemith's lack of further activity in this area to the Nazi assumption of power, especially since some of his involvement with the *trautonium* continued into the years of the Third Reich.²²² Moreover, his experimentation with film, radio, and mechanical instruments were already largely over by 1930. Instead, his shift away from technology can be explained in other ways. First, improvements in radio technology, such as better microphones, seem to have rendered the creation of radio-specific music unnecessary. Likewise, the introduction of sound-on-film technology in 1929 supplanted any need to work with synchronization machines or mechanical instruments. Second, the fascination with electronic instruments like the *trautonium* had passed by the mid-1930s; as Patteson observes, "the heady futurism of the previous decade had given way to an impulse toward consolidation and stability. There was a backlash against the technological enthusiasm of the '20s, whose utopian visions increasingly appeared as distant fevered delusions."²²³ Third, the shuttering of his annual new music festival as a result of the economic depression (the New Music Berlin event was the last one) removed the forum for Hindemith and other composers to test out new experiments.²²⁴ Related to this, however, was a

²²¹ For a description of the instrument's use during the Third Reich and its appropriation by the Nazis, see Patteson, 133–141.

²²² He helped launch the *Volkstrautonium* in 1933 and wrote his *Langsames Stück* for it in 1935, the same year as the closure of the Center and one year after his falling-out with the regime in November 1934 (discussed in Chapter Six).

²²³ Patteson, 155–156. Patteson attributes the failure to the lack of original music for these instruments and the fact that too many new instruments kept appearing, replacing older ones before musicians had the chance to master them.

²²⁴ Schenk, "Paul Hindemith," 193.

certain weariness among festivalgoers with the experimentation and workshop atmosphere (discussed in the next chapter); even new music enthusiast Heinrich Strobel described the New Music Berlin festival as an “alarming flattening of once-active experimental ideas.”²²⁵ While considering these reasons behind Hindemith’s turn away from technology, however, the question arises of how truly invested he was in these experiments in the first place. The works discussed in this chapter, representing only a small portion of his output, were generally confined to new music festivals and were treated more as scientific experiments than musical works.

Notwithstanding any genuine curiosity he had with regard to the musical possibilities of these technologies, his engagement with them resembled more of a resigned acceptance of, or coming-to-terms with, the inevitable spread of technology, rather than a whole-hearted embrace.

²²⁵ Strobel, “Junge Musik in Pymont,” *Melos* 9, no. 8/9 (August/September 1930): 382. “eine bedenkliche Verflachung des ehemals aktiven Experimentiergedankens.” Dietmar Schenk also notes that the New Music Berlin festival, at which the *trautonium* debuted, “conveyed the impression that the experimental *élan* had exhausted itself” (“Die Berliner Veranstaltung vermittelte den Eindruck, dass sich der experimentelle Elan erschöpft hatte”). Schenk, “Paul Hindemith,” 193.

Chapter Four:

Music for Amateurs

Like his oeuvre in general, Hindemith's works for amateur musicians from the interwar period encompass an astounding array of genres, including cantatas, etudes, choruses, music for large ensembles, chamber music, and even a musical play for children. It is these works, to an even greater extent than his experiments with technologies, that have become synonymous with the term "Gebrauchsmusik."¹ Auner, for examples, states that Hindemith "composed *Gebrauchsmusik* for children and the youth movement," while the Grout textbook notes that the goal of his *Gebrauchsmusik* was "to create for young or amateur performers music that was high in quality, modern in style, and challenging yet rewarding to perform."² Finally, scholars cite Hindemith's works for children and amateurs as the foremost example of his famous desire to close the gap between modern composers and an increasingly uncomprehending audience. In discussions of his amateur music, for example, Geoffrey Skelton states that Hindemith had "come to consider that through over-specialization modern music was losing touch with the public," while Gerd Sannemüller observes Hindemith had "turned decidedly against the... existing gap between the composer, the artwork, the performing artist, and a rather passive

¹ Hindemith and his publishers generally referred to these works as *Gemeinschaftsmusik* or *Sing- und Spielmusik*, not *Gebrauchsmusik*.

² Auner, *Music*, 126; Grout, 882. See also Kemp, *Hindemith*, 23; Ian Sutherland and Tia De Nora, "Musical Creativity as Social Agency: Composer Paul Hindemith," in *Musical Imaginations: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Creativity, Performance, and Perception*, eds. David J. Hargreaves, Dorothy E. Miell, and Raymond A.R. MacDonald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 77.

public.”³ Magnar Breivik even claims that “Hindemith’s life’s work as a composer, musician, teacher, theoretician, and even music administrator, may be seen as one huge effort to bridge the gap between music and people.”⁴

This desire to reach out to the public by altruistically creating works for amateurs has traditionally been framed as stemming from a leftist or Social Democratic affinity on Hindemith’s part. Skelton, for one, cites Hindemith teaching an evening class at a *Volkshochschule* in the working-class district of Neukölln as an “indication” that he “leaned to social democracy.”⁵ His collaboration with Bertolt Brecht on two works for amateurs (*Das Lindberghflug* and *Lehrstück*) also contribute to the impression of his left-leaning tendencies.⁶ Moreover, Hindemith’s focus on this less-glamorous area of music is viewed as part of his larger rejection of prewar romantic ideals, such as notions of subjectivity, musical autonomy, and the cult of genius.⁷ Finally, like the works of the previous chapter, there is a notion that the Nazis also curtailed Hindemith’s work in this area, which also bolsters his leftist reputation.⁸

While acknowledging Hindemith’s concern about bridging the composer-audience gap, this chapter demonstrates that financial considerations were also a driving force behind his

³ Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 86. Sannemüller, introduction, ix. “Entschieden wandte er sich gegen die für ihn bestehende Kluft zwischen dem Komponisten, dem Kunstwerk, dem ausführenden Künstler und einem eher passiven Publikum.” See also Grout, 873.

⁴ Magnar Breivik, “Contexts of Hindemith’s *Frau Musica*,” in *The Arts and the Cultural Heritage of Martin Luther*, eds. Eyolf Østrem, Jens Fleischer, and Nils Holger Petersen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2003), 175.

⁵ Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 102. Schubert also claims Hindemith is “classified” as “left-bourgeois,” citing his work in traditional institutions and new forms of music such as amateur music. Schubert, *Hindemith*, 49.

⁶ Auner states that Hindemith “worked closely with Socialist and communist artists, including Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht.” Auner, *Music*, 126. For a discussion on how scholars have framed Hindemith as politically left-leaning, see Taylor-Jay, 181–182.

⁷ Hinton, for instance, cites “Music for Amateurs” as one “aspect” of Hindemith’s *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Hinton, “Aspects,” 29–33. See also Sannemüller, introduction, ix.

⁸ Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 101; Sannemüller, introduction, xix; Kemp, *Hindemith*, 23.

decision to compose these works. As an inexpensive form of entertainment, amateur music making actually thrived during the economic crises of the Weimar Republic, immune to the reduced budgets and even closures of musical institutions. Moreover, the rise of the youth music movement (*Jugendmusikbewegung*) in the 1920s led to increased participation in amateur musical groups, which the movement promoted through its music journals and sponsorship of singing retreats and sing-alongs.

For Hindemith and his publishers, the strength and popularity of the amateur movement, coupled with the relative shortage of easy modern pieces on the market opened a new, profitable area of compositional activity. Their attempts to capitalize on this area included urging amateur groups to commission contemporary works, creating and marketing collections of accessible music, and collaborating with the leaders of the *Jugendmusikbewegung*. Composing simple works in a modern idiom also served another purpose: to educate youth about new music, thus ensuring an audience for the future, especially at a time when traditional concert life seemed to be under threat. Finally, this chapter shows how Hindemith's eventual cessation in this area after 1932 stemmed from personal and ideological conflicts with the leaders of the youth movement.

***Hausmusik*, Hindemith, and Schott Publishing**

During the economic turbulence of the Weimar Republic, amateur music was one area that actually prospered.⁹ Making music—whether alone, among friends, or in an ensemble—was a relatively inexpensive form of entertainment, in contrast to attending a traditional concert or

⁹ Potter, "German Musicology," 102. My summary of amateur music making in Weimar Germany is largely based on her studies, as well as Celia Applegate's article "The Past and Present of *Hausmusik* in the Third Reich."

opera.¹⁰ Because amateur music making was largely a private, informal practice, it is difficult to estimate how many people participated in this activity. However, the proliferation of literature aimed at amateur musicians, including music, guides, and magazines, indicates its popularity.¹¹ Between 1918 and 1934, over sixty periodicals that dealt with various kinds of amateur music-making emerged in German-speaking lands, ranging from those devoted to specific instruments (such as the guitar, harmonium, or lute) to folk music magazines.¹² The large number of people taking part in non-professional ensembles, especially choirs, also attests to the strength of amateur music. According to Leo Kestenberg's *Jahrbuch der deutschen Musikorganisationen 1931*, there were approximately fifty amateur orchestra and chamber groups, as well as around 19,000 non-church-related choral organizations, with an estimated two million citizens taking part.¹³

Of course, amateur music offered intangible benefits in addition to economic ones. Music served as a source of comfort and pleasure, as well as an escape from the struggles of daily life in postwar Germany. Moreover, by making music, Germans could still take pride in their country's musical heritage and their reputation as "people of music," despite the defeat in 1918, the humiliation of the Versailles treaty, and the weakened state of the nation.¹⁴ Amateur music also

¹⁰ Thomas Christensen, "Four-Hand Piano Transcription and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 259. Christensen notes that even during the nineteenth century, hearing a live concert or opera was rare "unless one lived near a major metropolitan center and, just as importantly, had the necessary financial resources..."

¹¹ Potter, "German Musicology," 102; Applegate, "Hausmusik," 142.

¹² Potter, "German Musicology," 105–106. I arrived at a similar number by examining the *Hofmeister Verzeichnis*, which annually listed the music and literature on music (including journals) that was published in Germany and German-speaking lands,

¹³ These figures are cited in Potter, *Most German*, 6.

¹⁴ In his discussion of the development of *Hausmusik* as a concept in the 1840s, Anthony Newcomb has shown how domestic music making had political implications, as the "German national traits of seriousness, simplicity, and *Volkstümlichkeit*" were positioned against the

created, or promised to create, a sense of community in an increasingly polarized society.

Making music in a group was believed to be inherently “community-building”

(*gemeinschaftsbildend*), as people in an ensemble must set aside personal differences and work together in order to perform a piece of music.¹⁵ Indeed, the membership and practices of some amateur groups actually did seem to bring people together across party and class lines; as Pamela Potter has observed, working-class groups often used professional conductors and non-working-class musicians to improve their musical standards. Moreover, the repertoire of these groups (folk songs, music from the classical and romantic repertoire) was often indistinguishable from that of middle-class organizations.¹⁶

One area that contributed to the strength of amateur music during the Weimar Republic was that of *Hausmusik*, or music performed at home, often with friends or family, for personal entertainment. Domestic music making had a long history in Germany (the term *Hausmusik* dates back to the early seventeenth century), and the eighteenth century saw the increased production of music specifically aimed at amateurs, such as C. P. E. Bach’s six collections of keyboard sonatas designated “for connoisseurs and amateurs” (*für Kenner und Liebhaber*).¹⁷ It was during the nineteenth century, however, that *Hausmusik* became a fixture of bourgeois domestic life, associated above all with the piano.¹⁸ A wide variety of genres for the instrument appeared during this century, including “the ubiquitous parlor genres” of waltzes, galops,

“frivolous, artificial French characteristics” of salon music. Newcomb, “Schumann and the Marketplace: From Butterflies to *Hausmusik*,” in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, 2nd ed., ed. R. Larry Todd (New York: Routledge, 2004), 272–274.

¹⁵ Dorothea Kolland, *Die Jugendmusikbewegung: Gemeinschaftsmusik, Theorie und Praxis* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1979), 32.

¹⁶ Potter, *Most German*, 6.

¹⁷ *Clavier Sonaten für Kenner und Liebhaber*, Wq. 55–59, 61 (1779–87).

¹⁸ Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History* (London: Dent, 1976); Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women, and Pianos: A Social History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1990).

marches, potpourris, fantasies, and variations on popular songs.¹⁹ Alongside original works, arrangements of concert pieces for four hands, or less commonly, for two hands, were also widely produced and consumed.²⁰ These arrangements were an important disseminator of concert music, as attending a live concert was an expensive luxury for most people.²¹

Hausmusik continued to flourish during the interwar period, despite frequent predictions of its demise due to competition from mass media and other forms of entertainment.²² Publishers continued to churn out parlor genres and transcriptions of concert works for piano, while adding newer social dances such as the foxtrot and, after 1929, arrangements of film music.²³ Even if the number of works published did not match figures from the heyday of the nineteenth century, sales still remained substantial and steady during the 1920s and 1930s.²⁴ Irene Lawford-Hinrichson, in her monograph on the Leipzig publishing firm C. F. Peters, has observed that despite the financial crises of the interwar period, “Piano transcriptions of orchestral music were still avidly sought. So the catalogue of piano scores was considerably enlarged during the 1920s.”²⁵

Like their fellow publishing houses, Schott relied on this traditional source of bourgeois music making, creating two-hand and four-hand piano arrangements of several of Hindemith’s larger works.²⁶ The firm also marketed his music to amateurs by offering single editions of the

¹⁹ Christensen, 257-258.

²⁰ Christensen, 258; Roth, 88.

²¹ Christensen, 259.

²² The fears over the future of *Hausmusik* can be seen in articles such as “Die Zukunft der Hausmusik” (*Anbruch*, 1920). See also Applegate, “Hausmusik,” 141–142.

²³ 1929 *Hofmeister Verzeichnis*.

²⁴ Applegate, “Hausmusik,” 142.

²⁵ Lawford-Hinrichsen, 171.

²⁶ Hindemith often made these arrangements himself. These included the dance suite from *Das Nusch-Nuschi* (1921), the symphony *Mathis der Maler* (1934), and *Symphonische Tänze* (1927).

slower, usually easier, movements from larger works. In 1925, for example, Ludwig asked Hindemith about issuing the middle movement (“Nachtstück” or “Night-piece”) from the raucous *Suite “1922”* as a separate work since “it is the only movement from this suite that is also technically accessible to a large circle.”²⁷ Willy made a similar request one year later regarding the second movement from *Kammermusik Nr. 4* op. 36, no. 3, also titled “Nachtstück”:

From all sides we’re getting hounded to have the “Nachtstück” from your violin concerto appear as a single edition. Such special editions of a single part of a concerto are completely normal and significantly contribute to the dissemination of the entire work, since dilettantes also dare to play such single editions.²⁸

Willy’s request demonstrates the two-fold purpose of both the piano transcriptions and single editions: to make Hindemith’s works available to a wider group of consumers and to advertise the original work.²⁹

In addition to these arrangements and single editions of his larger works, Hindemith began to compose another bread-and-butter genre for the publishing industry: original etudes and easy pieces for amateurs. His correspondence with Schott shows that both parties believed that these works would be profitable, since they filled a gap in the market for contemporary, yet easy

²⁷ L. Strecker to Hindemith, 13 August 1925. “Es ist das einzige aus dieser Suite, welches auch technisch einem großen Kreis zugänglich ist.” Schott also issued a piano arrangement of the foxtrot “Dance of the Wooden Dolls” (*Tanz der Holzpuppen*) from *Tuttifantchen* in late 1922, presumably corresponding with the premiere of the play on 13 December of that year.

²⁸ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 2 June 1926. “Von mehreren Seiten wurde uns nahe gejagt, das ‘Nachtstück’ aus Ihrem Violin-Konzert für Violine und Klavier einzeln erscheinen zu lassen. Derartige Sonderausgaben einzelner Teile eines Konzertes sind durchaus üblich und tragen wesentlich zur Verbreitung des ganzen Werkes bei, da auch die Dilettanten sich an derartige Einzelausgaben heranwagen.”

²⁹ A similar function was served by arranging parts of operas for concert performance. Willy Strecker referred to the propaganda function of these arrangements in letters from 13 September 1921 and 16 November 1921. For a discussion on the promotional function of piano arrangements, see Christensen, 267.

pieces. Hindemith specifically referred to this need when he announced his plan to “write some violin etudes (about 6)—a side job (*Gelegenheitsarbeit*). Violin students still learn the same way as 50 years ago. It would be commendable to give them for once some instruction in contemporary techniques. What do you think? Every violinist would buy the book.”³⁰ Willy also viewed a planned album of modern children’s music in these terms,³¹ believing that “such a book priced at 2 or 2.5 Marks would have a really big potential for distribution... Every teacher would buy this book and, if at all useful, would also use it in the classroom (*im Unterricht*). You would contribute something valuable to the understanding of modern rhythm and music and give true joy to many.”³² Hindemith also described his *Klaviermusik*, op. 37, *Zweiter Teil: Reihe kleiner Stücke* (Piano Music, op. 37, Second Part: Series of Little Pieces, 1927)³³ as a collection that “absolutely had to be written. It tackles piano technique from the most diverse angles; the pieces are not so very hard.”³⁴ Advertisements for the works targeted amateur players (and their teachers) by explicitly stating the work’s level of difficulty, while also stressing its modernity.

³⁰ Hindemith ended up writing only five etudes, which did not appear in print until 1958. Hindemith to W. Strecker, 10 August 1925. “Ich möchte demnächst mal (eine *Gelegenheitsarbeit*) einige Violinetüden (6 etwa) schreiben. Die Geigerschüler lernen noch immer so wie vor 50 Jahren—es müsste sehr verdienstvoll sein, den Violinisten einmal einige Anleitungen für heutigen Technik zu geben. Was halten Sie davon? Jeder Geiger würde sich doch das Heft kaufen.”

³¹ The book was to have been a collaboration between Hindemith and his friend Rudolf Heinisch (1896–1956), a Frankfurt painter and graphic artist who would have provided illustrations for the book. The plan never came to fruition.

³² W. Strecker to Hindemith, 4 August 1926. “Ein solches Heft zu M 2.- oder 2.50 hätte eine sehr große Verbreitungsmöglichkeit... Jeder Lehrer würde sich dieses Heft kaufen und wenn irgend brauchbar es auch im Unterricht verwenden. Sie trügen somit zum Verständnis moderner Rhythmen und Musik etwas wertvolles bei und machten vielen eine wirkliche Freude.”

³³ He composed these works in November and December 1926, only a couple of months after the children’s book project. The first part of Op. 37, *Übung in drei Stücken* (Exercise in Three Pieces) was published in 1925.

³⁴ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 31 December 1926. “Es macht mir viel Spaß und ich denke, dass dieses Heft heute unbedingt mal geschrieben werden musste. Es packt die Klaviertechnik von den verschiedensten Seiten, die Stücke sind nicht so sehr schwer.”

One ad, for example, listed the *Reihe kleiner Stücke* under the heading “new easy piano music” (*neue leichte Klaviermusik*), while another described it as “light and medium-hard piano pieces from the pen of Hindemith. Abundant in melodic and rhythmic ideas, formally lean and compact, of the highest stylistic unity. In one word: a masterpiece of contemporary piano literature.”³⁵ The work also included piano fingerings, another indication of the target audience. In order to maximize profits for these types of works, the Streckers constantly reminded Hindemith to “bear in mind that the easier the etudes are, the bigger the sales.”³⁶ Unfortunately, Hindemith ignored—or couldn’t achieve—the degree of simplicity his publisher requested. Gertrud Hindemith reported to a friend that the planned violin etudes “have emerged, cruelly hard, they look like a giant flea-camp [*Flohlag*er],”³⁷ while regarding the *Reihe kleine Stücke*, Willy commented, “You certainly don’t always make it very simple for the poor dilettante... I myself will need to set aside several nights for practicing.”³⁸

Hindemith also engaged in another popular area of amateur music during the interwar period: amateur choruses. Like *Hausmusik*, this form of music-making also represented a continuation of prewar activity, as participation in these choirs dated back to the early nineteenth

³⁵ *Melos* 6, no. 10 (October 1927): 460; *Melos* 6, no. 4 (April 1927): 177. “Leichte und mittelschwere Klavierstücke aus der Feder Hindemiths. Überreich an melodischen und rhythmischen Einfällen, formal knapp und geschlossen, von höchster stilistischer Einheitlichkeit, mit einem Wort: ein Meisterwerk zeitgenössischer Klavierliteratur.”

³⁶ L. Strecker to Hindemith, 13 August 1925. “allerdings bitte ich Sie dann zu bedenken, dass der Absatz umso grösser ist, je leichter die Etüden sind.” See also Willy Strecker’s letter to Hindemith on 12 November 1926 asking if he could make the piano pieces easier.

³⁷ G. Hindemith to Emma Lübbecke-Job, 4 September 1926. “4 Geigenetüden sind entstanden, gemein schwer, sie sehen aus wie ein Riesenflohlag

³⁸ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 8 January 1927. “So ganz einfach machen Sie es den armen Dilettanten allerdings nicht immer... Ich werde jetzt selbst einige Nächte zum Üben reservieren.”

century.³⁹ One composer in 1930 observed how “more and more choirs are being formed and the old choirs are ramping up their performances.”⁴⁰ Amateur choral works thus remained a fertile ground for composers; the *Hofmeister Verzeichnis* for example, shows a staggering variety and amount of choral music produced during the Weimar Republic for men, women, children, schools, and mixed choruses. For men’s chorus alone, the 1929 edition included the genres of dialect songs, night-songs, morning songs, joke songs, hunting songs, soldiers’ songs, and lullabies, as well as political, hiking, dance, drinking, and folk songs.

Hindemith’s contributions to this area included several works composed in the 1920s for the Stuttgart Madrigal Singers (Stuttgarter Madrigalvereinigung), a series of works for men’s chorus (*Männerchor*) in 1929 and 1930, and a few works for children’s and boys’ choirs.⁴¹ The numerous choral festivals held in German-speaking countries would have provided a good advertisement for these compositions, as attendance at these festivals often numbered in the thousands.⁴² Indeed, Hindemith was inspired to write more works for men’s chorus after hearing some of his earlier works sung at a competition (*Gesangswettstreit*) in Salzwedel, and expressed hope that a “first class choir” (*erstklassigen Chor*) would be interested in performing them at the

³⁹ Potter, *Most German*, 5. See also Celia Applegate, *Bach in Berlin: Nation and Culture in Mendelssohn’s Revival of the St. Matthew Passion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005) and Ryan Minor, *Choral Fantasies: Music, Festivity, and Nationhood in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁴⁰ Hugo Herrmann, “Laienchorschule und Choretüden,” *Melos* 9, no. 5/6 (May/June 1930): 226. “Immer mehr Chöre werden gebildet und die alten Chöre steigern ihre Leistungen.”

⁴¹ Works for the Stuttgart choir include: *Lieder nach alten Texten*, op.33 (1924) and *Der Guguck* (1925). The songs for Männerchor: *Über das Frühjahr* (Brecht, 1929), *Eine lichte Mitternacht* (Whitman, 1929), *Fürst Kraft* (Benn, 1930), *Du mußt dir alles geben* (Benn, 1930), *Vision des Mannes* (Benn, 1930), and *Der Tod* (Klopstock, 1931). Children’s choruses: *Spruch eines Fahrennden* (1928), *Lügenlied* (1928), and *Chorlieder für Knaben* (1930).

⁴² Annegret Heemann, *Männergesangsvereine im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert: Ein Beitrag zur städtischen Musikgeschichte Münsters* (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1992). Alexander Fisher also alludes to the economic benefit to writing this music, given the number of Männerchor festivals in Germany and Austria. Fisher, 19.

Frankfurt singing festival the following year.⁴³ Likewise, his publishers urged him to write some choruses to texts by Goethe, in order to capitalize on the one-hundredth anniversary in 1932 of the author's death, as people "will want to declare their joy over this at singing festivals."⁴⁴ Once again, the Streckers reminded him to keep the music simple, presumably to increase sales.⁴⁵

Clearly, financial considerations played a significant role in Hindemith's engagement with these traditional genres of amateur music. The potential profitability of this music was also a factor behind Schott's decision to branch out even further into the realm of modern music for amateurs, starting with the publication of *Das neue Klavierbuch* (*The New Piano Book*, 1927). The three-volume collection featured works by Bartók, Korngold, Milhaud, Poulenc, and Stravinsky and was specifically marketed to amateur musicians. Three of Hindemith's pieces from his *Reihe kleiner Stücke* were also included. In a letter to Hindemith, Ludwig explained the reasons behind the firm's move in this direction, believing that "with the over-cultivation of 'music-festival music' we have reached a dead end. Even those who might be interested in modern music can't engage with it on their own because they lack the technical skills for it, and there is nothing there for the youth and those at the early stages of education."⁴⁶ Scholars have often misattributed this quote to Hindemith, using it as an explanation for his turn to amateur

⁴³ Hindemith to Schott, 20 July 1930; Hindemith to L. Strecker, 6 or 7 September 1930.

⁴⁴ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 23 July 1930: "da der alte Herr 1932 hundert Jahre tot zu sein beabsichtigt und man hierüber durch Sängerfeste seiner Freude Ausdruck verleihen will." See also Ludwig's letter to Hindemith, 9 September 1930, in which he claims that people are "already roaring for such literature" (Man brüllt z. Zt. schon derartig nach solcher Literatur). These planned choruses never materialized.

⁴⁵ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 23 July 1930. "nur nicht zu schwer"

⁴⁶ L. Strecker to Hindemith, 12 February 1927. "Der Ausgangspunkt meiner Erwägungen liegt in der Überzeugung, dass mit der Überzüchtung der 'Musikfeste-Musik' wir in eine Sackgasse geraten sind. Auch diejenigen, die sich für die moderne Musik interessieren können sich aus Eigenem nicht damit befassen, weil ihnen die technischen Voraussetzungen dafür fehlen und für die Jugend und den ersten Unterricht ist schon gar nichts da."

music.⁴⁷ But coming from publisher Ludwig Strecker, the quote suggests that “music festival music” is a dead end since it doesn’t sell, rather than lofty goals about reconnecting with the public on Hindemith’s part. Ludwig’s explanation also confirms that, like Hindemith’s violin and piano works for amateurs, the firm is trying to fill a gap in the market for easy works in a contemporary style for children and amateurs. Indeed, Ludwig stated that this was the impetus behind the creation of *Das neue Klavierbuch*, hinting that collections of easy modern music represented a new, potentially profitable, area of publication:

This realization is pretty much [the reason for] the birth of the modern youth album [*Das neue Klavierbuch*, edited by] (Frau Autenrieth-Schleussner), which is now slowly taking shape. On this occasion, some composers have written entire albums, which lie in the same direction. This music is arranged according to degree of difficulty, not only for use in teaching, but also as material for modern-minded circle of amateurs to play. When you think of these works being supplemented by easy violin pieces and such for other instruments, this group of music undoubtedly signifies an entirely new area of literature.⁴⁸

Schott would follow this piano book up with the collections *Das neue Werk*:

Gemeinschaftsmusik für Jugend und Haus (*The New Work: Community Music for Youth and Home*, 1927) and *Das neue Chorbuch* (*The New Choirbook*, 1930), “a progressively-ordered collection of short, easy to middle-hard choral works of contemporary composers.” Both included works by Hindemith.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 85–86.

⁴⁸ L. Strecker to Hindemith, 12 February 1927. “Diese Feststellung ist so ungefähr die Geburt des modernen Jugendalbums (Frau Autenrieth-Schleussner), welches jetzt langsam Gestalt gewinnt. Bei dieser Gelegenheit haben einige Komponisten gleich ganze Albums geschrieben, die in der gleichen Richtung liegen. Diese Musik nun ist dem Schwierigkeitsgrad nach berufen, nicht nur im Unterricht Verwendung zu finden, sondern auch Musizierstoff für die modern eingestellten Laienkreise zu sein. Wenn man sich nun diese Werke ergänzt denkt durch leichte Violinstücke und solche für andere Instrumente, so bedeutet diese Gruppe von Musik zweifellos ein ganz neues Literaturgebiet.”

⁴⁹ See letters from Willy Strecker to Hindemith, 14 April 1930 and 3 May 1930, asking for contributions for the collection.

Ludwig's comments on the inaccessibility of modern music points to another equally important reason behind Hindemith's choice to compose amateur and children's music: to familiarize them with contemporary music in order to cultivate an audience for it. Exposing these groups to new music through *Hausmusik* would hopefully cause them to grow used to it and come to appreciate it, even leading them back to the concert hall. This in turn would keep German composition alive (and musicians employed). Herbert Trantow, for example, acknowledged that the goal of amateur music was to bring new music to new audiences, writing in 1931, "One writes amateur music in order to bring the public closer to new productions—one tells oneself, with justification, that an amateur who has successfully dealt with Hindemithian *Spielmusik* will face new concert works more positively than before."⁵⁰ Walter Berten also recognized that Hindemith's works for amateurs was "the first step to a higher goal" and "the precursor to the absolute art of the Masters, mediated through a competent [composer]."⁵¹ The foreword to *Das neue Klavierwerk* explicitly stated that the goal of the collection was to "acquaint the amateur with the spirit of modern musical thought through the medium of technically easier pieces."⁵² The marketing of this collection also played on a fear of being left behind, stressing the need for students to become familiar with modern music. An advertisement

⁵⁰ Herbert Trantow, "Neue Geistigkeit," *Melos* 10, no. 8/9 (August/September 1931): 262. "Man schreibt Laienmusiken, um das Publikum der neuen Produktion zu nähern—man sagt sich mit Recht, dass ein Laie, der sich mit Hindemithschen *Spielmusiken* erfolgreich auseinandergesetzt hat, der neuen Konzertmusik dann positiver gegenüberstehen wird als vorher."

⁵¹ Walter Berten, "Paul Hindemith und die deutsche Musik," *Zeitschrift für Musik* 100, no. 6 (June 1933): 543. "das Laienmusizieren ist erst Weg zum höherem Ziel, ist Vorstufe zur absoluten Kunst der Meister, vermittelt durch Berufene."

⁵² Forward to the English edition. *The New Piano Book*, vol. 2 (London: Schott & Co., Ltd, 1927).

for the work trumpeted that “*Das neue Klavierwerk* is aimed at the progressive teacher who recognizes the need to familiarize young people with the language of their time” (fig. 4.1).⁵³

Die beste Einführung
in Geist und Sprache der heutigen Musik gibt

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Diese sorgsame, fortschreitend geordnete Auswahl stellt einen charakteristischen Querschnitt durch die Klaviermusik der Gegenwart dar. Die verschiedensten Köpfe und Stile sind vertreten. Trotz der leichten Spielbarkeit bleiben die an das Auffassungsvermögen gestellten Forderungen bestehen und bürgen auch dem verwöhnten Musikfreund für einen vollen Kunstgenuss. Darüber hinaus aber wendet sich „Das neue Klavierbuch“ an den fortschrittlichen Lehrer, der die Notwendigkeit erkannt hat, schon die Jugend mit der Sprache ihrer Zeit vertraut zu machen.

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B. SCHOTT'S SÖHNE / MAINZ UND LEIPZIG

Figure 4.1. Advertisement from *Melos* 6, no. 8/9 (August/September 1927): 404.

Despite the altruistic intention of providing contemporary music for amateurs, Hindemith differentiated between these works and his music for the concert hall, clearly prioritizing the latter. Like his self-described “kitsch” or “indecent music” (*unanständige Musik*) described in Chapter Two (foxtrots, ragtimes), Hindemith seems to have composed many of these works in his spare time, or when he was between more important projects. He initially described the violin etudes as a *Gelegenheitsarbeit*, which can be translated as a side job, day labor, or an odd job.⁵⁴ While vacationing in France in 1926, Hindemith again displayed a casual attitude to the project, informing his publishers:

I myself haven't done anything noteworthy. I've made one and a half violin etudes—there will be 10 or 11... I am doing the things on the sly (they are hardly compositions

⁵³ *Melos* 6, no. 8/9 (August/September 1927): 404. “Darüber hinaus aber wendet sich ‘Das neue Klavierbuch’ an den fortschrittlichen Lehrer, der die Notwendigkeit erkannt hat, schon die Jugend mit der Sprache ihrer Zeit vertraut zu machen.”

⁵⁴ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 10 August 1925.

anyway, more like pure construction work [*Konstruktionsarbeit*]) and you will be getting them complete sometime in the autumn.⁵⁵

Similarly, when waiting on an opera libretto in July 1932, Hindemith noted, “If I can’t get on with this opera over vacation, I want to do a series of really easy songs that one can sing alone or in a choir, at home or in school.”⁵⁶

Hindemith’s description of the violin etudes as “construction work” illustrates how he distinguished his works for amateurs from his concert works. Echoing the “Ragtime” in *Suite “1922”* with its “directions for use,” the terms *Gelegenheitsarbeit* and *Konstruktionsarbeit* make associations with a product that is assembled or built with physical labor, rather than a work of art created through intellectual effort. Hindemith underscored this sentiment in a letter to violinist Licco Amar, sarcastically comparing the composition of the etudes to American-style assembly line production and the industrial efficiency studies of Frederick Winslow Taylor: “I’m doing nothing at all. I have only devised the fingerings (*Fingersätze*) for one of the etudes I’m composing. Ford’s system, Music Tayler [sic]: One person composes, one writes the notes, one comes up with the fingerings, one foists it upon the publisher.”⁵⁷ While Hindemith was likely joking about the etudes’ lack of musicality, he would repeat these references to production and

⁵⁵ Hindemith to Schott, 18 August 1926. “Ich selbst habe nichts Nennenswertes getan. 1 ½ Geigenetüden habe ich gemacht—10 oder 11 werden es... Ich mache die Dinger unter der Hand (es sind ja kaum Kompositionen, fast reine Konstruktionsarbeit) und Sie bekommen sie dann im Laufe des Herbstes ganz.”

⁵⁶ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 16 July 1932. “Kann ich in den Ferien noch nicht an diese Oper gehen, will ich eine Serie ganz leichter Lieder machen, die man zu Hause oder in Schulen einzeln oder chorisich singen kann.”

⁵⁷ Hindemith to Licco Amar, 27 August 1926, quoted in Luitgard Schader, introduction to *Sing- und Spielmusik III*, xi. “Ich tu gar nichts eben. Nur Fingersätze zu einer von mir gemachten Etüde habe ich erfunden. Fords System, Music-Tayler [sic]: Einer komponiert, einer schreibt die Noten, einer erfindet die Fingersätze, einer drehts dem Verleger an.”

consumption in later discussions about amateur music. In a 1927 lecture he gave at a choral directors' conference at the Berlin Hochschule, for instance, he observed that:

the tenuous relationship that generally prevails in music today between the producer [*Produzenten*] and the consumer [*Konsumenten*] is regrettable. A composer today should write only when he knows the need for which he is writing. The time of composing for its own sake is perhaps gone forever. On the other hand, however, the need for music is so great, that it is urgently necessary that composer and user [*Verbraucher*] finally understand each other.⁵⁸

While this statement demonstrates Hindemith's attempt to bridge the gap between composer and audience, the language he uses downgrades music to a product, composers to producers, and "the people of music" to mere consumers. Musical autonomy and metaphysics are further dismissed when he exhorts the directors to commission "new choruses for specific societies. Pieces, so to say, 'made to order' (*nach Maß*) which would fit the particular needs of the society and which would be manufactured (*angefertigt*) for a particular use after an in-depth consultation with the society or its conductor."⁵⁹ Hindemith also speaks of the "cooperation between producing (*produzierenden*) musicians and the consuming (*konsumierenden*) amateurs" in an essay on amateur music from 1930.⁶⁰ This re-fashioning of the composer to a producer resonates with

⁵⁸ Hindemith, "Wie soll der ideale Chorsatz der Gegenwart oder besser der nächsten Zukunft beschaffen sein?" in Schubert, *Aufsätze*, 27. "Zu bedauern ist heute allgemein die geringe Beziehung, die in der Musik zwischen dem Produzenten und dem Konsumenten herrscht. Ein Komponist sollte heute nur schreiben, wenn er weiß für welchen Bedarf er schreibt. Die Zeiten des steten Für-sich-Komponierens sind vielleicht für immer vorbei. Auf der anderen Seite ist dagegen der Musikbedarf so groß, dass es dringend nötig ist, dass sich Komponisten und Verbraucher endlich verständigen."

⁵⁹ Hindemith, "Chorsatz der Gegenwart," 27–28. "Man mache doch einmal den Versuch, Komponisten zu beauftragen, für bestimmte Vereine neue Chöre zu schreiben. Stücke, die sozusagen "nach Maß" den jeweiligen Bedürfnissen des Vereins angepasst wären und die nach gründlicher Rücksprache mit dem Verein bzw. seinem Dirigenten zum speziellen Gebrauch angefertigt würden."

⁶⁰ Hindemith, "Forderungen an den Laien," in Schubert, *Aufsätze*, 44. "die Zusammenarbeit zwischen den produzierenden Musikern und den konsumierenden Laien"

sociologist Alfred Weber's 1922 prediction that, with the postwar decline of cultural life, a new type of intellectual would emerge out of period of inflation, the *Arbeitsintellektuelle* (worker intellectual) who would, in the words of historian Bernd Widdig, "combine his intellectual education with a practical training that will allow him to earn a steady income."⁶¹

This materialist languages coincides with the gradual transformation of the Donaueschingen and Baden-Baden festivals into what one critic in 1928 described as "a manufacturing fair with musical works as the goods."⁶² Indeed, like his experiments with technology, works for amateurs were also featured at the Baden-Baden and Berlin festivals of the late 1920s (discussed below), ostensibly to be researched and perfected before being distributed to the masses. Once again, while Hindemith clearly thought of these works as a consumer good, or a less-distinguished branch of music, his engagement in this area would also represent a deliberate—if reluctant—coming-to-terms with the changing postwar musical and economic landscape.

Hindemith and the *Jugendmusikbewegung*

Hindemith's interest in producing works for amateurs was largely spurred by his encounter with the Musikantengilde (Musician's Guild) in 1926. The Musikantengilde, under the leadership of music educator Fritz Jöde, was part of the *Jugendmusikbewegung* (Youth Music Movement) that arose after the First World War. This movement, in turn, had grown out of the larger *Jugendbewegung* (Youth Movement) that appeared around the turn of the century in

⁶¹ Alfred Weber, "Die Not der geistigen Arbeiter," quoted in Widdig, 187.

⁶² Eberhard Preussner, "Deutsche Kammermusik 1928 in Baden-Baden," *Die Musik* 20, no. 12 (September 1928): 874. "das Fest erhalte dann eben den Charakter einer Produktionsmesse mit musikalischen Werken als Marktware."

reaction to Germany's rapid industrialization and urbanization.⁶³ While the youth movement was extremely heterogeneous, with different groups based on religion, social class, and political parties, the Wandervogel organization was the oldest, most prominent and influential group.⁶⁴ Through outdoor activities such as hiking and camping, the purpose of the organization was, according to historian Peter Stachura, "to bring the younger generation back to the purer foundations of a society in which human bonds could be restored to their rightful place of priority over machines, factories, materialism, and the impersonalia of urban civilization."⁶⁵ Making music was also an important part of the Wandervogel's activities. Because the group took inspiration from an idealized medieval Germany, in which the *Volk* were supposedly united in community, folk songs and songs from the fourteenth-seventeenth centuries were particularly prized.⁶⁶

⁶³ Scholars have also read the growth of the youth movement as a reaction against "the stuffy and constricting conventions of late Wilhelmine society," and the isolation, competition, and strict discipline of the *Gymnasium*. Peter D. Stachura, *The German Youth Movement, 1900–1945: An Interpretive and Documentary History* (London: MacMillan, 1981), 15.

⁶⁴ This organization began in Steglitz in 1896, when Hermann Hoffman, a teacher at the Steglitz Gymnasium, began taking his students on hiking and camping excursions. These activities soon spread to other schools and by 1901, an umbrella organization (*Ausschuss für Schülerfahrten*) was formed. By 1914, there were around 800 local branches and over 25,000 members. Stachura, 21.

⁶⁵ Stachura, 16.

⁶⁶ Part of this emphasis on folk songs and older music may be attributed to the music director at the Steglitz Gymnasium, Max Pohl, who introduced songs from F. M. Böhmes *Altdeutsches Liederbuch* (1877) to the original Wandervogel group. Among this group was Hans Breuer, who later compiled the most important Wandervogel songbook, *Der Zupfgeignhansl* (1911). The book contained folksongs (often identifying the song's region of origin), songs from the twelfth through sixteenth centuries, and a few songs from the nineteenth century. In addition to these songs, and fitting with the medieval theme, the Wandervogel resurrected older instruments such as the lute, guitar, and recorder to accompany their singing. These instruments were easily portable for hiking and relatively easy to learn; they also did not have the bourgeois associations of a piano or violin, thereby fitting with the youth movement's overall rejection of bourgeois culture and values. Heinz Antholz, "Jugendmusikbewegung," in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2007), 1573.

It was out of this youth movement that the Youth *Music* Movement was born, with two primary factions emerging: the Musikantengilde under Fritz Jöde in 1919, and the more nationalistic Finkensteiner Bund under educator Walter Hensel in 1923.⁶⁷ Like their non-musical counterparts, these two factions stressed a collectivist message, promoting music for its ability to create community and setting out to create a “communal music culture.” Guided by these rather vague ideals, they praised or cultivated music that was seen as community-building or easily accessible to all (both in terms of performing or listening), such as folk songs, choral music, and polyphonic music. Conversely, the groups disapproved of any type of music believed to be bourgeois, autonomous, commercial, or virtuosic, which included romanticism, jazz, popular music, and modern music; even traditional *Hausmusik* was seen as too bourgeois and solitary. The group also decried the concept of professionalism in music, believing that the “distinction drawn between professional and amateur had allowed music to stray from the Volk.”⁶⁸ In their attempt to create community through music, the groups sponsored various music-making activities, such as singing retreats and mass sing-alongs, in addition to publishing a plethora of journals, books, and music.⁶⁹

Hindemith’s first encounter with Jöde’s *Musikantengilde* occurred at the group’s *Erste Hochschulewoche* (First Conservatory Week), which was held in October 1926 in Brieselang.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Applegate, “Hausmusik,” 141.

⁶⁸ Potter, *Most German*, 8.

⁶⁹ Sannemüller, introduction to *Sing- und Spielmusik I*, xi; Potter, *Most German*, 8. The Kallmeyer publishing firm was associated with Jöde and the Musikantengilde, while the Bärenreiter firm was the publisher for the Finkensteiner Bund. Wilhelm Scholz and Waltraut Jonas-Corrieri, eds., *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung in Dokumenten ihrer Zeit von den Anfängen bis 1933* (Wolfenbüttel: Mösseler, 1980), 190–196, 318–324.

⁷⁰ Hindemith’s time at the Berlin Hochschule, which began in May 1927, also coincided with many of his works for amateurs. In addition to his composition classes at the conservatory, he also taught adult music education classes at the *Volkshochschule* in the working-class neighborhood of Neukölln. His new position also put him in contact with Fritz Jöde of the

The five-day conference for leaders and musical directors of the organization featured lectures on practical issues, such as choral directing, the care of one's voice, and how to teach music theory, as well as rehearsing and performing music in groups. Each day started with calisthenics and a sing-along and ended with a concert featuring older works by acceptable composers (Telemann, Bach, Schütz) and new works by composers involved with the youth movement, such as Ludwig Weber and Heinrich Erpf.⁷¹ Hindemith's role at the conference seems to have been mostly as an observer, although he also performed his *Sonate für Bratsche allein*, op. 25, no. 1 at one of the evening concerts. It was at this conference, however, that he received his first commission to write a work for a youth ensemble. Hilmar Höckner (1891-1968), the music teacher at a private boarding school in the country (*Landerziehungsheim*) and prominent figure in the *Jugendmusikbewegung*, asked Hindemith to write a piece for the school's orchestra, wanting an alternative to the Baroque repertoire the group usually played.⁷² The result was what he described as the "made-to-order" (*nach Maß angefertigte*) *Spielmusik für Streicher, Flöten und Oboen*, op. 43, no. 1, which Hindemith tailored to accommodate the needs, strengths, and weaknesses of Höckner's ensemble.⁷³ As Hindemith reported to his publishers, the work was

Musikantengilde, who was the director of the music school associated with the conservatory. Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 86; Berta Joncus, "Jöde, (Wilhelm August Ferdinand) Fritz," *Grove Music Online*. 2001; accessed 12 Feb. 2020. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000014341>.

⁷¹ Heinrich Schumann, "Erste Hochschulwoche der Musikantengilde," *Hamburger Lehrerzeitung* 6, no. 6 (1927), in Scholz and Jonas-Corrieri, *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, 393. "6 Uhr Wecken, Morgengymnastik, 7.30 Uhr Morgenfeier, darauf Frühstück."

⁷² Sannemüller, introduction to *Sing- und Spielmusik I*, xii.

⁷³ Hindemith to Schott, 7 March 1927. He wrote the piece between October 1926 and January 1927, and the first performance was in March 1927. As with so many of his amateur works, the music was too hard for the children, and he had to play with the orchestra in the performance. However, Hindemith did seem genuinely interested in the work, travelling to the school and working with the students. An account by Höckner of Hindemith's work with the

performed by the students “confidently without a director and with much joy—a sign that new music can be understood after all.”⁷⁴

The week in Brieselang left a positive impression on Hindemith; he even remarked to Jöde that, “rarely in my whole musical life have I been so full of hope and confidence.”⁷⁵ One reason behind this optimism may have been the possibility of exposing this enthusiastic and influential group of musicians to new music. As he noted to Jöde, “The conference really interested me; it definitely confirmed my ideas about the youth movement and about its collaboration with music—contemporary music.”⁷⁶ To further this collaboration, Jöde and Hindemith discussed holding the next Musikantengilde’s annual leaders’ conference at the same time as the Donaueschingen Festival. For the Musikantengilde, combining the two festivals would hopefully convince composers to reconnect with, and compose works for, the Volk, breaking down the barriers between professional and amateur.⁷⁷ For Hindemith, it meant weaning the organization off its traditional repertoire of folk songs and older music and persuading them to start playing (and presumably buying) contemporary compositions. He reiterated the importance of familiarizing amateurs with modern music to Jöde, stating that “in general, I think that modern music came off pretty well at the conference. I hope that from now

ensemble can be found in the Scholz and Jonas Corrieri, *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, 396–399.

⁷⁴ Hindemith to Schott, 7 March 1927. “die Buben haben sie ganz ohne Dirigent absolut sicher und mit viel Freude gespielt—ein Zeichen, dass die neue Musik immerhin zu begreifen ist.”

⁷⁵ Hindemith to Jöde, 12 October 1926, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 124–125. “Ich bin so voller Hoffnung und Zuversicht wie noch selten in meinem ganzen musikalischen Leben.”

⁷⁶ Hindemith to Jöde, 12 October 1926, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 125. “Die Tagung hat mich außerordentlich interessiert; sie hat meine Ideen über die Jugendbewegung und über ihr Zusammenarbeiten mit der Musik—der heutigen—durchaus bestätigt.”

⁷⁷ Schumann, 394. “die Brücke zu schlagen von den musizierenden Kreisen zu dem Volk”

on, now that your people have extensively come into close contact with it for the first time, the prospects for the Donaueschingen collaboration are really favorable.”⁷⁸

In addition to potentially gaining a new market for new music, Hindemith believed that creating new works for amateur musicians was, like his experiments with technology, a way to bridge the gap between composer and audience. However, rather than writing this music out of sheer altruism, as is typically portrayed in scholarship, his engagement with amateur music was once again born out of the perception that traditional concert life was unsustainable owing to postwar social and economic shifts.⁷⁹ Numerous commentators stressed the urgent need to reconnect with audiences in order to save the future of German music. As Lotte Spitz noted in a 1931 article:

Economic and social shifts have changed the face of the Berlin concert; on the other hand, non-concert playing in amateur circles spreads more and more. The youth music movement, the singing societies, school and amateur musicians are beginning to shape new forms of music-making, which are taken up above all by the youth. Our public musical life will certainly depend on whether or not the growing joy in music-making will lift and rouse a need in the people for artistic performances.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Hindemith to Jöde, 12 October 1926, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 126. “Im Allgemeinen glaube ich, dass die moderne Musik ziemlich gut bei der Tagung abgeschnitten hat. Ich hoffe, dass nunmehr, nachdem Ihre Leute zum ersten Male ausgiebig in engere Berührung damit gekommen sind, die Aussichten für das Donau-eschinger Zusammenarbeiten sehr günstig sind.”

⁷⁹ Häusler, 98. According to Häusler, the desire to engage with youth music “had its roots in sincere concerns about the salvation and mooring of a contemporary art” (“ihre Wurzel in ehrlicher Sorge um Heil und Verankerung einer gegenwärtigen Kunst”). See also Breivik, 174–175.

⁸⁰ Lotte Spitz, “Schichtwechsel um Publikum. Konzertsaal 1930,” *Musik und Gesellschaft: Arbeitsblätter für soziale Musipflege und Musikpolitik* (1930/31): 216. “Verändert die wirtschaftliche und soziale Umschichtung das Bild des Berliner Konzerts, so breitet sich auf der anderen Seite dass nicht konzertmäßige Musizieren in Laienkreisen immer mehr aus. Die Jugendmusikbewegung, die Singgemeinden, Schul- und Liebhabermusiken beginnen neue Formen des Musizierens zu prägen, die vor allem von der Jugend aufgegriffen werden. Viel wird für unser öffentliches Musikleben davon abhängen, ob die steigende Musizierfreudigkeit im Volke das Bedürfnis nach künstlerischer Darbietung hebt und weckt.”

Karl Laux also opined in 1930 that “we live in a new time. The musical worldview has also changed.” Before the war, the concert was “a matter of, more or less, great passivity”; now the “working masses are pushing upwards, they want a part of cultural assets... one no longer sits alone in the folding chair with his subscription ticket. One sits in a row with many others, one wants to band together into a community. What’s more, this community no longer limits itself to mere listening. One wants to make music oneself.”⁸¹ The same year, critic Hans Gutman reported to American readers that in Germany:

A breach between the public and the art of music is everywhere discernible and it is both frivolous and incorrect to hold the radio and sport alone responsible. A deeper cause lies in the obsolescence of the usual concert and traditional opera as mediums for the presentation of music... For the new audience which was ushered into existence and power by the revolution, the outmoded sociological approach to music, handed down by the previous generation, has proved unserviceable. Hence the birth of the new “Gebrauchsmusik,” the music for everybody, for everyday use, which is to replace the “Luxusmusik”... the auditor is to be roused from this lethargy, stimulated and induced to make music himself, instead of uncomprehendingly following the conductor’s baton.⁸²

Hindemith echoed these beliefs, calling “the connection between Volk and art” the “most important question of today’s musical life that can only be solved through purely personal relationships. I have initiated this connection and have won over Jöde and his entire circle.”⁸³ He also called the planned collaboration between the Musikantengilde and the Donaueschingen

⁸¹ Laux, 537. “Wir leben in einer neuen Zeit. Auch das musikalische Weltbild hat sich verändert... Das Konzert war eine Angelegenheit mehr oder minder großer Passivität... die arbeitende Masse drängte nach oben, will Anteil an den Kulturgütern... Man sitzt nicht mehr einsam auf dem Klappstuhl seines Abonnements. Man sitzt in einer Reihe mit vielen anderen, man möchte sich zu einer Gemeinschaft zusammenschließen. Mehr noch. Diese Gemeinschaft beschränkt sich nicht mehr auf ein bloßes Hören. Man will selbst musizieren.”

⁸² Hans Gutman, “Young Germany, 1930,” *Modern Music* 7, no. 2 (February/March 1930): 7–9.

⁸³ Hindemith to Sutter, 5 January 1927, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 131. “Die wichtigste Frage des heutigen Musiklebens, die Verbindung von Volk und Kunst, ist überhaupt nur durch rein persönliche Beziehungen zu lösen. Ich habe den Anstoß zu dieser Verbindung gegeben und habe Jöde und seinen ganzen Kreis herübergezogen.”

festival “something... that will renew all our musical life from the ground up.”⁸⁴ While Hindemith’s concern about reconnecting with the Volk was genuine, as with technology, underscoring these statements is the desperate sense that these engagements *had* to be pursued, willingly or not.

Amid the high hopes and enthusiasm for exposing the *Jugendmusikbewegung* to modern music, however, Hindemith’s letter to Jöde also hinted at tensions between the two groups, tension that would eventually lead to the failure of the collaboration. Hindemith presciently referred to the strong opposition (from both sides) that the joint festival would encounter, warning Jöde “that we will face hostility, misunderstanding, stupidity, and malevolence. But what does that matter with such an important undertaking?”⁸⁵ Moreover, after only attending the Brieselang conference once as a guest, he was already full of suggestions of how the Musikantengilde could “modify” their conference for the Donaueschingen festival.⁸⁶ Finally, Hindemith seemed slightly suspicious of—or at least embarrassed by—the utopic, community-building *ethos* (sing-alongs and calisthenics!) of the group, telling Jöde that:

the continual excitement in which the community resides strikes the onlooker as a bit strange. I think that enthusiasm is a rare and great matter, and one should not demean oneself by applying it to everything down to (for example) food... You know that it was in order not to give my support to this false enthusiasm that I did not put in an appearance

⁸⁴ Hindemith to Jöde, 12 October 1926, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 126. “Die übrigen werden erkennen, dass hier etwas geschieht, unser aller musikalisches Leben von Grund auf zu erneuern, und werden sich dieser Bewegung immer eifriger anschließen.”

⁸⁵ Hindemith to Jöde, 12 October 1926, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 124. “Natürlich bin ich mir ebenso bewusst wie Sie und viele Andere, dass wir Anfeindungen, Missverständnissen, Blödigkeit und Böswilligkeit gegenüberstehen werden. Hat das aber etwas zu sagen bei einer so wichtigen Aktion?”

⁸⁶ Hindemith to Jöde, 12 October 1926, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 125. “Einiges ist mir aufgefallen, dessen Änderung in Donaueschingen sicher zum Vorteil Ihrer Arbeit gereichen wird.” His suggestions included gearing lectures to laymen rather than professionals and having more lectures dealing with practical problems rather than theory and history.

on the mornings before my departure; I ask you once again to understand my nonappearance.⁸⁷

While this complaint may seem minor, it arguably encapsulated the difference between Hindemith's goal of bringing amateurs to new music, and the movement's goal of creating a "new person" (*ein neuer Mensch*) in a "real and living community" (*echten und lebendigen Gemeinschaft*) through music—a conflict that would eventually come to a head.⁸⁸

Hindemith's and Jöde's plan came to fruition the following summer. The Musikantengilde held its second Hochschulewoche concurrently with the 1927 Baden-Baden festival in the nearby town of Lichtental, with groups from each festival visiting concerts and lectures at the other.⁸⁹ Participants from Jöde's organization performed Hindemith's *Spielmusik für Streichorchester, Flöten und Oboen*, op. 43, no. 1 (the work he wrote for Höckner); his *Lieder für Singkreise*, op. 43, no. 2; and the *Schulwerk des Instrumental-Zusammenspiels*, op. 44.⁹⁰ While taking pains to reassure participants that the schedule and events of each festival would remain separate, the spokesmen of both organizations stressed mutual cooperation and the need to learn from each other. The preliminary report (*Vorbericht*) of the Musikantengilde, for

⁸⁷ Hindemith to Jöde, 12 October 1926, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 125–126. "Ein wenig seltsam berührt den Zuschauer die ständige Begeisterung, in der die Gemeinschaft sich befindet. Ich finde, dass Begeisterung eine seltene und große Angelegenheit ist, man darf sich nicht erniedrigen, indem man sie sich (z.B.) bis aufs Essen erstrecken lässt... Sie wissen, dass ich, um diese falsche Begeisterung nicht zu unterstützen, morgens vor meiner Abreise nicht mehr erschienen bin; ich bitte hier nochmals, mein Nichterscheinen richtig verstehen zu wollen."

⁸⁸ Fritz Jöde, *Musik und Erziehung: Ein pädagogischer Versuch und eine Reihe Lebensbilder aus der Schule* (Wolfenbüttel: Julius Zitzlers Verlag, 1919), 10.

⁸⁹ This festival (11–17 July 1927) featured exhibitions on mechanical music, short operas, and film music.

⁹⁰ Schott published these works (in collaboration with the Kallmeyer firm) in the collection *Das Neue Werk: Gemeinschaftsmusik für Jugend und Haus*, edited by Hindemith, Fritz Jöde, and Hans Mersmann.

example, noted that the group's annual Leadership Week (*Reichsführerwoche*) would be held in tandem with the Chamber Festival since:

The development of recent years has prepared and inwardly demanded a decisive step for youth music: an involvement with the present. Therefore, the question this year of the connection of youth music to original (*schaffende*) music and the musical life of our time will stand in the foreground next to music theory and musicological leader-training.⁹¹

Heinrich Burkardt, one of the organizers of the Baden-Baden festival, repeated these sentiments almost verbatim, adding that the leaders of the chamber music festival hoped:

to interest the Volk (in the broadest sense) once again in music, especially the works of today, but also to point out to the creative artist the responsibility to not only write for the concert hall, but rather to take up the rewarding task of meeting the musical needs of all music-cultivating circles and through that, completing the circle between creators and the Volk.⁹²

In spite of the high-minded rhetoric about creating mutual cooperation and understanding between the modern *Tonkünstler* and amateur *Musikant*, these aims went largely unfulfilled. Reports from music critics and leaders of the *Jugendmusikbewegung* alike alluded to persistent tensions between the two groups, although they praised their motives. Eberhard Preussner in *Die Musik* referred to the “collision” (*aufeinanderprallten*) of the two festivals, specifically citing the

⁹¹ Fritz Reusch, “Zweite Reichsführerwoche der Musikantengilde vom 11.–17. Juli 1927 in Lichtental bei Baden-Baden,” in Scholz and Jonas-Corrieri, *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, 400. “Die Entwicklung der letzten Jahre hat einen entscheidenden Schritt der Jugendmusik vorbereitet und innerlich gefordert: die Auseinandersetzung mit der Gegenwart. Daher stehen in diesem Jahre neben der musiktheoretischen und –wissenschaftlichen Führerschulung die Fragen nach dem Verhältnis der Jugendmusik zu der schaffenden Musik und dem Musikleben unserer Zeit im Vordergrund.”

⁹² Burkhardt, “Donaueschingen–Baden-Baden,” in Scholz and Jonas-Corrieri, *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, 401. “Was die Leiter des Kammermusikfestes von dem Zusammengehen mit der Musikantengilde erhoffen: das Volk (im weitesten Sinne) wieder an der Musik, insonderheit dem Schaffen der Jetztzeit zu interessieren, die schaffenden Künstler aber auf die Pflicht hinzuweisen, nicht nur für den Konzertsaal zu schreiben, sondern sich auch die dankbare Aufgabe zu stellen, den musikalischen Bedürfnissen aller musikpflegender Kreise entgegen zu kommen und dadurch einen Ring zu schließen zwischen Schaffenden und Volk.”

incongruity between presentations such as Kurt Weill's *Mahogonny Songspiel* and mechanical music in Baden-Baden, and youth music being sung in the woods. He finally noted that "we cannot yet talk of a connection between the youth movement and contemporary artists!"⁹³ In the conservative *Zeitschrift für Musik*, Wilhelm Weismann described the "seemingly grotesque connection" (*groteske scheinende Verbindung*) between the "hodgepodge" (*Sammelsurium*) of cinema, mechanical music, and chamber operas at Baden-Baden, and the youth organization whose music was able to give even the most uptight listeners "an inkling of what it means to have a healthy German soul."⁹⁴ While Weismann lauded the collaboration of the two groups—if only because the encounter would lead degraded modern music "back to nature" (*den Weg zur einfacften Natur*) and to music with soul—he doubted that the festival's offerings would lead the youth to modern music.⁹⁵ Heinrich Schumann, writing for the journal *Musikantengilde*, claimed:

The experiences of the Reich leaders' week in Baden-Baden have shown that the simultaneity of two things (Reich leaders' week and chamber music festival) can easily lead to introducing unrest and strife into the work of one or the other. After the many suggestions that were once given through the encounter of two worlds and on the other through the integration of overriding presentations, it is now only natural that we relocate our next workshop in tranquility.⁹⁶

⁹³ Eberhard Preussner, "Deutsche Kammermusik Baden-Baden 1927," *Die Musik* 19, no. 12 (September 1927): 891. "Sprechen wir aber noch nicht von einem Anschluss von Jugendbewegung und zeitgenössischem Künstler!"

⁹⁴ Wilhelm Weismann, "Deutsche Kammermusik Baden-Baden 1927," *Zeitschrift für Musik* 94, no. 9 (September 1927): 504. "[Musik] die wohl dem Verflachtesten oder Verkrampftesten eine Ahnung von dem zu geben vermochte, was es heißt, eine gesunde deutsche Seele zu haben..."

⁹⁵ Weismann recognized the festival's goal was to "making plain the relationship of youth music with composed music of the present" ("das Verhältnis der Jugendmusik zu der schaffenden Musik unserer Zeit klarzumachen war der Zweck"). Weismann, 504.

⁹⁶ Heinrich Schumann, "Reichsführerwoche vom 1.–6. Jan. 1928 im Landschulheim am Solling," in Scholz and Jonas-Corrieri, *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, 176. "Die Erfahrungen der Reichsführerwoche in Baden-Baden haben gezeigt, dass das Nebeneinander zweier Dinge (Reichsführerwoche und Kammermusikfest) leicht dazu führen kann, eine Unruhe und Zerrissenheit in die eine oder andere Arbeit hineinzutragen. Nach den vielen Anregungen, die einmal durch die Begegnung zweier Welten und zum anderen durch die Eingliederung

In his review for the *Singgemeinde* journal,⁹⁷ Konrad Ameln depicted a clash between the two musical groups, painting a picture of fresh-faced German youths “who were far removed from professional music making, and often in deliberate opposition to it” suddenly “in contact with professional musicians, and indeed with the most radical wing of them, and at an event that was less about music than it was about musical experiments.”⁹⁸ Even worse, “more than two hundred young people were exposed to the confusing impressions of this music festival...”⁹⁹

Beyond the obvious disjunction between the two groups and their aims, the members of the *Jugendmusikbewegung* felt themselves particularly snubbed. Many believed that the composers at Baden-Baden had overlooked the fundamental purpose of their movement: to create community through music. Rather than simply writing folksy or “volkstümlich” modern music, it was the composer’s mindset and understanding of these goals that was crucial, not the musical style. George Götsch, writing for *Der Kreis* (one of the Musikantengilde’s publications), noted that for the organization, “the question of ‘new music’ lies far less in the material, or in the composition itself, and much more in the form of expression, in the type, how and in which

übergeordneter Vorträge gegeben waren, ist es nur zu natürlich, dass man eine nächste Tagung in die Stille verlegte.”

⁹⁷ *Singgemeinde* was the journal of the Finkensteinerbund, the other primary group of the *Jugendmusikbewegung*.

⁹⁸ Konrad Ameln, “Zweite Reichsführerwoche der Musikantengilde und Deutsche Kammermusik Baden-Baden im Juli 1927,” in Scholz and Jonas-Corrieri, *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, 402. “eine Jugend, die fernab vom Fachmusikertum, ja oft im bewussten Gegensatz zu ihm, ihren Weg in die Musik gesucht hat, nun wieder die Fühlung mit der Fachmusikerschaft aufnimmt, und zwar mit dem radikalsten Flügel derselben, und das bei einer Veranstaltung, die weniger der Musik als dem musikalischen Experiment dient.”

⁹⁹ Ameln, 403. “mehr als zweihundert junge Menschen den verwirrenden Eindrücken dieses Musikfestes ausgesetzt haben...”

situation and with what seriousness is it incorporated into everyday life.”¹⁰⁰ Konrad Ameln, while praising Hindemith’s desire to compose works beyond “a small circle of professionals and music snobs” (*einen engen Kreis von Fachleuten und Musiksnobs*), believed (or rather, discerned) that Hindemith’s works, rather than building community, were meant to lead the amateur player to the type of modern art music the youth movement was decidedly against. As he observed, “One thing is quite clear with these works: they themselves are neither volkstümlich, nor do they lead to a volkstümlich musical practice. In fact, the *Schulwerke* had the task of leading (level by level) to over-refined, highly-sophisticated artworks.”¹⁰¹

Youth music leaders also questioned the very premise behind the festival: namely, that the youth needed to come into contact with new music. Götsch noted that the guild’s festival had included music by living composers who had “stood, more or less personally, in the circle of the *Musikantengilde* for quite some time; so it would be a false to emphasize that the Lichtental collaboration with the chamber music group was their first ‘encounter with new music.’”¹⁰² He specifically cited Armin Knab, Ludwig Weber, and Hermann Erpf, composers who were actively involved in the movement and of whose music the youth organization approved.¹⁰³ Related to

¹⁰⁰ Georg Götsch, “Kurzer Bericht über die Reichsführerwoche in Lichtental,” in Scholz and Jonas-Corrieri, *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, 172. “die Frage der ‘neueren Musik’ liegt viel weniger im Stoffe, in der Komposition, als vielmehr in der Darstellungsform, in der Art, wie und an welcher Stelle und mit welchem Ernste sie sich ins allgemeine Leben einbaut.”

¹⁰¹ Ameln, 403. “Eines aber ist auch an diesen Werken ganz deutlich: weder sind sie selbst volkstümlich, noch führen sie zu einer volkstümlichen Musikübung hin; die Schulwerke haben vielmehr die Aufgabe, von Stufe zu Stufe bis zu jenen überfeinerten höchstdifferenzierten Kunstwerken hinzuführen, von denen oben die Rede war.”

¹⁰² Götsch, 170. “Bezeichnend war, dass nur die Gruppen von Reusch und Götsch alte Musik übten. Die Anderen vertieften sich in die Stücke von ‘Lebenden’, die ja dem Kreise der Musikantengilde seit längerer Zeit bereits mehr oder weniger persönlich nahe stehen, sodass es eine falsche Betonung wäre, gerade erst das Lichtentaler Zusammenwirken mit dem Kammermusikkreise als ‘Begegnung mit der neuen Musik’ herauszuheben.”

¹⁰³ As Wolfram Hader observes, “The Jugendmusikbewegung accepted on a broader basis mostly just new music that arose from their midst that was composed by protagonists of

this was the sense that the onus was on the youth movement to adapt to new music and not the other way around. Or rather, the exchange between the two festivals was not reciprocal: new music could potentially gain new performers and listeners (and revenue) from the amateurs but would give nothing back. Indeed, representatives from the youth movement repeatedly travelled to Baden-Baden to attend concerts of new music, while the Baden-Baden attendees made one trip to an evening concert in Lichtental on 12 July, which featured Hindemith's works. Ameln concluded his report by summarizing that it had "became clear that an encounter of youth music with Hindemith and the Baden-Baden circle can hardly be fruitful for a new folk music; it may supply art music (in the narrower sense) with fresh blood, but only be a subordinate duty of youth music."¹⁰⁴

Most galling to the leaders of the *Jugendmusikbewegung*, however, was the general feeling that their movement was not taken seriously by the Baden-Baden crowd. Ameln hinted that "their" contemporary composers (Weber, Knorr, Erpf) had been snubbed, as they were not included in the Baden-Baden portion of the festival.¹⁰⁵ Götsch displayed irritation at what he felt was condescension from the art music circle:

this movement" ("Die Jugendmusikbewegung akzeptierte auf breiterer Basis zumeist lediglich Neue Musik, die aus ihrer Mitte entstanden war, von Protagonisten dieser Bewegung komponiert wurde"). Hader, "Jugendmusikbewegung und Neue Musik: "Cultural lag" oder eigenständiger Weg zur Neuen Musik?" in *New Music in the "New" Europe 1918–1938: Ideology, Theory, and Practice*, ed. Geoffrey Chew (Prague: Koniasch Latin Press, 2007), 136.

¹⁰⁴ Ameln, 403. "Es wird aus alledem deutlich, dass eine Begegnung der Jugendmusik mit Hindemith und dem Baden-Badener Kreise für eine neue Volksmusik kaum fruchtbar werden kann; der Kunstmusik (im engeren Sinne) frisches Blut zuzuführen darf aber nur eine untergeordnete Aufgabe der Jugendmusik sein..."

¹⁰⁵ Ameln, 403. "Nicht unwesentlich in diesem Zusammenhange ist der Umstand, dass eine Aufführung der Werke von einigen Komponisten, die in engerer Fühlung mit dem Kreise um Jöde schon seit längerer Zeit standen—L. Weber, L. v. Knorr, H. Erpf, u.a.—, bei den eigentlichen Veranstaltungen des Kammermusikfestes angeblich nicht ermöglicht werden konnte."

From the standpoint of art or professional music, one either takes our movement as [not worth mentioning] and not seriously, or they praise it as a type of folk movement of “back to folksong and folkdance” and heartily welcome it, but they think it is harmless and innocuous. One constructs façades and talks so kindly, in volkstümlich terms, of the “fresh young people,” although our participants are just as old or older than the chamber musicians. One calls them simply ‘musicians’ and doesn’t realize that we also have a lot of professional musicians in our circle...¹⁰⁶

Despite these strains, the two festivals were once again held simultaneously in Baden-Baden and Lichtental the following year.¹⁰⁷ Hindemith premiered three works under the general title *Sing- und Spielmusik für Liebhaber und Musikfreunde*, op. 45: *Frau Musica—Musik zum Singen und Spielen auf Instrumenten nach einem Text von Luther*, op. 45, No. 1 (Dame Music—Music for Singing and Playing on Instruments on a Text by [Martin] Luther, 1928), *Acht Kanons für zwei Singstimmen mit Instrumenten*, op. 45, no. 2 (Eight Canons for two voices with Instruments, 1928), and a performance of *Ein Jäger aus Kurpfalz* (A Hunter from Kurpfalz), a work for strings and winds based on a folk tune.¹⁰⁸

At first glance, the 1928 festival appeared to have been a success, or at least a significant improvement over the previous year. Henny Simons, for example, alluded to a friendlier atmosphere between the groups, observing, “If one could hardly evade the feeling last year that

¹⁰⁶ Götsch, 174. “Die geht in der Richtung, dass man sichs dort zu leicht macht und entweder vom Standpunkte einer Kunst- und Fachmusik unsere Bewegung für unerörterbar und nicht ernst zu nehmen hält, oder aber sie als eine Art Volksbewegung ‘zurück zu Volkslied und Volkstanz’ lobt und herzlich begrüßt, sie aber im Grunde für harmlos und ungefährlich hält. Man konstruiert falsche Flächen und spricht bei uns volkstümlich-liebevoll von ‘frischen jungen Leuten,’ obgleich unsere Teilnehmer so alt oder auch älter sind als die Kammermusiker. Man nennt nur diese ‘Musiker’ und beachtet nicht, dass wir auch eine Menge von Fachmusikern in unserem Kreise haben...” See also Eduard Zuckmeyer, “Warum werden wir in diesem Sommer nicht zum ‘Deutschen Kammermusikfeste’ nach Baden-Baden gehen?” in Scholz and Jonas-Corrieri, *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, 410.

¹⁰⁷ The 1928 festival featured the categories “Film and Music” and “Chamber Operas.”

¹⁰⁸ Sannemüller, introduction to *Sing- und Spielmusik I*, x. *Ein Jäger aus Kurpfalz* was premiered earlier that April by members of the Bieberstein school. Luttmann, 481.

the Youth Music Movement imagined itself among a critical public the entire week, this was in no way the intention this time...”¹⁰⁹ Erich Katz in the *Hannoverschen Kurier* also believed that if last year it was doubtful whether the collaboration between these “different worldviews would permanently succeed, already this year the mutual rapprochement and increased understanding was palpable.”¹¹⁰ In the journal for the *Musikantengilde*, Herman Reichenbach believed that the event had made “crucial progress” (*wesentlicher Fortschritt*) since last year’s festival, showing that “a mutual cross-pollination is possible.”¹¹¹

This positive impression hinged largely on the success of Hindemith’s *Frau Musica*, a cantata for two soloists, chorus, and chamber orchestra based on a text by Martin Luther. The work was performed at a public sing-along (*offene Singstunde*) at the Baden-Baden festival, one of the few events attended by professional musicians and composers as well as members of the *Jugendmusikbewegung*.¹¹² Both groups praised the cantata for its modern yet accessible and singable music. Reichenbach, for example, singled out the work as the highlight of the day,

¹⁰⁹ Henry Simons, “Deutsche Jugendmusik in Lichtental 9.–15. Juli 1928,” in Scholz and Jonas-Corrieri, *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, 174. “Konnte man sich im Vorjahre dem Gefühl kaum entziehen, die Jugendmusikbewegung habe sich der ganzen Woche einer kritischen Öffentlichkeit vorzustellen, so war es diesmal keineswegs die Absicht...”

¹¹⁰ Erich Katz, *Hannoverschen Kurier* (18 July 1928), in Scholz and Jonas-Corrieri, *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, 407. “Konnte man im vorigen Jahr, wo die erste Begegnung zwischen Vertretern der neuen Musik und der musikalischen Jugendbewegung stattfand, noch im Zweifel sein, ob der Versuch, diese äußerlich so verschiedenen Gesinnungswelten zusammenzubringen, auf die Dauer glücken würde, so war schon in diesem Jahr die gegenseitige Annäherung, das Wachsen des Verständnisses deutlich zu spüren.”

¹¹¹ Herman Reichenbach, “Lichtental 1928,” in Scholz and Jonas-Corrieri, *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, 405. “eine gegenseitige Befruchtung möglich ist.”

¹¹² Critic Eberhard Preussner noted that the youth movement represented “only a part, and indeed, only the far-narrowest part (a morning) of the festival. In all the main events of the chamber music festival, the youth music community vanished” (“Damit ist aber nur ein Teil und zwar nur der weitaus geringere Teil [ein Vormittag] des Festes getroffen. In allen Hauptveranstaltung des Kammermusikfestes verschwindet die Gemeinde der Jugendmusik”). Preussner, “Deutsche Kammermusik 1928,” 873.

based on its “compelling natural flow, in the colorful diversity of the parts and in the richness of the concept,” and described it as “a successful shot for ... *volkstümlich* festival music in the best sense.”¹¹³ Moreover, the work’s familiar cantata form fell squarely in the tradition of Bach’s, while the sixteenth-century text by Luther may have been an accommodation to the youth movement’s familiarity and preference for that period.¹¹⁴ Most importantly, however, the audience participated in the opening and closing choruses of the cantata, led by an amateur chorus. The sight of composers, professional performers, teachers, and amateurs singing together seemed to embody the bridging of the composer-audience divide. Simons, calling *Frau Musica* the “crowning moment of the week,” noted how the boundary between professionals and amateurs disappeared as everyone sang together. Eberhard Preussner in *Die Musik* likewise praised the sing-along choruses of the cantata, declaring that “here that famous span between public and performers was finally removed.”¹¹⁵ Eduard Zuckmayer, who conducted the work, spoke of how the “usually skeptical and doubtful musical festival audience were visually and aurally drawn into the spell of this form of music-making and went along with it joyfully.”¹¹⁶

Ultimately, the success of *Frau Musica* was not enough to maintain the partnership between both groups, and by the following year, the leaders of the youth movement decided to drop out of the 1929 Baden-Baden festival. The ostensible reason behind the split was the issue

¹¹³ Reichenbach, 405. “[D]ie in ihrem zwingenden natürlichen Fluss, in der farbigen Mannigfaltigkeit der Teile und in dem Reichtum der Erfindung ein geglückter Wurf für einen im besten Sinne heute volkstümliche Festmusik ist.”

¹¹⁴ Magnar Breivik notes that the text came from a “period in which the target group was familiar.” Breivik, 180.

¹¹⁵ Preussner, “Deutsche Kammermusik 1928,” 878. “wie hier jene berühmte Brücke zwischen Publikum und Ausübenden endgültig beseitigt wird...”

¹¹⁶ Zuckmayer, 407. “das sonst so skeptische und unsichere Musikfestpublikum ganz augen- und ohrenscheinlich in den Bann dieser neuen Musizierform hineingezogen worden und freudig mitgegangen war.”

of programming. The Baden-Baden committee did not permit the youth movement, who wanted to feature works by composers who had been working within their circle such as Ludwig Weber or Armin Knab, to have any decisive input.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, despite Hindemith's alleged proclamation that the 1929 festival would foreground amateur music, this area was only one part of the actual program, which was a more comprehensive overview of recent trends in music (sound film, music for radio).¹¹⁸

Lurking behind the issue of programming, however, were the still-simmering tensions of the previous year. Articles written by representatives of the youth movement after the 1928 festival now complained openly of patronizing composers who "look down from [their] 'cloud' onto the 'young little folk'" rather than placing themselves among them.¹¹⁹ Members also began to push back against the burden of having to learn to appreciate new music; Reichenbach, for example, spoke of their "growing self-confidence, that we presume to have the right to place demands on the current generation of composers to meet our own needs."¹²⁰ Certainly, Magnar Breivik has noted that Hindemith's "ambitions to pave the way for particular challenges of new music" are quite evident even in *Frau Musica*, as Hindemith, in his words, deliberately "gave the amateur some hard nuts to crack."¹²¹ Finally, leaders asserted that the attempts by composers to

¹¹⁷ Krabiel, 161.

¹¹⁸ Sannemüller, introduction to *Sing- und Spielmusik I*, x.

¹¹⁹ Zuckmayer, 410. "[E]r durfte nicht aus seiner 'Meistervolk' auf das 'junge Völkchen' herabblicken wollen, sondern musste sich mitten unter dieses stellen." See also Reichenbach's statement that the composer needs to "climb down from his high pedestal" and "recover the connection to the thinking and feeling of the Volk" ("Er soll mit seinem ganzen künstlerischen Wesen von dem hohen Piedestal einer auserlesenen Intellektuellenschicht herabsteigen und die Verbindung zum Denken und Fühlen des Volkes..."). Reichenbach, 405.

¹²⁰ Reichenbach, 405. "Ein zweiter Grund entstand in dem gewachsenen Selbstvertrauen, dass wir uns das Recht zutrauen, von unserem eigenen Bedarf her Ansprüche an die Komponistengeneration der Gegenwart zu stellen."

¹²¹ Breivik, 181. Hindemith, foreword to *Frau Musica*. "Dem Liebhaber werden hier einige Nüsse zu knacken gegeben."

write in a *volkstümlich* style were still not enough; composers were just writing modern “atonal” works for bourgeois choruses and orchestras without understanding the movement’s community-building ethos.¹²² Not even Hindemith escaped criticism. While Zuckmayer praised both *Frau Musica* and Hindemith’s actual contact with the *Jugendmusikbewegung*, he ultimately concludes that Hindemith’s works in this area are, like his previous festival works, simply art music experiments:

But one asks himself: what has become of these commissioned works (the entertainment and Gebrauchsmusik of the former Donaueschingen and Baden-Baden festivals) in real life? In what garden concerts does the wind music sound, the Potpourries and Variations that are crafted to be popular? In which cinemas does the film music sound? Do they not remain thoroughly concert literature? It would be completely wrong to blame the Volk for not taking [these pieces] up. They do not signify anything more than a literary attempt, one doubtless arising from a well-intentioned and sympathetic insight into fulfilling a need. But life can only emerge from the contact with life; it cannot be created experimentally.¹²³

Baden-Baden 1929 and *Lehrstück*

Apart from the rather embarrassing non-involvement of any groups from the *Jugendmusikbewegung*, the 1929 Baden-Baden festival did prominently feature amateur music. In fact, it was now one of the “official” themes (along with radio music and sound film), with two evening concerts devoted solely to “Musik für Liebhaber,” forcing composers to seriously

¹²² Zuckmayer directly referred to the type of modern youth albums that Schott was currently publishing, such as *Das neue Klavierbuch*. Zuckmayer, 410.

¹²³ Zuckmayer, 411–412. “Aber man frage sich einmal, was etwa aus den bestellten Werken, der Unterhaltungs- und Gebrauchsmusik der bisherigen Donaueschinger und Badener Feste im wirklichen Leben geworden ist. In welchem Gartenkonzert etwa erklingen die Blasmusiken, die so volkstümlich sich gebärdenden Potpourries und Variationen, in welchem Filmtheater die Filmmusiken? Sind sie nicht durchaus Konzertliteratur geblieben? Es wäre grundfalsch, dem Volk einen Strick daraus zu drehen, dass es sie nicht aufnimmt. Sie bedeuten eben nicht mehr, als einen zweifellos aus verstandes- und gefühlsmäßig richtiger Einsicht in die notwendigen Aufgaben entsprungenen literarischen Versuch. Leben kann eben nur aus der Berührung mit Leben entstehen, nicht experimentell erzeugt werden.”

engage with this music.¹²⁴ Moreover, Hindemith affirmed the importance of amateur music in German life in the program notes:

The attempt to make creative artists (*schaffenden Künstler*) aware of the challenges of the day and the needs of all classes of the population that cultivate music has prompted us to devote an evening to compositions for amateurs... This music is not meant for its outward effectiveness on the podium, but primarily takes into account of the needs of the players and singers.¹²⁵

The 1929 festival also featured Hindemith's most radical experiment in communal music-making: the dramatic work *Das Lehrstück* (Teaching Piece), a collaboration with the playwright Bertolt Brecht. As mentioned in the previous chapter, *Lehrstück* was a companion piece to the radio play *Der Lindberghflug*: both are about a pilot and had a pedagogical purpose. Unlike the celebration of Lindbergh's flight, however, *Lehrstück* had a starker message. The work deals with a pilot who, after his plane crashes, calls on his fellow man for help. After dialogues with the chorus and audience, who refuse to help, the pilot realizes his unimportance as an individual and finally acquiesces to death. The five scenes with the pilot were interspersed with two additional "Investigations" (*Untersuchungen*) on the question of "whether man helps man" (*ob der Mensch dem Menschen hilft*), one of which featured a giant clown who complains of various aches and pains. Two other clowns "help" him by sawing off the problem limbs (complete with blood-red paint), thus ironically illustrating how man "helps" man (fig. 4.2).

¹²⁴ The concert on 26 July featured works by Rudolf Wagner-Régeny, Jögen Bentzon, and Hindemith's student Walter Leigh, none of whom appeared to be in the circle of the Musikantengilde.

¹²⁵ Hindemith, "Neue Aufgaben," 35–36. "Das Bestreben, die schaffenden Künstler wieder auf die Forderungen des Tages und auf die Bedürfnisse aller musikpflegender Bevölkerungsschichten hinzuweisen, hat uns veranlasst, der Komposition für Liebhaber (vom klein besetzten Kammermusikwerk bis zu Gemeinschaftsmusik mit Einbeziehung der Singstimmen für eine größere Spiel- und Singvereinigung) einen Abend einzuräumen. Diese Musik wird nicht auf äußere Podiumswirksamkeit hin angelegt sein dürfen, sondern in erster Linie auf die Bedürfnisse der Mitspielenden bzw. Mitsingenden Rücksicht nehmen müssen."

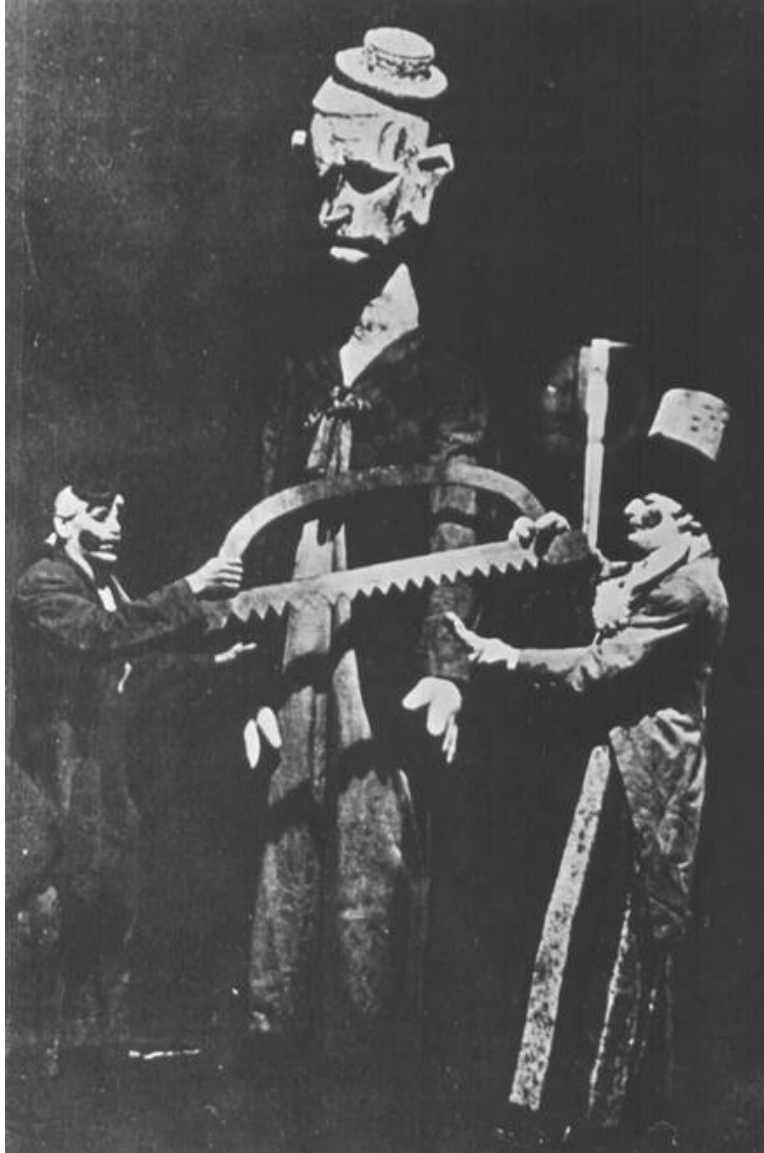


Figure 4.2. Clown scene from the 1929 Baden-Baden *Lehrstück* performance. “Collaboration with Brecht,” Hindemith-Institut, accessed 6 March 2020, <http://www.hindemith.info/en/life-work/biography/1927-1933/work/collaboration-with-brecht/>.

Building on the success of the group sing-along in the opening and closing choruses of *Frau Musica*, *Lehrstück* went even further in blurring the lines between audience and performer, overturning the traditional concert format based on audience passivity. Led by the amateur chorus, the audience sang along with simple refrains that were projected on a screen. Hindemith also dramatically simplified his style, using diatonic melodies and mostly syllabic text

declamation.¹²⁶ Underscoring the participatory nature of the work, the motto “making music is better than listening to it” was plastered on a placard hanging on the wall.¹²⁷ The informal seating arrangements also emphasized the community-building or society-leveling aim of the work, as well as further dissolving the boundary between audience and performer. As critic Karl Laux reported, “In the municipal hall, in a primitive room, stood a bunch of chairs where one could sit anywhere, a screen hung somewhere, a podium stood somewhere, [the writer] Gerhart Hauptmann sat somewhere and no one had preferred seating. People sat all over the place: the ministers of Baden, the composers, writers, scholars and journalists...”¹²⁸

Although musically the work seemed to fulfill the requirements of the amateur movement (singable, community-building), as in the previous two festivals, there was still a marked divergence between Hindemith’s aims and those of his collaborator. For Hindemith, the goal was primarily musical: bridging the audience-performer gap by encouraging music-making and exposing amateurs to modern music. In his preview of the work, Heinrich Strobel had clarified that it was a “continuation” of Hindemith’s previous “attempts to technically popularize modern music and to re-invigorate dilettante and amateur music making, which seems to be dying out.”¹²⁹ In contrast, Brecht viewed the work, which he described as a “collective artistic

¹²⁶ Strobel, *Paul Hindemith*, 53–54; Stephen Hinton, “*Lehrstück*: An Aesthetics of Performance,” in Gilliam, *Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic*, 72.

¹²⁷ Strobel, “Die Baden-Badener Kammermusik 1929,” 397. “‘Besser als Musik hören, ist Musik machen’ steht mit riesigen Lettern an der Wand.”

¹²⁸ Laux, 538. “In der Stadthalle, einem primitiven Raum, stand ein Haufen Stühle, da konnte man sich irgendwo hinsetzen, hing Leinwand irgendwo, stand ein Podium irgendwo, saß Gerhart Hauptmann irgendwo und niemand hatte einen bevorzugten Platz, man saß durcheinander, die Minister von Baden, die Komponisten, Schriftsteller, Wissenschaftler und Journalisten...”

¹²⁹ Strobel, “Vorschau auf Baden-Baden,” *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 337 (23 July 1929): 6, quoted in Krabiell, 162. “die moderne Musik auch technisch zu popularisieren und das scheinbar zum Absterben verurteilte Dilettanten- und Laienmusizieren wieder zu beleben.”

exercise,”¹³⁰ as a way to convey a (Marxist) political message—the unimportance of the individual in comparison to the community—through musical participation.¹³¹ In short: Brecht (like the *Jugendmusikbewegung*) saw amateur music-making as the means to an end, while Hindemith saw music-making as both the means *and* the end.

Critical response to the work mirrored these divergent purposes.¹³² In general, critics praised Hindemith’s simplified musical style, describing it “as powerful and more universal than ever” and as having “an unemotional solemnity, a weighty seriousness.”¹³³ Many were also sympathetic to the work’s aims, sharing Hindemith’s belief that postwar societal shifts necessitated a corresponding change in musical practice. Kaul Laux, for example, believed *Lehrstück* demonstrated “that it is no longer enough to compose a piece and have it played before a few others. With that, life would be stifled. No, the amateurs themselves should sing and play. And not just amateurs that are musicians, but the public should also participate.”¹³⁴ Strobel also

¹³⁰ Brecht, program for 1929 Baden-Baden festival, quoted in Krabiell, 171. “eine kollektive Kunstübung”

¹³¹ Several scholars have recognized the divergent goals of Brecht and Hindemith. As Alexander Rothe succinctly notes, “Hindemith approached the work as a means to propagate his ideas regarding a modern audience... In contrast, Brecht saw the *Lehrstück* as a means to motivate the audience to a political orientation, namely his breed of Marxism and Communism.” Rothe, “The Problematic Nature of Hindemith’s ‘Das Unaufhörliche’: A Critical Response,” *Tempo* 61, no. 240 (April 2007): 40. See also Fisher, 20–21; Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 95; Krabiell, 177. Hinton argues that Brecht initially seems to have gone along with the music-pedagogical aims, but later radicalized the message. Hinton, “*Lehrstück*: An Aesthetics of Performance,” 65–66.

¹³² Josef Häusler affirms this observation, noting that it was Brecht’s libretto that was the target of negative reviews, not Hindemith’s music. Häusler, 101.

¹³³ Preussner, “Gemeinschaftsmusik 1929,” 898. “Die Musik Hindemiths ist so kräftig wie nur je und allgemeingültiger denn je.” Strobel, “Baden-Badener Kammermusik 1929,” 397: “Seine Musik hat eine unpathetische Feierlichkeit, einen wuchtigen Ernst...”

¹³⁴ Laux, 538. “Sie wollen zeigen, dass es nicht mehr damit getan ist, dass ein Stück komponiert und von einigen wenigen vielen anderen vormusiziert wird. Das Leben wäre damit geknebelt. Nein, die Liebhaber sollen selbst singen und musizieren. Und nicht Liebhaber, die Musiker sind, auch das Publikum soll mittun.”

recognized that the work stemmed from “the realization that the concert-style presentation no longer possesses any inner viability,” while Eberhard Preussner acknowledged the “attempt to lead the public out of its passive role, to create a community or almost a congregation out of a random assortment of listeners.”¹³⁵ In contrast to this praise, critics largely panned Brecht’s text and its harsh collectivist message, decrying the “communist slant” (*kommunistische Tendenz*) and describing it as “doctrinal-tendentious” (*lehrhaft-tendenziös*), a “bolshevist scam” (*bolschewistischen Schwindel*), or a “drudgery that flouts of all the laws of aesthetic and morality” (*dieser Schinderei, die allen Gesetzen der Ästhetik und Moral Hohn sprach*).¹³⁶ The grotesque clown scene was the main source of the ire, apparently because of its graphic nature that reportedly caused one person to faint at the premiere.¹³⁷ Indeed, this scene caused a scandal at the festival, receiving reported whistles, shouts, and calls for the performance to end and ultimately overshadowing Hindemith’s musical-pedagogical aims.¹³⁸

While the scandal did not help matters, it was the events after the festival that exposed the fundamental differences between Brecht and Hindemith regarding the relation of music and

¹³⁵ Heinrich Strobel, “Tonfilme und Lehrstück,” *Melos* 8, no. 7 (July 1929): 316–317. “... Erkenntnis... dass die konzertmäßige Darstellung keine innere Lebensfähigkeit mehr besitzt.” Preussner, “Gemeinschaftsmusik 1929,” 898. “In ihm ist der Versuch gemacht, das Publikum aus der passiven Rolle herauszuführen, aus einer zufällig anwesenden Hörschaft eine Gemeinschaft oder fast eine Gemeinde zu schaffen...”

¹³⁶ Friedrich Herzog, quoted in *Melos* (1929), 400; Preussner, “Gemeinschaftsmusik 1929,” 898; Rudolf Kastner, *Berliner Morgenpost*, quoted in *Melos* (1929): 400; Elsa Bauer, *Badische Volkszeitung*, quoted in Hinton, “Lehrstück,” 63.

¹³⁷ Hinton, “Lehrstück,” 63. Strobel commented that “the disturbing realism of the scene in which Brecht showed that people do not help others may have unnerved sensitive minds who, after a good dinner, are used to letting themselves be gently amused by art” (“Die aufwühlende Realistik dieser Szene, in der Brecht zeigt, dass der Mensch dem Menschen nicht hilft, mochte empfindsamen Gemütern auf die Nerven gehen, welche gewohnt sind, nach einem guten Abendessen, sich von der Kunst sanft benebeln zu lassen”). Strobel, “Baden-Badener Kammermusikfest 1929,” 398.

¹³⁸ Laux, 539.

politics and would eventually hasten Hindemith's turn away from amateur music.¹³⁹ One month after the notorious premiere, Willy Strecker reported that "tempers are still simmering about the *Lehrstück*," and with his eye on the bottom line, he stressed that:

it lies in all our interests to correct the impression from Baden-Baden. It is really unfathomable how certain circles can regard this work only from a purely political standpoint, and the only danger is if one endeavors to stick a political label on to you, as they do with Brecht.¹⁴⁰

This didn't stop Schott from trying to capitalize on the scandal, as they marketed the work as the "controversial work from the Baden-Baden music festival."¹⁴¹ Hindemith also sought to minimize the damage, writing an introduction for the piano score that clarified the pedagogical—rather than political—intent of the work:¹⁴²

Since the *Lehrstück*'s only goal is to engage those present in the performance of a work and is not primarily meant to elicit a specific impression as a musical and poetic statement, the form of the piece can be adapted to the respective purposes wherever possible.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Even after the scandal, Hindemith was intrigued by a "high life" opera text by Brecht. Hindemith to the Schott firm, January 1930.

¹⁴⁰ In a letter to Hindemith from 19 March 1929, Willy had also expressed interest in the profitability of the work before the premiere, believing that choral societies could perform it. W. Strecker to Hindemith, 21 August 1929. "Über das *Lehrstück* sind die Gemüter immer noch sehr erhitzt... Hoffentlich stellt Brecht keine unerfüllbaren Forderungen, die die Herausgabe verzögern, denn es liegt in unser Aller Interesse, den Eindruck von Baden-Baden zu korrigieren. Es ist wirklich unbegreiflich, wie gewisse Kreise dieses Werk von einem rein politischen Standpunkt aus betrachten können und das einzig Gefährliche ist, wenn man Ihnen, ebenso wie Brecht damit ein politisches Etikett anzukleben bemüht ist." See also the letter from Ludwig Strecker to Hindemith, 27 November 1929, about wanting to avoid a new scandal.

¹⁴¹ "Das umstrittene Werk des Musikfestes Baden-Baden," *Melos* (1929), 411.

¹⁴² As he wrote to Willy, "I believe, with help from the written introduction, it will be clear to those who were not at the Baden-Baden performance what is meant" ("Ich glaube, mit Hilfe der Prosaerleitung wird jetzt auch jedem, der nicht bei der Badener Aufführung anwesend war, klar sein, was gemeint ist"). Hindemith to W. Strecker, August 1929. "

¹⁴³ Hindemith, *Szenische Versuche*, ed. Rudolf Stephan, vol. 1, no. 6 of *Paul Hindemith: Sämtliche Werke*, edited by Ludwig Finscher and Giseler Schubert (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1975–), 52. "Da das *Lehrstück* nur den Zweck hat, alle Anwesenden an der Ausführung eines Werkes zu beteiligen und nicht als musikalische und dichterische Äußerung in erster Linie

Regarding the clown scene, he reassured nervous amateur musicians that “omissions, additions, and transpositions can be made. Entire musical numbers can be left out, the dance can be cut, the clown scene can be shortened or eliminated.”¹⁴⁴

Unfortunately, Brecht explicitly specified to Schott that “every alteration of the text, and every omission” required his “explicit consent,” adding, “This pertains, above all, to the commentary, the film, and the clown scenes.”¹⁴⁵ This proviso was possibly a direct response to Hindemith’s foreword, which Schott may have included in a 13 September letter to Brecht about the royalties. Furthermore, after the publication of the piano score in October 1929, Brecht created his own version of the work the following summer, significantly revising it by cutting back on the musical content, radicalizing the Marxist message, and changing the title to *Das Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis* (The Baden-Baden Lesson on Consent).¹⁴⁶ Adding insult to injury, Brecht called Hindemith’s foreword to the Schott edition a “misunderstanding” in the preface to his new version, one that arose from:

bestimmte Eindrücke hervorrufen will, ist die Form des Stückes dem jeweiligen Zwecke nach Möglichkeit anzupassen.”

¹⁴⁴ Hindemith, *Szenische Versuche*, 52. “Auslassungen, Zusätze und Umstellungen sind möglich. Ganze Musiknummern können wegbleiben, der Tanz kann ausfallen, die Clownszone kann gekürzt oder ausgelassen werden.”

¹⁴⁵ Brecht also demanded that every public performance of the work had to be approved by both himself and Hindemith. Brecht to Schott, 16 September 1929. “Jede Veränderung des Textes, auch jede Auslassung, bedarf der ausdrücklichen Zustimmung Brechts. Die betrifft vor allem den Kommentartext, den Film und die Clownszone.”

¹⁴⁶ Hinton, “Lehrstück,” 66; Janik, 47–48; Krabiel, 174; Fisher, 21. Brecht would continue to hinder performances of the work; in a letter to Schott from 23 April 1930, for example, he complained that a school production had omitted the clown scene and demanded that they rent the original costumes. Schott pointed out that a school production was not a public performance and that renting the costumes would be cost-prohibitive for the very groups for which the work was intended. Likewise, regarding a planned performance in Charlottenburg, Brecht wanted his newer version to be performed with new music from Hindemith. Brecht to Schott, 20 September 1930.

mostly my own willingness to deliver an incomplete and ambiguous part of a text (as was this version of the *Lehrstück* that was performed in Baden-Baden) for purely experimental goals. Thus, the single pedagogical goal that could come under consideration was a purely musical one of form. But the Baden-Baden performance was, of course, only intended for self-understanding and as onetime event.¹⁴⁷

The rift between Brecht and Hindemith only worsened during the New Music Berlin festival, when Hindemith and the other artistic directors of the festival (Heinrich Burkard and Georg Schünemann) rejected Brecht's and Hans Eisler's *Lehrstück* titled *Die Maßnahme* (The Measures Taken) based on its "formal inferiority."¹⁴⁸ Eisler and Brecht, whose work explicitly propagated Marxist ideology, accused the directors of rejecting the work for political reasons.¹⁴⁹

Growing Frustrations

Following on the heels of the Musikantengilde's defection from Baden-Baden, Hindemith's falling out with Brecht represented yet another failed collaboration in the area of amateur music. In both cases, his collaborators' desire for music to serve a socio-political purpose, whether creating community or spreading a Marxist message, stood in sharp contrast to Hindemith's belief that music and music-making was sufficient unto itself.¹⁵⁰ One indication of this growing friction was his 1930 essay "Forderungen an den Laien" (Requirements for

¹⁴⁷ Brecht, quoted in Stephan, xvii. "An diesem Missverständnis ist wohl hauptsächlich meine eigene Bereitwilligkeit, einen unabgeschlossenen und missverständlichen Textteil, wie es die in Baden-Baden aufgeführte Fassung des *Lehrstücks* war, zu rein experimentalen Zwecken auszuliefern, schuld, so dass tatsächlich der einzige Schulungszweck, der in Betracht kommen konnte, ein rein musikalisch formaler war. Aber die Baden-Badener Aufführung war natürlich lediglich zur Selbstverständigung und einmalig gedacht."

¹⁴⁸ Rothe, 40.

¹⁴⁹ Rothe, 40; Fisher, 21. *Die Maßnahme* also repeated *Lehrstück's* theme of the unimportance of the individual, as a Communist agitator sacrifices his life for the good of the group.

¹⁵⁰ Andreas Briner believes that at the youth movement's use of music to achieve a non-musical goal "must have seemed to Hindemith a complete sacrilege against music." Briner, *Paul Hindemith*, 66. See also Walter, 294;

Amateurs), published in the journal *Musik und Gesellschaft*.¹⁵¹ At first glance, the essay appears to confirm his commitment to the youth movement, as he described the serious amateur musician as “just as important a part of our musical life as the seriously working musician.”¹⁵²

Immediately after affirming the equality of the professional musician and the amateur, however, he repeatedly underscored the boundary between them, writing that:

one will always have to decide between two opposing types of music-making: playing before others and playing for oneself. Playing for others is the profession of the musician; playing for oneself is the job of amateurs. Both kinds are equally important for the development of music.¹⁵³

This strict delineation between the professional and amateur was fundamentally at odds with the *Jugendmusikbewegung*, who sought to overcome this division, believing that professionalism had allowed music to stray from the Volk.¹⁵⁴ The very title of the essay (presumably reflecting Hindemith’s demands), implied an “us versus them” mentality, placing Hindemith firmly in the camp of the professionals. Moreover, he also put amateur musicians their place—decidedly below that of professionals—in spite of his statements of equality:

The amateur musician should be aware of his position in musical life. He should not try to imitate the artist, should not have the ambition to occupy the concert podium or invade

¹⁵¹ *Musik und Gesellschaft* 1 (1930): 8–10. The essay also appeared in *Der Weihergarten* (the supplement to *Melos*), November 1932, 59–60; *Die Musikantengilde*, Neue Folge, 1 (1930); *Auftakt* 12 (1932), and the *Freiburger Theaterblätter* (1930/31).

¹⁵² Hindemith, “Forderungen,” 42. “Der musizierende Laie... ist ein ebenso wichtiges Glied unseres Musiklebens wie der ernsthaft arbeitende Musiker.”

¹⁵³ Hindemith, “Forderungen,” 42. “Man wird immer zwischen zwei entgegengesetzten Arten des Musizierens zu unterscheiden haben: Vorspielen und Selbstspielen. Vorspielen ist der Beruf des Musikers, Selbstspielen Beschäftigung für den Laien. Beide Arten sind für die Musikentwicklung gleich wichtig.”

¹⁵⁴ Potter, *Most German*, 8. Giselher Schubert has also observed this back-tracking from his previous advocacy for the amateur. Schubert, “Kontext und Bedeutung der ‘Konzertmusiken’ Hindemiths,” *Hamburger Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* 4 (1980): 111. “Im Laien sieht Hindemith nun nicht mehr den Gegenpol zu einem verrotteten Konzertbetrieb; vielmehr bestimmt er mit den Rechten sogleich auch die Grenzen des Laien.”

other areas of public musical life that the professional musician can take care of better. The awareness of being a “dilettante” should not bother him... ¹⁵⁵

He saved special invective for those amateurs with “delusions of grandeur” (*Größenwahn*) who deigned to scorn art music and professional musicians. ¹⁵⁶

The rest of the essay outlined his “requirements” of the amateur musician, which reads like a laundry list of his personal frustrations with the youth movement. First, he expected that the amateur be more discerning when it comes to picking music, also directing this critique to other composers trying to write for amateurs, or to those composers whose music the amateur music community already preferred to play, such as August Halm, Ludwig Weber, or Armin Knab: ¹⁵⁷

Unfortunately, it is noticeable that a large part of the literature touted for amateurs is inferior... The composer must first immerse himself in his duties, setting aside the excess of technical complexity that he’s used to working with. Other composers have neither the talent, nor the intellectual mindset to write amateur music. Many of them write it anyway. Their music is no better or more useful than music produced by composers who, from a lack of skill, have not been able to develop further and therefore write for amateurs. ¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Hindemith, “Forderungen,” 42. “Der Laienmusiker sollte sich seiner Stellung im Musikleben bewusst sein. Er versuche nicht, den Künstler zu imitieren, habe nicht den Ehrgeiz, das Konzertpodium zu erobern oder in sonstige Gebiete des öffentlichen Musiklebens einzudringen, die der Berufsmusiker besser besorgen kann. Das Bewußtsein, ‘Dilettant’ zu sein, sollte ihn nicht stören.”

¹⁵⁶ Hindemith, “Forderungen,” 44. “Allerorten sieht man aber auch Laien, die sich außerordentlich überschätzen. Für sie ist die Tatsache, dass sie sich nicht berufsmäßig mit Musik beschäftigen oder die berufsmäßig ausgeübte Musik nicht allzu sehr schätzen, ein Grund zur Überheblichkeit.”

¹⁵⁷ Hindemith was quite negative, for example, about some works for youth by fellow composer Wolfgang Fortner, describing them as “really clumsy and dry. I can’t imagine that it would be fun for kids. If so, then it’s probably because they don’t have anything better. The teaching pieces and schoolworks gradually make me want to puke” (“Fortner ist sehr ungeschickt und trocken. Ich kann mir nicht vorstellen, dass Kinder Spaß daran haben. Wenn doch, dann wohl deshalb, weil sie nichts Besseres kennen. Die Lehr- und Schulstückenode finde ich allmählich zum Speien”). Hindemith to Schott, 17 February 1931.

¹⁵⁸ Hindemith, “Forderungen,” 43. “Leider ist festzustellen, dass ein großer Teil der dem Laien angepriesenen Literatur minderwertig ist... Der Komponist muss sich in seine neuen Aufgaben erst einleben, das Übermaß an technischem Aufwand, mit dem er zu arbeiten gewohnt

Hindemith followed this with a dig at another source of competition: musicologists:

If one can't compose, then he exhumes old music and arranges it. Alongside some excellent, stylistically pure arrangements of old music, one unfortunately finds the most miserable corruptions. Even in collections published with good intentions, the most widely distributed and most well-known publications of music for amateurs are swarming with mistakes, bad arrangements, inadequate attempts and modernizations.¹⁵⁹

Like musicians in general, musicologists also faced job shortages during the Weimar Republic, but with the additional hurdle that “the new government was inclined to reassess all intellectual activity not just for its budgetary feasibility but also for its contribution to the well-being of the community in all social strata.”¹⁶⁰ In order to prove that their work benefitted society at large, scholars often turned to preparing performance editions of early music, much of which was playable for amateurs.

Hindemith then turned to the fundamental ideological difference between him and the amateur movement (and Brecht)—the hijacking of music for a non-musical, socio-political purpose:

With many societies of musical amateurs, one can make the observation that, within their community, music is not so important as they think it is. From the worst sort of over-organization (*Vereinsmeierei*) of the current forms of communal entertainment, to the

ist. Andere Komponisten haben weder das Können, noch die geistige Einstellung, Laienmusik zu schreiben. Viele von ihnen schreiben sie gleichwohl. Ihre Musik kann nicht besser und brauchbarer sein, als die von solchen Komponisten hergestellte, die sich mangelnder Fähigkeiten wegen nicht haben entwickeln können und darum für Laien schreiben.”

¹⁵⁹ Hindemith, “Forderungen,” 43. “Komponiert man nicht selbst, gräbt man alte Musik aus und bearbeitet sie. Neben vorzüglichen, stilreinen Bearbeitungen älterer Musik finden sich leider die jämmerlichsten Verballhornungen. Selbst im guten Glauben herausgegebene Sammelwerke, die verbreitetsten und bekanntesten Veröffentlichungen von Musik für das Laitum wimmeln von Fehlern, schlechten Bearbeitungen, unzulänglichen Versuchen und Modernisierungen.”

¹⁶⁰ Potter, “German Musicology,” 95. The 1926 Musikantengilde conference at Brieselang had featured lectures by musicologists, including “Berlin Vocal Polyphony in the Sixteenth Century” by Dr. Mersmann and Friedrich Blume’s talk on Heinrich Schütz and Protestant church music.

most eccentric sectarianism, all sorts of shared behavior can be found, which have overtaken the original joy of music-making in a shockingly large number of cases. Whoever wants to get together with others to make music should just make music.¹⁶¹

Finally, Hindemith attacked the movement's continued preference of old music and old instruments and their rejection of (his) modern works, accusing them of committing the cardinal sin of stymieing the progress of German music:

A type of music isn't good just because it's not played by others. An instrument shouldn't be re-introduced just because it was in use hundreds of years ago. What's more important is what's happening today. Whoever withdraws into history is cowardly. Contemporary music loses its power and because of that, music will need a longer time to evolve to a higher level. Not all old music is good. Earlier times also produced trash.¹⁶²

This statement arguably captures the frustration of what had been a primary reason for his involvement in his area—introducing modern music to amateurs.

“Forderungen an den Laien” (1930) signaled the beginning of the end of Hindemith's public involvement with amateur music or with music that served some sort of social function.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Hindemith, “Forderungen,” 43. “Bei vielen Vereinigungen musikalischer Laien kann man die Beobachtung machen, dass die Musik innerhalb ihrer Gemeinschaft gar nicht so wichtig ist, als sie selbst glauben. Von der übelsten Vereinsmeierei über die geläufigen Formen gesellschaftlicher Unterhaltung bis zum verschrobensten Sektenwesen finden sich alle Arten gemeinsamen Handelns, die in einer erschreckend großen Anzahl von Fällen die ursprüngliche Freude am Musizieren überwuchert haben. Wer sich mit anderen musizierend zusammenfindet, sollte vor allem musizieren.”

¹⁶² Hindemith, “Forderungen,” 43. “Eine Musik ist nicht deshalb gut, weil sie von anderen nicht gespielt wird. Ein Instrument muss nicht deshalb wieder eingeführt werden, weil es vor Hunderten von Jahren im Gebrauch war. Wichtiger ist immer das, was heute geschieht. Wer sich in die Historie zurückzieht, ist feige. Seine Kraft geht der heutigen Musik verloren, die darum längere Zeit benötigen wird, sich auf eine höhere Stufe zu entwickeln. Nicht alle alte Musik ist gut. Früher hat es auch Schund gegeben.”

¹⁶³ Citing the “Forderungen” essay, Heinz-Jürgen Winkler notes that already by 1930, Hindemith “had distanced himself decisively from the amateur groups” (“Zudem distanzierte sich Hindemith bereits 1930 entschieden von Laiengrupperungen”). Winkler, “Paul Hindemith—der widerwillige Emigrant? Anmerkungen zu Michael H. Kater: *Komponisten im Nationalsozialismus*,” *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 34 (2005): 192.

That same year, he would make a decisive return back to the concert hall with his series of *Konzertmusik* (discussed in the next chapter). Nevertheless, music for amateurs still comprised a significant part of the New Music Berlin festival, which included two concerts of amateur choruses, a concert of choral exercises, two *Lehrstücke* by Ernst Toch and Hermann Reutter, and a concert of plays and songs for children.¹⁶⁴ There were even plans for a mass sing-along that were eventually scrapped. Hindemith's own musical play for children, *Wir bauen eine Stadt* (*Let's Build a City*), received mostly positive reviews, especially in its potential to lead children to develop an appreciation for new music. J. Marius Schneider called it "an excellent method for the introduction to modern music,"¹⁶⁵ while educator Edgar Rabsch noted that the work "converted a large number of outsiders to new music."¹⁶⁶ Pedagogue Frieda Loebenstein believed it had the potential to "awaken" in children "love and receptivity for the new music of our time," reporting how at first "the sounds seemed wrong" to them, but "only with their own participation was a willingness for this type of music possible."¹⁶⁷

The music for children, however, seemed to be the only thing critics liked about the festival. Hans Gutman said the performance of *Wir bauen eine Stadt* by eager children "provided

¹⁶⁴ It would be interesting to know how far ahead the themes for each festival were chosen, especially regarding the calls for scores. While Hindemith may have soured on this area, it is possible that it would have been too late to change the programming of the festival.

¹⁶⁵ J. Marius Schneider, "Neue Musik.-Berlin 1930," *La Revue Musicale* 11 (1930): 163, quoted in Schader, introduction to *Sing- und Spielmusik III*, xxi. "Nous avons ici affaire à une excellente méthode d'introduction à la musique moderne."

¹⁶⁶ Edgar Rabsch, "Zu Hindemiths 'Wir bauen eine Stadt,'" *Zeitschrift für Schulmusik* 5, no. 6 (1932): 107, quoted in Schader, introduction to *Sing- und Spielmusik III*, xxiii. "Wir... haben mit ihm einen großen Teil Außenstehender zur neuen Musik bekehrt."

¹⁶⁷ Frieda Loebenstein, "Die neue Musik in der Musikerziehung des Kindes," *Melos* 9 (1930): 225, 224. "Für die neue Musik unserer Zeit schon im Kinde Liebe und Empfänglichkeit zu wecken... Die Klänge erschienen ihnen falsch. Erst bei eigenem Mittun wurde eine Bereitschaft für diese Art von Musik möglich."

about the only joy there was at this Berlin Musik 1930.”¹⁶⁸ Hugo Leichtentritt agreed, calling the concert the “best thing of the entire event,” positing that “here at last the composers felt freed of the onerous pressure to offer something new and modern at any cost.”¹⁶⁹ These comments reflected a general exhaustion with the direction of the summer festivals; as seen in the previous chapter, the élan for experiments with technology and new concert forms seemed to be fading. As early as 1927, Wilhelm Weismann had asked whether the “hodgepodge of cinema, mechanical music, chamber opera (cabaret)” was nothing more than “a type of international musical fashion show,” adding:

Like a bon vivant, one takes note of the newest “sport”... One has reverted here to a methodical promotion of “progress,” one goads the composers to unnecessary experiments, pressures them to lie in wait for every new attraction, to listen outwardly rather than inwardly.¹⁷⁰

By the 1930 festival, even mechanical music enthusiast Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt opined that “one comes to the somewhat depressing conclusion that the time of the modern music festival is, for now, over.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Hans Gutman, “The Festivals as Music Barometers,” *Modern Music* 8 (1930/31): 31.

¹⁶⁹ Hugo Leichtentritt, “Neue Musik Berlin 1930,” 835: “Bei weitem gelungener und erfreulicher, überhaupt das Beste der ganzen Veranstaltung waren die ‘Spiele und Lieder für Kinder.’ Hier fühlten sich endlich einmal die Komponisten von dem drückenden Zwang befreit, unter allen Umständen modern und neu sich zu geben.”

¹⁷⁰ Weismann, “Deutsche Kammermusik Baden-Baden 1927,” 504. “War dieses Sammelsurium von Kino, mechanischer Musik, Kammeroper bzw. Kabarett... nicht vielmehr eine Art internationaler Musikmodenschau, zu der das mondäne Weltbad allerdings den einzig passenden Rahmen stellte? Lebemännisch nahm man Kenntnis von dem neusten ‘Sport’... Man ist auch hier in eine planmäßige Propagierung des ‘Fortschritts’ zurückgefallen, man reizt die Komponisten zu unnötigen Experimenten, zwingt sie nach jeder neuen Attraktion auf der Lauer zu liegen, nach außen statt nach innen zu horchen.”

¹⁷¹ Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, “Neue Musik Berlin 1930,” *Deutsche Zeitung Bohemia*, June 24, 1930, quoted in Schader, introduction to *Sing- und Spielmusik III*, xlii. “Zieht man aus diesen vier Tagen die künstlerische Bilanz, kommt man zu dem etwas deprimierenden Schluss, dass die Zeit der modernen Musikfeste einstweilen vorbei ist.”

Amateur music in particular seemed to be on the way out as something of interest to contemporary composers. In the 1930 article “The Situation in Germany,” the Heinrich Strobel, Hans Mersmann, and Hans Schultze-Ritter noted that:

it was boosted by talents whose entire nature urges them to pursue another line of development. It is significant that a musician like Hindemith, who is influential in Germany’s Gebrauchsmusik and established important types of works like “Lehrstück” or Spielmusik, never gave up the connection with absolute art music (as composer and interpreter), but rather has written and still writes works of a stylistically influential power.¹⁷²

Hans Heinsheimer, writing for *Anbruch* in 1932, also saw Hindemith as the bellwether for the death of the amateur music trend:

It’s remarkable, however, that the foray into amateur and school music was in no way carried on with any consistency, as was expected. One remembers, for example, that a few years ago, Paul Hindemith and his crowd committed themselves to these new directions in music with the utmost conviction and wrote school music for amateur orchestras and likewise vocal music for amateur groups. These musicians have again veered away from these goals, and this year, Hindemith even produced a large, extremely complex oratorio, whose difficulty is only accessible to the most experienced professionals working for weeks on it, and a concerto for the Philharmonic Orchestra in Berlin.¹⁷³

¹⁷² Mersman, Schultze-Ritter, and Strobel, “Die Situation in Deutschland,” 349. “Ihre größte Gefahr ist die zwangsläufige Tendenz zur Nivellierung; sie wird verstärkt bei Talenten, die ihrer ganzen Natur nach in eine andere Entwicklungslinie drängen. Es ist bezeichnend, dass ein Musiker wie Hindemith, der für die Gebrauchsmusik in Deutschland richtunggebend ist, und in Werken wie dem ‘Lehrstück’ oder den Spielmusiken wichtige Typen dafür aufstellte, als Komponist und Interpret die Verbindung mit der absoluten Kunstmusik niemals aufgegeben, sondern gerade für diese Kategorie Werke von stilbildender Kraft geschrieben hat und noch schreibt.”

¹⁷³ Heinsheimer, 73. “Bemerkenswert bleibt dabei, dass auch der Vorstoß in die Laien- und Schulmusik keineswegs mit jener Konsequenz weitergeführt wurde, die zu erwarten war. Man erinnert sich, dass zum Beispiel Paul Hindemith und sein Kreis vor einigen Jahren mit äußerster Entschiedenheit sich zu diesen neuen Tendenzen der Musik bekannten und Schulmusik für Laienorchester und ebenso Vokalmusik für Laiengruppen schrieben. Diese Musiker haben sich wieder von diesen Zielen entfernt und von Hindemith liegt in diesem Jahre sogar ein großes, äußerst kompliziertes Oratorium, dessen Schwierigkeit es nur den allergewiegtesten Fachleuten in wochenlanger Arbeit erschließt, und ein Konzert für das Philharmonische Orchester in Berlin vor.” Heinsheimer’s remark about the difficulty of the oratorio doesn’t seem to be hyperbole, as Gertrud Hindemith noted that, “the manager of the [Philharmonic] chorus claims to have dug his

In particular, this music's simplification seemed to have hindered musical progress. Strobel, Mersmann, and Schultze-Ritter observed that its "greatest danger" lay in the "tendency toward levelling," while composer Herbert Trantow believed that Gebrauchsmusik had "resulted in the sinking of the musical level to that of public taste, instead of raising the education of the public to a higher level."¹⁷⁴ Stuckenschmidt, while acknowledging that "there is no room in the present-day" for the "genius in the attic," also noted that, "on the way to the popularization of modern music, almost all the enrichment in musical language produced in the last decades is sacrificed."¹⁷⁵

Members of *Jugendmusikbewegung* also began to question how deep Hindemith's commitment was to their mission, viewing his works for amateurs as simply another music festival experiment. Georg Kallmeyer, head of the Kallmeyer firm that published music for the Musikantengilde, praised the "cooperation" (*Mitarbeit*) of composers such as Hindemith in his article "The Work of 1931." But, he continued, "it seems to me to be difficult to ascertain (since we are dealing with mature artists) to what extent this association is about inner affinity or is about pure intellectual recognition, [and] that it no longer continues on its previous path."¹⁷⁶ He

own grave with the piece because of the many rehearsals (Klemperer would work just as hard for the St. Matthew's Passion)" ("Der Vorstand vom Chor behauptet, sich mit dem Stück sein Grab zu schaufeln wegen der vielen Proben [für die Matthäuspassion würde Klemperer genauso viel arbeiten]"). G. Hindemith to W. Strecker, 10 November 1931.

¹⁷⁴ Trantow, 262. "die Einstellung auf Gebrauch hat, statt zur Erziehung des Publikums auf ein höheres Niveau, teilweise ein Senken des musikalischen Niveaus auf Publikumsgeschmack ergeben."

¹⁷⁵ Stuckenschmidt, "Neue Musik Berlin 1930," quoted in Schader, introduction to *Sing- und Spielmusik*, xliii. "Erstens wird auf dem Wege zu einer Popularisierung der modernen Musik fast alles geopfert, was die letzten Jahrzehnte an Sprachbereicherung hervorgebracht haben."

¹⁷⁶ Georg Kallmeyer, "Die Arbeit des Jahres 1931," in Scholz and Jonas-Corrieri, *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, 425. "Trotzdem scheint mir, da es sich um reife Künstler handelt, schwer zu entscheiden zu sein, inwieweit bei diesem Zusammengehen innere

then hinted that “these mature artists” had simply dabbled in this area out of a feeling of patronage and duty, rather than from a feeling of true connection to the movement’s goals:

This is, of course, the great danger: that men with such unusual talent, who were up until now at home in an atmosphere of high, virtuosic artistic achievements, do indeed recognize that an art that has lost its roots in the national character (*Volkstum*) essentially loses its sense. But on the other hand, the sober pursuit of art of this new youth does not come from the role of the friendly patrons and so they don’t find the inner connection that is necessary in order to allow a true life-strengthening to grow.¹⁷⁷

Hindemith did not entirely stop writing music for children and amateurs after 1930. In 1931, he contributed a number of short pieces for violin for the *Geigen-Schulwerk* by Erich and Elma Doflein, as well as for the series *Spielmusik für Violine* (also edited by Erich Doflein). The following year, he composed his last major work for amateurs, *Plöner Musiktag* (Music Day at Plön), which he wrote for high school students in the small town of Plön, after being invited to visit the school by the music teacher Edgar Rabsch.¹⁷⁸ The work consisted of a series of pieces to be performed throughout the day, such as “Morning Music” played on brass instruments from a tower, “Tafelmusik” for lunchtime, a cantata on a text by Martin Agricola, and an “Evening Concert,” which included a recorder trio. Like his earlier foray into youth music with Höckner and the Biberstein school, this work came about from his personal contact with Rabsch and

Verbundenheit oder die rein intellektuelle Erkenntnis, dass es auf dem bisherigen Wege nicht mehr weiterging, mitspricht.”

¹⁷⁷ Kallmeyer, 425. “Es besteht naturgemäß die große Gefahr, dass Männer mit so ungewöhnlichem Können, die bisher in einer Atmosphäre höchster virtuoser Kunstleistung zu Hause waren, zwar erkennen, dass eine Kunst, die ihre Wurzeln im Volkstum verloren hat, ihren eigentlichen Sinn verliert, andererseits aber der schlichten Kunstbetätigung dieser neuen Jugend gegenüber aus der Rolle des freundlichen Gönners nicht herauskommen und so die innere Verbindung nicht finden, die nötig ist, um etwas wirklich Lebensstarkes wachsen zu lassen.”

¹⁷⁸ Skelton describes the works as “virtually the last of that important body of work which Hindemith once rashly referred to as *Gebrauchsmusik*.” Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 101.

addressed the needs of the music students.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, rather than radical new forms of participatory or community-building works such as *Lehrstück*, these compositions were simply easy pieces and exercises in a modern style. Hindemith's foreword to *Plöner Musiktag*, for example, specified that the work was "to instruct and entertain music-loving youth" with music that was "accessible to the player and listener."¹⁸⁰ Once again, however, at least one member of the *Jugendmusikbewegung* felt that the work missed the mark. In his review of the work, Walter Blankenburg praised Hindemith's intentions but still observed that "the work lacks, like all works of Hindemith and most modern music in general, something of the true bond to Volk and Heimat... We fear that Hindemith's work, like all modern musical works, will not last long."¹⁸¹

Conclusion

Like his experiments with mechanical instruments, radio, and film, Hindemith's works for amateurs were borne out of the sense that traditional concert life was dying as a result of social and economic shifts. Writing music for amateurs and experimenting with new, participatory forms of performances, was a way to bridge the gap between composers and the public, bringing about the renewal of German musical life and progress. Writing high-quality music for this demographic also offered a way to familiarize the public with modern music, thus hopefully creating an audience for the future. Furthermore, from a purely financial standpoint,

¹⁷⁹ Hindemith met Rabsch during a rehearsal for a concert in Kiel, in which he was performing. The next day, Hindemith visited the school and played with the school orchestra.

¹⁸⁰ Hindemith, *Sing- und Spielmusik I*, 40. "Dem Zwecke entsprechend, die musikliebende Jugend zu belehren und zu unterhalten, habe ich mich bemüht, eine Musik zu schreiben, die dem Spieler und Hörer dieser Kreise in jeder Beziehung zugänglich ist."

¹⁸¹ Walter Blankenburg, "Der Plöner Musiktag," in Scholz and Jonas-Corrieri, *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, 433. "Es fehlt dem Werk wie allen Werken Hindemiths und dem größten Teil der modernen Musik überhaupt etwas von der wirklichen Bindung an Volk und Heimat... Wir fürchten, dass Hindemiths Werk wie alle modernen musikalischen Werke keinen langen Bestand haben wird."

the continued strength of amateur music represented a potentially more lucrative area of composition than modern concert music.

Notwithstanding his sincere concern about bridging the composer-audience divide or the joy he experienced working with amateurs, like his other music festival experiments, these works comprised only a small part of his *oeuvre*, largely remaining artifacts of new music festivals.¹⁸² Moreover, he again made a sharp differentiation between this music and art music, treating his amateur works as products or consumer goods rather than creative endeavors, a judgment that perhaps gives some basis to accusations of condescension from the representatives of the youth movement. Finally, as with his experiments with technology, Hindemith began to distance himself from this mission around 1930. The *Jugendmusikbewegung*'s belief that music should be used to build community directly conflicted with Hindemith's belief in music (whether listening or performing) for its own sake. Moreover, the group continued to prefer older music, or music by composers who had a long association with the group, negating Hindemith's attempts to pull the movement into the realm of the present. Bertolt Brecht's hijacking of *Lehrstück* for political purposes also was at odds Hindemith's musical-pedagogical goals and represented another nail in the coffin of his works with a social purpose. Ultimately, Hindemith would turn almost completely away from this area of music, renewing his commitment to art music and the concert hall. Nevertheless, the simplified musical language he developed while working on these amateur works would contribute to the development of his more accessible style of the 1930s.

¹⁸² Wolfram Hader also observes that Hindemith's works for the youth movement occupies only a "narrow, marginal position" (*eine schmale Randstellung*) of his works. Hader, 135. *Wir bauen eine Stadt* seems to have had the most performances. *Lehrstück* also received several performances around Germany and in England. It's impossible to say what the circulation was for his amateur works, especially in comparison with his art music.

Chapter Five

Return to the Concert Hall

If 1930 seemed to mark Hindemith's shift away from the amateur movement, or, more broadly, away from works with a social or political purpose, it would also signal his return to serious music and the concert hall. That year, Hindemith would compose three concert works he titled *Konzertmusik* (Concert Music); these were soon followed by the oratorio *Das Unaufhörliche* (1931), and his *Philharmonisches Konzert* (1932). Accompanying this return to the concert hall was a change in his musical language, as he moved away from his signature dissonant, contrapuntal style to a simpler, more accessible style characterized by homophonic textures, flowing melodic lines, and formal structures clearly delineated by a more tonal harmonic organization.¹ Hindemith would eventually codify his new musical language in his 1937 theoretical treatise, *Unterweisung im Tonsatz* (English version: *The Craft of Musical of Musical Composition*).

While scholars almost unanimously agree on the existence of this shift around 1930 (both in terms of style and his return to art music), there are several theories as to why it occurred.

¹ Heinrich Strobel, in his 1948 monograph on Hindemith, described a loosening up of style, which in turn led to consolidation (*Vertiefung*) and simplification (*Vereinfachung*) in both melodic-polyphonic structures and in harmony. Likewise, Stephen Hinton notes that Hindemith's music of the 1930s "acquires a weightier, more monumental quality. Chorale-like, homophonic textures become prominent, as do broad, flowing melodic lines within the framework of a relatively four-square periodicity. Moreover, the large-scale harmonic organization, which serves to articulate that periodicity, is systematically more tonal than in earlier music." James E. Paulding sees a "metamorphosis" in Hindemith's style just before 1930. Strobel, *Paul Hindemith*, 64; Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, by Paul Hindemith, vol. 2, no. 2 of Finscher and Schubert, *Paul Hindemith: Sämtliche Werke*, ix; James E. Paulding, "Mathis der Maler—The Politics of Music," *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 5 (1976): 121.

Many have attributed it to the political situation in Germany at this time: specifically, to the rise of National Socialism. Arnold Whittall, for example, interprets Hindemith's "retreat from the vitality and abrasiveness of his early style" as a "response to the political disaster which afflicted Germany at the end of the 1920s," claiming that his more accessible style was meant "to provide, whether intentionally or not, a spiritual antidote to the poison of fascism."² He then comments that it was "immeasurably sad" that his "cultural cure for political insanity proved to be sadly dull and colorless."³ Michael Walter attributes the "breakdown of political stability" as one of the reasons Hindemith returned to the "great and serious" tradition of German music, echoing Whittall's claim that "Hindemith's music in the 1930s and 40s tended to be as academic as his *Unterweisung im Tonsatz*, losing much of the fresh and imaginative quality so typical for his music in the 1920s."⁴ Ian Kemp makes a direct link between the political situation and Hindemith's change in style, claiming that "the Nazis precipitated a fundamental change in his music, the price to pay being less of vigor and adventurousness, more of melancholy and introspection, in short, a reversion to inclusiveness and a wider general appeal."⁵ This narrative both reinforces and is reinforced by the common perception that musical life was a stagnant, anti-modernist artistic wasteland during the years of the Third Reich. From this standpoint, then,

² Whittall, 74.

³ Whittall, 75.

⁴ Walter, 285–296.

⁵ Kemp, "Some Thoughts," 109. In contrast, Karen Painter acknowledges that "Hindemith's new style, which many contemporaries linked to National Socialism, emerged well before 1933 and at a time when the composer had no interest in or sympathies with Nazi ideology." Painter, *Symphonic Aspirations: German Music and Politics, 1900–1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 231.

Hindemith's shift in the 1930s toward clear formal structures and tonality, and the simplification of his musical language is considered regressive.⁶

Another explanation for Hindemith's change in style is that it was the natural result of his writing simpler music for amateurs, one that simply "rubbed off" onto his works for the concert hall. Elizabeth Janik, for example, states that his "growing interest in music education and other forms of 'music for use' was accompanied by the stylistic evolution of his composition, which was marked by a return to tonality and the exploration of more socially engaged forms of musical expression."⁷ Gerd Sannemüller also notes that the necessary simplification in writing for amateurs and children was "an important phase in his efforts at the restructuring of his compositional material and stylistic clarification."⁸ Stephen Hinton pinpoints the shift in style to the simple choruses of *Lehrstück*, claiming that "the new simplicity prompted by writing for amateurs also affected what traditional musicology terms his [Hindemith's] 'personal style.' ... In other words, *Lehrstück* signals a shift in Hindemith's approach to composition, and it is a shift that continues to make itself felt in the immediately succeeding instrumental works."⁹

Although Hindemith's engagements with amateur music no doubt caused him to develop a simpler style (one that never seemed quite simple enough for most amateurs), the question is

⁶ As Stephen Hinton notes, "Hindemith's development is seen by many... as one of gradual regression or reaction," adding that "the chief exponent of this line of interpretation was of course Theodor W. Adorno, whose Hindemith critiques, as polemically eloquent as they are exaggeratedly tendentious, influenced a whole generation of scholars and critics." Hinton, *Idea of Gebrauchsmusik*, 109.

⁷ Janik, 43. David Neumeyer views Hindemith's style around 1930 as a "synthesis of the *Jugendmusik*-inspired style with his New Objective manner." Neumeyer, 5.

⁸ Gerd Sannemüller, "Das *Philharmonische Konzert* von Paul Hindemith," *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 6 (1977): 80. "Die daraus folgende Notwendigkeit zur Vereinfachung der Mittel und zur Konzentration in der kleinen Form ist eine wichtige Phase in seinen Bemühungen um die Neuordnung seines Kompositionsmaterials und einer stilistischen Klärung."

⁹ Hinton, "*Lehrstück*: An Aesthetics of Performance," 72. See Painter, 231; Strobel, *Paul Hindemith*, 53–54.

why he decided to apply that style to his concert works. This chapter explores the myriad of reasons behind Hindemith's return to the concert hall and the corresponding shift in his musical style, looking at his *Konzertmusik* series, *Das Unaufhörliche*, and *Philharmonisches Konzert*. Rather than interpreting this shift as the unintended result of writing too much *Gebrauchsmusik* or the outgrowth of a totalitarian Nazi art policy, I show how these shifts were part of a larger, international movement towards conservatism in the arts, of which Hindemith was well aware. On a more personal level, Hindemith may have also been reacting to the growing calls in the musical press for him to abandon the music festival experimentation and return to the path of art music. Accompanying these calls was praise from critics and his own publishers for his new, more accessible style in his concert works of the 1930s and his re-embrace of serious music. Ultimately, by simplifying his musical style and returning to the concert hall, Hindemith was able to both bridge the gap between composer and audiences as well as fulfill his artistic mission as a *Tonkünstler*.

Under Pressure

As shown in the previous chapter, Hindemith's increasing frustrations with the *Jugendmusikbewegung*, as well as his disagreement with Bertolt Brecht over the pedagogical goals of *Lehrstück*, undoubtedly contributed to his growing distance from socially engaged works beginning around 1930. At the same time, the site of his experiments with technologies and amateur music—the annual summer new music festivals—could no longer continue after the New Music Berlin event due to the worsening economic crisis. In addition to these problems, Hindemith was starting to receive pressure from critics to drop his experiments of the past decade and, as Germany's leading young composer, take up the mantle of his country's musical legacy. Critic Hugo Leichtentritt, for example, believed that “if Hindemith places importance on

his music being heralded as the blossoming of the German spirit, then he must energetically disassociate himself from the nonsense on which he has, for years, wasted his great talent.”¹⁰ Max Donisch observed that it had become “fashionable” to describe Hindemith as “competent and, at best, to regret his direction,”¹¹ while Peter Epstein lamented how Hindemith had “romped about” (*getummelt*) in different genres, abandoning himself “to all the thoughts and experiments of the time,” namely mechanical music and compositions for children and amateurs.¹² Adorno also called on Hindemith to pick a compositional direction, stating that “it’s time that he, along with his entirely confident technique, finally puts himself seriously on the line with his experiments.”¹³ The culmination of this pressure was an open letter published in 1930 in *Die Musik* from composer Bruno Stürmer, who accused Hindemith of betraying the progress of German art music with these experiments:

From all sides, supporters have flocked to you, we gathered to you, we had hope in you. You could have become a messiah of German music, since (like Mozart) you united a basic musical instinct with abundant ideas.

But for a few years now, your previous straight path is interrupted; there are weird zigzag paths, which fill all outsiders and serious-minded people with worry. You write a school work, five finger exercises, songs for amateurs, you depict waltzes and platten. You write an opera, “News of the Day,” that doesn’t bring anything new to the day. You write Lehrstücke and school operas and finally, one sees pictures in the illustrated newspapers: “Hindemith in the sound-film studio,” “Hindemith with an electro-acoustic instrument...”

¹⁰ Leichtentritt, “Neue Musik 1930,” 837. “Wenn Hindemith Wert darauf legt, dass seine Musik weiterhin als Blüte deutschen Geistes gepriesen werden soll, dann muss er von den Faxereien, an die er seit Jahren sein großes Talent verschwendet, energisch abrücken.”

¹¹ Max Donisch, *Der Tag*, 9 June 1929, quoted in Schubert, introduction to *Neues vom Tage*, xviii. “Es ist Mode geworden... von Paul Hindemith als einem Könnern zu sprechen und höchstens seine Richtung zu bedauern.”

¹² Epstein, 582. “eine Hingabe an alle Gedanken und Experimente der Zeit, ein Sichverlieren in abseitige Probleme so misstrauisch von der ‘Kunstmusik’ her beobachteten ‘mechanischen Musik,’ Kompositionen für Kinder und Laien...” Epstein’s article was actually a defense of Hindemith’s *Neues vom Tage*.

¹³ Theodore Adorno, *Musikalische Schriften*, vol. 6, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978–1984), 188. “Aber es ist Zeit, dass er beim Experiment endlich sich wieder samt der ganzen sicheren Verfahrensweise ernst aufs Spiel setzte.”

We are eager for your answer, because we finally want to hear from you whether [this music] is your conviction or if it is just a well-paid whim. We want finally to know why Paul Hindemith, once the hope of German music, has become a destroyer of its strongest merits, of the consciousness of the mission of art.¹⁴

These intensifying calls from critics to return to serious music and the tensions with Brecht and the *Jugendmusikbewegung* formed the backdrop to the composition of three works in 1930 Hindemith titled *Konzertmusik* (concert music). The *Konzertmusik für Solobratsche und größeres Kammerorchester*, op. 48 (1930), was a virtuosic vehicle meant for him to showcase himself as a concert soloist.¹⁵ The other two works, *Konzertmusik für Klavier, Blechbläser und Harfen*, op. 49 (1930); and *Konzertmusik für Streichorchester und Blechbläser*, op. 50 (1931), were commissions: the former from American new music patron Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge for a festival in Chicago, and the latter from Serge Koussevitzky for the fiftieth anniversary of the

¹⁴ Stürmer, 41. “Offener Brief an Herrn Professor Paul Hindemith, Berlin,” *Die Musik*, 23, no. 1 (October 1930): 41. “Aus allen Lagern sind Anhänger zu Ihnen übergelaufen, man hat sich um Sie geschart, man hat auf Sie gehofft. Sie konnten ein Messias der deutschen Musik werden, da Sie Mozart ähnlich musikalischen Urtrieb mit strotzender Einfallsfülle verbanden. Seit ein paar Jahren aber ist Ihre vorher so geradlinige Bahn unterbrochen; sie findet seltsame Zickzackwege, die alle Außenstehenden und Ernsthaften mit Sorge erfüllen. Sie schreiben ein Schulwerk, Fünf-Finger-Tonstücke, Lieder für Liebhaber, beschreiben Walzen und Platten. Sie schreiben eine Oper ‘Neues vom Tage,’ die nichts Neues an den Tag bringt. Sie schreiben Lehrstücke und Schulopern und endlich, man sieht Bilder von Ihnen in den Illustrierten Zeitungen: ‘Hindemith im Tonfilmstudio,’ ‘Hindemith am elektro-akustischen Instrument...’ Wir sind gespannt auf Ihre Antwort, weil wir endlich von Ihnen hören wollen, ob es Ihre Überzeugung ist oder nur eine gut bezahlte Laune. Wir wollen endlich wissen, warum Paul Hindemith aus der Hoffnung der deutschen Musik zu einem Zertrümmerer eines ihrer stärksten Vorzüge, des Bewusstseins von der Sendung der Kunst geworden ist.”

¹⁵ He composed the work in fall 1929 through February 1930, premiering it on 28 March 1930 with the Berlin Philharmonic under Wilhelm Furtwängler.

Boston Symphony Orchestra.¹⁶ For both Hindemith's contemporaries and scholars today, these three works heralded his return to, and reconciliation with, the much-maligned concert hall.¹⁷

One way Hindemith signaled this reconciliation was through the deliberate designation of "Konzertmusik" he gave each work. On one level, the term simply specified the genre of the works, as *Konzert* translates as "concerto" as well as "concert." Both Op. 48 and Op. 49 are concertos (for the viola and piano, respectively), and Op. 50 uses a concerted style, featuring contrasting groups of strings and brass. Yet *Konzertmusik* more likely referred to music meant for the concert hall, as Hindemith used this term in his letters in order to distinguish this type of music from his music for amateurs, which he designated as "Laien-" or "Gemeinschaftsmusik."¹⁸ This careful differentiation between music for professionals and music for amateurs echoed the sharp distinction he made between professional and amateur musicians in the essay "Demands on the Amateur" (discussed in the previous chapter).¹⁹ Indeed, the essay appeared in January 1930, the same time Hindemith was composing his Viola Concerto, op. 48. But while making this distinction, Hindemith also reaffirmed the importance of the professional musician, calling him "equally important" to the development of musical life. By pointedly labeling these works as *Konzertmusiken*, then, Hindemith seems to unashamedly reclaim an institution he had only

¹⁶ Op. 49 premiered on 12 October 1930 with the Chicago Symphony and Hindemith's friend Emma Lübbecke-Job as the soloist. Op. 50 was premiered by the Boston Symphony under Koussevitzky in April 1931. Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* was also commissioned for this concert.

¹⁷ Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke*, ix; Giselher Schubert, "Kontext," 87.

¹⁸ Examples of this term are found in his letters to Eduard Reinacher, 14 April 1930 and to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, 8 May 1930. He also uses other terms referencing the concert or concert hall, such as *Konzertbetrieb* (concert industry), *Konzertbesucher* (concert attendees), and *Konzertpodium* (conductor's podium).

¹⁹ Hans Kohlhasse believes that the essay was probably influenced by his work on both the *Konzertmusik* series and his experiences with amateur music. Kohlhasse, introduction *Violinkonzert/Konzertmusik op. 48*, vol. 3, no. 3 of Finscher and Schubert, *Paul Hindemith: Sämtliche Werke*, xv. See also Schubert, "Kontext," 111.

recently declared as untenable.²⁰ Furthermore, because Hindemith continued to write and perform concert music while simultaneously declaring that traditional concert life was dying, perhaps “Demands on the Amateur” may also be seen as a justification of his continued work in this area.²¹

By writing works specifically designated for the concert hall, Hindemith also reaffirmed the associations of the venue that he had seemed to reject in his works of the previous decade, such as its bourgeois audiences and the nineteenth-century values of autonomy, subjectivity, and creative genius. Hindemith scholar Giselher Schubert, for one, has observed this “restorative quality” in the three concert pieces, believing that with them, “Hindemith supports an artistic position that he renounced in his works of the early 1920s.”²² These associations are thrown into sharper relief when one compares the *Konzertmusik* series with his earlier *Kammermusik* series of the 1920s.²³ While the size of the ensembles in the works of both series are not very different (both feature small chamber orchestras with rather eclectic instrumentation), the semantic shift from *Kammer* to *Konzert* is significant. *Kammer* suggests smaller, more intimate ensembles— itself a rejection of the large forces of late romanticism (Strauss, Mahler, Bruckner) and their place in the concert hall. *Konzert*, by contrast, calls up the traditional, popular repertoire of the concert hall, such as symphonies, concertos, and overtures. The move from *Kammer* to *Konzert*

²⁰ Giselher Schubert also observes that “even in its name alone, *Konzertmusik* op. 48 restitutes the institutionalized concert industry that he simultaneously criticized” (“Die *Konzertmusik* op. 48 restituiert schon in ihrem Namen den institutionalisierten Konzertbetrieb, den er gleichzeitig kritisiert”). Schubert, “Kontext,” 106.

²¹ Hindemith continued to perform with the Amar quartet, taking tours of the USSR in 1927 and 1928. Additionally, he performed his viola concerto *Kammermusik Nr. 5* as the soloist eighty-fivetimes between 1927–1933 in Germany and abroad.

²² Schubert, “Kontext,” 87, 106. “Hindemith trägt in diese Werke sukzessiv einen Kunstanspruch, den sein Schaffen in den frühen zwanziger Jahren verleugnet hatte.”

²³ Hindemith composed the seven works of the *Kammermusik* series between 1921 and 1927.

may have also announced a shift in Hindemith's attitude or stance as a composer. The *Kammermusik* series was tied to the image of Hindemith the *enfant terrible*, as it was *Kammermusik Nr. 1* that caused the scandal at the 1922 Donaueschingen Festival and prompted Alfred Heuss's polemic "The Foxtrot in the Concert Hall."

The *Konzertmusik* works also signaled a clear shift in Hindemith's musical style. The *Kammermusik* series was known for its Baroque techniques (*Fortspinnung*, concerted techniques between concertino and ripieno, dense contrapuntal textures, and constant forward motion) and harsh dissonances, as well as the so-called "coldness" or "objective" stance critics found in it. In contrast, the three works of the *Konzertmusik* series featured more transparent textures, less dissonance, clearer tonal centers, less forward momentum, and lyrical melodies.²⁴ Hindemith even quoted a German folksong ("So wünsch ich ihr ein' gute Nacht") in the final movement of the piano concerto. In sum, if the term *Kammermusik* evoked images of Baroque coldness and a rejection of the nineteenth century, "*Konzertmusik*" represented the opposite: a reconciliation with the bourgeois audience, nineteenth-century genres, and even romanticism. By moving from *Kammer* to *Konzert*, Hindemith was arguably announcing his move away from his past and back to the *Konzertbetrieb*.²⁵

While scholars are generally in agreement that the *Konzertmusik* series represented both a stylistic and philosophical shift in Hindemith's compositional direction, his contemporaries also recognized a sea change. In numerous reviews, critics remarked on a new sense of simplicity and

²⁴ Ian Kemp notes that the three works "are distinguished from their predecessors, the *Kammermusik* series, by a lyric melody whose vocal contours and strongly tonal bias stem ultimately from German folk music." Kemp, *Hindemith*, 25. See also Neumeyer, 5; Kohlhase, xiv; Strobel, *Paul Hindemith*, 67–72.

²⁵ Michael Kater has singled out the three *Konzertmusiken* as "works that were putting his once controversial avant-garde reputation well behind." Kater, *Composers*, 33.

lightness in his music, moving away from a preponderance of polyphony.²⁶ Heinrich Strobel, for example, described the viola concerto, Op. 48 as:

one of the loveliest and most mature work that we know of Hindemith's. The cheerful, relaxed style of "Neues vom Tage" is carried over into concert music. The same grace, the same lightness, the same mastery of work—but simpler, more transparent, calmer, and with a lyrical undertone that was always there with Hindemith but has never come through so purely [as now]. Many themes have something of the popular about them; they make an imprint, they remain in the ear... Hindemith's polyphonic style has loosened up so much, that the clear coherence is now more latently perceptible...²⁷

Alfred Einstein, writing for *Die Musik*, also approvingly noted that the concerto was "not a typical 'Hindemith creation': it doesn't have the signs of "rhythmic vitality" or the "linear abandon" of which even a conservative public has gradually gotten used to with Hindemith...

Hindemith is on a new path, melodically and harmonically."²⁸ Even Adorno noted the thawing of his objective style through the "rediscovery of harmony" (*Neuentdeckung der Harmonie*) which "crackled under the sheet of ice for the first time in a long time."²⁹

²⁶ Some critics admittedly saw or discerned nothing different in the *Konzertmusiken*, still describing his music as atonal, mechanical, motoric, and unfeeling. Kohlhasse, xv.

²⁷ Heinrich Strobel, "Hindemiths Neue Bratschenmusik," *Melos* 9, no. 4 (April 1930): 195–196. "es ist eine der schönsten und reifsten Arbeiten, die wir von Hindemith kennen. Die heitere, gelöste Stil von 'Neues vom Tage' ist auf die konzertante Musik übertragen. Dieselbe Grazie, dieselbe Leichtigkeit, dieselbe Meisterschaft in der Arbeit—aber noch einfacher, noch durchsichtiger, noch beruhigter und mit einem lyrischen Grundton, der immer bei Hindemith da war der aber noch nie so rein durchklang. Manche Themen haben etwas Volkstümliches, sie prägen sich ein, sie bleiben im Ohr... Hindemiths polyphoner Stil hat sich so stark aufgelockert, dass die reine Stimmigkeit nur mehr latent spürbar ist."

²⁸ Alfred Einstein, review of Op. 48, *Die Musik* 22, no. 8 (May 1930): 611–612. "Es ist kein abgestempelter 'Hindemith,' es trägt nicht die Zeichen der 'rhythmischen Vitalität' oder der 'linearen Unbekümmertheit,' an die sich allgemach bei Hindemith selbst ein konservatives Publikum gewöhnt hat... Hindemith ist auf einem neuen Wege, melodisch und harmonisch."

²⁹ Adorno, "Paul Hindemith: *Konzertmusik für Solobratsche und größeres Kammerorchester* (1930)," *Die Musik* 24 (1931): 299. "Es knistert unter der Eisdecke, zum ersten Male seit sehr langer Zeit."

Critics also hailed the piano concerto, Op. 49, and the commission for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Op. 50, as representing a new and welcome change in Hindemith's compositional style. Armand Machabey wrote that the piano concerto:

Confirms the impression left by the most recent works of this author: Hindemith is evolving... Hence his orientation to a music rich in sonority, but simple in structure, towards accentuated motives, clear, stripped of all complexity, toward polyphony that is a bit massive, but whose constituent lines mutually lead each other in the irresistible movements, and finally towards ease and spontaneity freed from all concern of writing.³⁰

For Hans Schultze-Ritter, who devoted an entire article to the work, it was “no mere coincidence” that the piano concerto, with its simpler harmonies, clear tonal relationships, and “elastic” (*elastisch*) melody and rhythm, “had the greatest success at its Chicago premiere and had to be repeated in a second performance.”³¹ Similarly, with regard to Op. 50, Strobel declared that the work's “confident freedom in form and style, rhapsodic force of melodic line, [and] boldness of sounding contrasts surpasses everything that Hindemith has written,” even claiming that the solo trumpet and trombone lines in the second movement “almost trespass into the realm

³⁰ The performance occurred during a concert of contemporary German music sponsored by the French chapter of the International Society for Contemporary Music. Armand Machabey, review of Hindemith's *Concerto pour Piano, Cuivre et Harpes*, *La revue musicale* (1931): 364. “Ce second concerto pour piano confirme l'impression que laissent les oeuvres immédiatement précédentes de cet auteur : Hindemith évolue... De là cette orientation vers une musique riche de sonorité, mais simple de structure, vers des motifs accusés, clairs, dépouillés de toute complication, vers ces polyphonies un peu massives mais dont les lignes constitutives s'entraînent mutuellement dans des mouvements irrésistibles, vers l'aisance enfin et la spontanéité dégagée de tout souci d'écriture.”

³¹ Hans Schultze-Ritter, “Hindemiths neues Klavierkonzert,” *Melos* 10, no. 7 (July 1931): 227. “Die Harmonik ist von einer bei Hindemith überraschenden Einfachheit und lässt die tonalen Beziehungen oft unmittelbar deutlich hervortreten. Melodik und Rhythmik sind elastisch und fein geschliffen... Es ist eine Tatsache von nicht bloß zufälliger Bedeutung, dass das Konzert, für das Musikfest in Chicago geschrieben und Mrs. Coolidge gewidmet, bei der dortigen Erstaufführung der größte Erfolg war und in einer zweiten Veranstaltung wiederholt werden musste.” Schultze-Ritter also discerned a “perceptible change” (*ist ein Wandel spürbar*) in this work.

of romanticism.”³² The *Boston Globe* also placed the work firmly within the German romantic musical legacy, stating:

This Konzertmusik in spirit might be the work of a 20th century Brahms. It is the first work by a German of the younger generation to be played in Boston which seems to continue the tradition of the 19th century masters. One thought of Richard Strauss and of Reger and Mahler, as well as of Brahms, in listening.³³

A few critics understood this new, simplified musical language as a way to make concert music accessible to the public. Arthur Browne in *Music & Letters* spoke of Hindemith's intention “to delete all superfluous notes, and to make his music concise, clear, economical of means, direct in end—in a word, to make music ‘serviceable.’”³⁴ After describing how Hindemith had simplified the harmony and clarified tonal relationships in the piano concerto, Schultze-Ritter specifically stated that it was “therefore relatively easy to grasp and doubtless also accessible to a wider public without too many difficulties.”³⁵ Yet Schultze-Ritter was careful to note that this new simplicity was not “a cheap concession to an everyday taste,” nor was it “a retreat in Hindemith's development,” and as to prove the work's compositional worth, Schulze-Ritter included a four-page analysis of it.³⁶ This statement, along with the analysis, illustrates what

³² Heinrich Strobel, “Das neue Oratorium von Hindemith,” *Melos* 10, no. 12 (December 1931): 424. “eine souveräne Freizügigkeit in Form und Stil, eine rhapsodische Gewalt der melodischen Linie, eine Kühnheit klanglicher Kontraste, die alles übertrifft, was Hindemith geschrieben hat... Solotrompete und Soloposaune fast bis in romantische Bezirke eindringen.”

³³ *Boston Globe*, 4 April 1931, quoted in Arnold Werner-Jensen, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1917–30*, vol. 2, no. 1 of Finscher and Schubert, *Paul Hindemith: Sämtliche Werke*, xii.

³⁴ Arthur Browne, “Paul Hindemith and the Neo-Classic Music,” *Music & Letters* 13, no. 1 (January 1932): 57–58.

³⁵ Schultze-Ritter, “Hindemiths neues Klavierkonzert,” 227. “Das Konzert ist daher verhältnismäßig leicht aufzufassen und zweifellos auch einem breiteren Publikum ohne allzu große Schwierigkeiten zugänglich.”

³⁶ Schultze-Ritter, “Hindemiths neues Klavierkonzert,” 227. “In diesem Umstand liegt nicht eine billige Konzession an einen Allerweltgeschmack; noch weniger ist er als Rückschritt in Hindemiths Entwicklung aufzufassen.”

Michael Walter has called the “paradox” of music from the 1930s, as artists tried to strike a balance between accessibility and artistic worth. Concert music was expected to be somewhat complex and original, yet simultaneously be simple enough to appeal to the masses.³⁷

Critics perceived his return to romanticism not only in terms of style, but also in Hindemith’s apparent return to writing music with soul and depth of feeling. One reviewer stated that with the viola concerto, Hindemith had “bound the scattered elements of modern music into an inner unity... not only with intellect, but also with soul.”³⁸ Henry Prunières in the *New York Times* wrote that the composer “has never before appeared so romantically inspired” as in the piano concerto, believing that it represented “a new Hindemith, much less a slave of rhythm, of the machine, more human and more sentimental. May not the change be due to the fact that now he is a professor at the Berlin Conservatory, and has stopped writing his works on trains, as he used to for ten years while traveling with the quartet of which he was a member?”³⁹ After the German premiere of the Boston piece, A. Sachse in the *Steglitzer Anzeiger*, calling Hindemith “the most significant figure in contemporary music, already accomplished, no longer experimenter,” described the symphony as the:

purest affirmation of a new romanticism. In the dramatically exciting breath of this (in the noblest sense) impassioned composition, Mahler’s broad melos and great expressive gestures come to life again in a new, entirely authentic form. The soul, long suppressed in modern music creations, is finally permitted to speak again! The applause after the dynamically strong, captivating display was extraordinarily warm.⁴⁰

³⁷ Walter, 303.

³⁸ Review from the *Hamburger Echo* (29 March 1930), quoted in Kohlhasse, xv. “auseinanderstehenden Elemente der modernen Musik zu innerer Einheit gebunden...sie nicht nur mit Geist, nein auch mit Seele erfüllt.”

³⁹ Henry Prunières, “The Coolidge Festival in Chicago,” *New York Times*, 19 October 1930: 120.

⁴⁰ W. Sachse, *Steglitzer Anzeiger*, 16 November 1931, quoted in Werner-Jensen, xii. “Hindemith, die bedeutendste Gestalt in der jungen Musik, Erfüller schon, nicht mehr Experimentator... Die zuletzt genannte Schöpfung Hindemiths ist reinstes Bekenntnis zu neuer Romantik; im dramatisch erregenden Atem dieser im edelsten Sinne pathetischen Komposition

Sachse's comment that Hindemith was "no longer [an] experimenter," as well as Strobel's belief that Hindemith had finally "overcome" his contrapuntal period, capture what is perhaps the most important theme of this criticism: the overwhelming sense of relief that Hindemith was finally moving past his works of the previous decade.⁴¹ Critics saw the *Konzertmusik* works as proclaiming a new, more mature Hindemith, one who was shedding his "bad boy" reputation and musical festival experimentation. In his review of Op. 50, the critic for the *Boston Globe* noticed that "other works of Hindemith heard here in the past had given one the impression that he was the typical clever young musical radical, bent above all on shocking conventionally minded listeners... Hence it was astonishing to hear yesterday music wholly serious and somber, with no calculated audacities of manner."⁴² Likewise, the *Christian Science Monitor*'s critic expressed their thankfulness that in Op. 50, Hindemith "did not want to experiment with particular instrumental possibilities, nor with a realistic depiction of mechanized life,"⁴³ while another wrote that "this work belongs to the group of recent works" that signified "that Hindemith has retreated from the combat zone of revolutionary new-toners."⁴⁴ English

lebt Mahlers breites Melos und große Ausdrucksgebärde in neuer, ganz eigentlicher Form wieder auf. Die im modernen Musikschaffen lange verdrängte Seele darf endlich wieder sprechen! Der Beifall nach der dynamisch stark unterstrichenen, hinreißenden Darstellung war von außerordentlicher Wärme."

⁴¹ Strobel, "Das neue Oratorium von Hindemith," 424. "Hindemith hat seine kontrapunktische Periode überwunden."

⁴² *Boston Globe*, 4 April 1931, quoted in Werner-Jensen, xii.

⁴³ Review from *The Christian Science Monitor*, reproduced and translated in *Melos*. "...im weiteren Verlaufe der Aufführung wurde es immer stärker spürbar, dass Hindemith hier weder mit den einzelnen instrumentalen Möglichkeiten noch mit einer realistischen Darstellung mechanisierten Lebens experimentieren wollte."

⁴⁴ Raskin in *Rheinisch-Westfälischen Zeitung*, 9 March 1932, quoted in Werner-Jensen, xii. "Dieses Werk gehört zur Gruppe der letzten Werke Hindemiths...die bedeuten, dass Hindemith sich aus der Nahkampfzone revolutionärer Neutöner...zurückgezogen hat."

critic Arthur Browne also expressed satisfaction that Hindemith was putting his talents to better use:

In his sets of *Kammermusik* and in his string quartets, Hindemith has shown how capable he is of writing good and noteworthy music. With his vitality and his technical dexterity, it is scarcely credible that he will continue to fritter away his talents. Perhaps it is necessary for him to experiment if only to convince himself of his real abilities in other directions... Fortunately however, Hindemith's most recent works indicate that he is "settling down." The "Konzertmusik für Bläser" (1930) is splendidly direct in manner—straightforward, vigorous, and to the point. And the "Klavier Konzert" (1930-1) for pianoforte, brass, and two harps, is one of the finest works Hindemith has written.⁴⁵

Clearly, Hindemith's contemporaries noticed—and approved of—the compositional and aesthetic change of direction found in the three *Konzertmusiken*, yet both Hindemith and his publishers remained quiet about this change.⁴⁶ In fact, he initially seemed reluctant to abandon his stance regarding the importance of amateur music, based on statements from April and May 1930 after the *Lehrstück* scandal and publication of "Demands on Amateurs," but before the New Music Berlin festival. In a letter to the poet Eduard Reinacher from April 1930, for example, Hindemith seemed to reaffirm his dedication to music with a social function.⁴⁷ While planning a mass amateur sing-along for the New Music Berlin festival (the sing-along ultimately did not take place), Hindemith asked Reinacher to come up with a suitable short poem for the sing-along, declaring, "I think that today, such things are more important than all concert music or such stuff."⁴⁸ He repeated these sentiments the following month in a letter to Elizabeth

⁴⁵ Browne, 57–58. Browne also notes that Hindemith is "young and impetuous enough to have one or two bees in his musical bonnet," which he identifies as *Gebrauchsmusik*, *Gemeinschaftsmusik*, *Lehrstückmusik*, *Filmmusik*, and *Musik für Radio*. Browne, 43.

⁴⁶ I have found no statements by Hindemith or his publishers regarding this change.

⁴⁷ Hindemith had set Reinacher's poetry in the 1922 song cycle *Des Todes Tod*.

⁴⁸ Hindemith to Reinacher, 14 April 1930, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 146. "Ich wäre sehr froh, wenn Du noch daran versuchen wolltest, weil ich solche Dinge heute für wichtiger halte als alle Konzertmusik oder sonstigen Kram."

Sprague Coolidge regarding her commission for the Chicago festival, dismissing his recent concert works as merely commercial necessities:

In the last few years I have almost entirely turned away from concert music and have, almost without exception, written music with pedagogical or social leanings: for amateurs, for children, for radio, mechanical instruments, etc. I believe this type of composition is more important than writing for concert purposes, because the latter is almost only a technical exercise for the musician and hardly does anything for the further development of music. Therefore, I have to consider the concert as a purely commercial matter. All the music that I have written in the past few years for concert purposes have been produced for commercial reasons. I can't transfer to concert music the same idealism that I gladly devote to things that seem to me extremely necessary for the further development of music. If anything, I have to offset one with the other.⁴⁹

Taken at face value, these letters appear to show that Hindemith's commitment to amateur music was both idealistic and unwavering, and that his recent works for the concert hall were merely commercial and pragmatic.⁵⁰ Indeed, both the piano concerto and the piece for brass and strings were commissions, while the viola concerto was a virtuoso tour-de-force he used to promote himself as both a performer and composer.⁵¹ Because of these statements, scholars have tried to reconcile the glaring contradiction between Hindemith's continued activity in the concert hall as performer and composer while simultaneously declaring this music

⁴⁹ Hindemith to Coolidge, 8 May 1930, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 147. "Ich habe mich in den letzten Jahren fast ganz von der Konzertmusik abgewandt und fast durchweg Musik mit pädagogischen oder sozialen Tendenzen geschrieben: für Liebhaber, für Kinder, für Rundfunk, mechanische Instrumente etc. Ich halte diese Art der Komposition für wichtiger, als das Schreiben für Konzertzwecke, weil Letzteres fast nur eine technische Aufgabe für den Musiker ist und für die Weiterentwicklung der Musik kaum etwas getan wird. Ich muss darum das Konzert als eine rein geschäftliche Sache betrachten. Alle Musik, die ich in den letzten Jahren für Konzertzwecke geschrieben habe, ist aus geschäftlichen Gründen angefertigt worden. Den Idealismus, den ich gerne auf Dinge verwende, die mir für die Weiterentwicklung der Musik äußerst notwendig erscheinen, kann ich nicht auf die Konzertmusik übertragen. Im Gegenteil, ich muss das eine durch das andere ausgleichen."

⁵⁰ Alexander Fisher, for example, cites the letter to Coolidge and the essay "Demands on the Amateur" as evidence of "Hindemith's concern with the musical amateur" that "remained central to his artistic philosophy throughout his life." Fisher, 17.

⁵¹ Kohlhasse, xv.

unimportant or simply a commercial enterprise (especially since he had established the equality of the performing artist with the amateur in his essay “Forderungen an den Laien,” calling both “necessary” (*wichtig*) to the development of music). Stephen Hinton therefore uses the letter to Coolidge as proof that, “in re-establishing compositional links with traditional concert life... Hindemith was in no way turning his back on *Gebrauchsmusik*, let alone committing an aesthetic apostasy.”⁵² Giseler Schubert and Hans Kohlhasse try to resolve the contradiction by viewing the viola concert as a sort of “*Gebrauchsmusik* for a virtuoso,” believing that since Hindemith created the work as a touring vehicle, the work had a functional purpose and therefore can be classified as *Gebrauchsmusik*.⁵³

Without dismissing any sort idealism or genuine belief he might have had in music for children or amateurs, it is possible to view these statements in a more critical light. First, Hindemith had a vested interest in expressing his continued support for music with a social purpose in both these letters. In the case of Reinacher, he was trying to persuade the poet on short notice to write a text for the upcoming music festival. As he noted in his request regarding the planned mass sing-along on 22 June, “I’m supposed to write something for it and I’d like to do it together with my composition class, but I have no text. Can you write it?... The time until then is short, therefore I would naturally like to know something pretty soon.”⁵⁴ In the letter to Coolidge, Hindemith may have portrayed himself as an idealist in order to wrangle a higher

⁵² Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, ix.

⁵³ Kohlhasse, xv; Schubert, “Kontext,” 106. “Dieser Widerspruch mindert sich, wenn unter Konzertmusik Gebrauchsmusik für einen Virtuosen, als der Hindemith selbst in jenen Jahren reisen konnte, verstanden wird...”

⁵⁴ Hindemith to Reinacher, April 1930, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 144. “Ich soll und möchte mit meiner Kompositionsklasse zusammen etwas dafür schreiben, habe aber keinen Text. Kannst Du ihn schreiben?... Die Zeit bis dahin ist kurz, deshalb wüsste ich natürlich gerne recht bald etwas.”

honorarium from her.⁵⁵ After stating that his concert works helped finance the creation of “music with pedagogical or social tendencies,” he adds, “I hope that you understand my position when I tell you that the honorarium that you offered me for a concert piece is too low. For a commission of this type I can’t accept anything under 10,000 Marks. Should you find this price too high, I would, of course, completely understand your decision.”⁵⁶

Moreover, by insisting that his works for amateurs is done out of idealism or to contribute to the development of German music, Hindemith guards against accusations of writing simplistic music out of a lack of skill—the accusation he leveled against composers who wrote amateur music in his “Forderungen an den Laien.” He also wards off any accusations of writing “Gebrauchsmusik” for commercial gain, of which Bruno Stürmer would accuse him in his open letter later that year, when he asked whether Hindemith’s recent experiments were done out of a genuine conviction were just a “well-paid whim.”⁵⁷

Finally, Hindemith’s professed commitment to music with a social function may simply reflect a reluctance to backtrack from his former, very public endorsements of this music. As the organizer for the Donaueschingen, Baden-Baden, and New Music Berlin festivals, Hindemith had the reputation of being at the forefront of all new music experiments.⁵⁸ And now, he was

⁵⁵ Even Hinton, who sees the letter as evidence for Hindemith’s commitment to Gebrauchsmusik, acknowledges that “one should not overlook the tactical nature of the composer’s reply to Miss Coolidge’s initial request.” Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, ix. See also Schubert, “Kontext,” 111, footnote 99.

⁵⁶ Hindemith to Coolidge, 8 May 1930, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 147. “Ich hoffe, dass Sie meinen Standpunkt verstehen, wenn ich Ihnen sage, dass das Honorar, was Sie für ein Konzertstück von mir ausgesetzt haben, zu niedrig bemessen ist. Einen Auftrag in dieser Art nehme ich hier nicht unter 10000 Mark an. Sollte Ihnen dieser Preis zu hoch sein, würde ich Ihren Entschluss natürlich vollkommen verstehen.”

⁵⁷ Stürmer, 42. “eine gut bezahlte Laune”

⁵⁸ Even today, Auner describes Hindemith as becoming “associated with virtually all the latest trends, from Neoclassicism to music for radio and film.” Auner, *Music*, 144.

trying (and being called on) to extricate himself from those experiments. English critic Arthur Browne summarized this tug-of-war between his music festival experiments and his current contributions for the concert hall:

As a composer he [Hindemith] seems to be in an awkward and unsatisfactory position at present. He is the acknowledged leader of the New Music in Germany, and perhaps he has found it difficult to dissociate himself from the more extravagant and less musical manifestations of this movement. Many of his most ardent supporters hail him as the brilliant instigator of this or that craze, while others urge him to make his work less “useful” and more (much more) “soulful.” The result is that much of his music at present betrays a state of exasperating indecision.⁵⁹

On a more practical note, there is also the possibility that since these experiments (youth music, music for radio) were already in the works for the New Music Berlin festival, he could not appear to be less than enthusiastic about them.

Whether the motivations behind the *Konzertmusik* series were purely financial, a deliberate rejection of works for amateurs, or (more likely) something in between, both Hindemith and his publishers were eager that the compositions should be publicized and performed in a way befitting important concert works. Willy Strecker, for example, wanted to distribute copies of the score of the viola concerto to critics, an action that “would be not only for the sake of sales, but above all very important [to guarantee that] some of the influential people will understand the work.”⁶⁰ Likewise, for the German premiere of the piano concerto, Ludwig

⁵⁹ Browne, 57.

⁶⁰ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 21 March 1930. “Dies wäre nicht nur für den Verkauf, sondern vor allem für das Verständnis des Werkes bei einigen der maßgebenden Leute von großer Wichtigkeit.” Unfortunately, this didn’t seem to happen as Willy later chided Hindemith for not sending him the score back in time to do this, mentioning that, “It’s a shame that we couldn’t publish the score of the viola concerto in time. Some of the critics would have written less nonsense about it if they could have seen the work beforehand” (“Schade, dass wir nicht die Partitur des Bratschen-Konzertstückes rechtzeitig herausgeben konnten. Einige der Kritiker hätten weniger Unsinn darüber geschrieben, wenn sie sich das Werk vorher hätten ansehen können”). W. Strecker to Hindemith, 14 April 1930.

Strecker suggested using a pianist more famous than Hindemith's good friend Emma Lübbecke-Job, who had premiered the work in Chicago, to which Hindemith agreed.⁶¹ For the Boston piece, Willy wanted to "bring out the premiere in a big way with the Berlin radio," hoping to publicize this work and others "within the context of a larger Hindemith evening."⁶² Hindemith agreed, noting that "we must only make sure that we get a decent program together" and recommended his overture from *Neues vom Tage* along with one of the newer concertos.⁶³ He also expressed concern about the successful premiere and reception of these works, writing:

Despite the economic crisis, the radio station in Berlin sent me a 60-word telegram about whether [Hermann] Scherchen should conduct the string and wind concerto. If you've already allowed him to do it, I can't do anything about it, but I myself am strongly against having him do it. Lately, he's had atrocious performances. I'm afraid his time is pretty much over. Besides, I don't appreciate that he, of all people, who spoils my things for people everywhere (and not only for you!), should premiere a piece of mine. Bad director plus a radio orchestra gone to seed—damage done.⁶⁴

⁶¹ L. Strecker to Hindemith, 1 September 1930. "Giesecking zieht mehr in der Öffentlichkeit, als Frau Lübbecke." Otto Klemperer had originally suggested using Walter Giesecking.

⁶² W. Strecker to Hindemith, 19 February 1931. "Für das Bostoner Orchesterstück möchte ich vorschlagen, die Uraufführung in wirklich großer Form durch den Berliner Rundfunk Anfang November herauszubringen... Natürlich müsste sich der Rundfunk verpflichten, wirklich diese Uraufführung zu einem Ereignis zu machen, sie z.B. im Rahmen eines großen Hindemith Abends zu geben."

⁶³ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 2 March 1931. "Man müsste nur sehen, dass man ein anständigen Programm zusammenbekommt. Vielleicht die Ouvertüre, dann das neue Stück, dann einer der Konzerte und zum Schluss entweder der 'Prinz Eugen' oder das Orchesterkonzert."

⁶⁴ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 8 September 1931. "Der Rundfunk in Berlin schickte mir ein trotz der Wirtschaftskrise 60 Worte langes Telegramm: ob Scherchen das Streich- und Blaskonzert dirigieren solle. Wenn Sie es ihm erlaubt haben, kann ich ja nichts machen, aber ich selbst bin dringend gegen ihn. Er hat in der letzten Zeit miserable Aufführungen gemacht. Ich fürchte, seine Zeit ist ziemlich vorbei. Außerdem sehe ich nicht ein, dass ausgerechnet er, der den Leuten überall meine Sachen vermiest (nicht nur Ihnen!), ein Stück von mir herausbringen soll. Schlecht arbeitender Dirigent, dazu das ohnehin verschlammte Funkorchester—schade drum."

This letter seems particularly unkind, since Scherchen was the conductor who helped Hindemith at the start of his career by conducting many of his works at the Donaueschingen festivals. However, it is possible that Hindemith was also trying to distance himself from Donaueschingen, as Scherchen had conducted *Kammermusik Nr. 1*, his *Konzertmusik für Blasorchester*, op. 41 (for the Donaueschingen Festival), and *Der Lindberghflug*. Scherchen had also conducted a performance of *Lehrstück* on 1 March 1930 in Munich. Given his publisher's concerns over Brecht's politics discussed in the previous chapter, Scherchen's socialist leanings may have also been a liability.

Das Unaufhörliche

Hindemith's next major work for the concert hall was the oratorio *Das Unaufhörliche* (The Unceasing, 1931), a collaboration with the writer Gottfried Benn (1886–1956). In contrast to the *Konzertmusik* series' rather small and eclectic scoring, the oratorio featured his largest performing force to date, requiring a full symphony orchestra (with an extra organ and contrabassoon which Hindemith designated in the score as “desired but not totally necessary”), four soloists (soprano, tenor, baritone, and bass), boys' choir, and mixed choir. The work was also monumental in length, clocking in at around two hours with eighteen numbers divided into three large sections. Formally, Hindemith adhered to the models set by Bach and Mendelssohn, with large opening and closing chorus, and numbers for soloists in between. Moreover, *Das Unaufhörliche* stayed quite close to the genre in terms of subject matter. While not on a sacred subject, the libretto for *Das Unaufhörliche* has a somber, philosophical subject, as it explores the question of permanence and meaning in a world constantly in flux.⁶⁵ The first part presents “The

⁶⁵ Ann Clark Fehn, *Change and Permanence: Gottfried Benn's Text for Paul Hindemith's Oratorio Das Unaufhörliche*, Stanford German Studies (Bern: Peter Lang, 1977), 9, 131–143.

Unceasing” as a great law: change is the only thing that is permanent. The second part looks at science, technology, art, religion, and love and finds that all these things are transitory. The third part addresses how to find meaning in this world of constant change, with the boys’ choir providing the answer: struggle and suffering. In Benn’s words: “The name [*Das Unaufhörliche*] should portray the endless senselessness, the ebb and flow of history, the transience of the Great and of Glory, the unceasing randomness and instability of existence.”⁶⁶ Benn also alluded to the oratorio’s traditional spiritual content, writing to a friend in December 1931, “Right now I’m writing oratorios and turning towards the supernatural; I’ll send you the text.”⁶⁷

Despite the traditional genre, many scholars have suggested that the oratorio continued *Lehrstück*’s pedagogical goals. As *Lehrstück* was meant to have a didactic message about the unimportance of the individual, so too was the oratorio supposed to educate the audience about the impermanence of human achievements. Ann Clark Fehn, for example, believed that Hindemith considered the oratorio as “another type of ‘Gebrauchsmusik,’ [although] much more elaborate than his earlier works,” while other scholars have suggested that the oratorio’s choral numbers were simply an extension of his earlier works for amateur chorus.⁶⁸ Hindemith did seem to regard the two works (*Lehrstück* and oratorio) as interchangeable, initially describing his 1929 collaboration with Brecht on *Lehrstück* as a “sort of *Volksoratorium*.”⁶⁹ Likewise, he may have suggested creating another *Lehrstück* to Benn in the initial stages of their collaboration, as Benn

⁶⁶ Benn to Hindemith, 29 July 1930, in *Briefwechsel mit Paul Hindemith*, ed. Ann Clark Fehn, vol. 3 of *Gottfried Benn: Briefe* (Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag, 1978), 16. “Der Name soll das unaufhörliche Sinnlose, das Auf und Ab der Geschichte, die Vergänglichkeit der Größe und des Ruhms, das unaufhörlich Zufällige und Wechselvolle der Existenz schildern...”

⁶⁷ Benn to Gertrud Zenzes, 28 December 1931 in Fehn, *Briefwechsel*, 86. “Wir dichten schon Oratorien u. wenden uns dem Überirdischen zu, den Text sende ich Ihnen.”

⁶⁸ Fehn, *Change and Permanence*, 148; Rothe, 46.

⁶⁹ Hindemith to Schott, 10 March 1929. “Mit Brecht plane ich eine Art Volks-Oratorium für Baden.”

responded that his libretto was “not a Lehrstück, but rather more like poetry.”⁷⁰ Benn himself indicated that he wanted the oratorio to serve a pedagogical function, referring to Hindemith’s *Lehrstück* and Brecht’s *Die Maßnahme* (1930) as examples of how he wanted the oratorio to demonstrate “how the Unceasing works.”⁷¹ *Das Unaufhörliche* also displays musical continuities with *Lehrstück*, as well as *Frau Musica*, in its clear declamation unburdened by polyphony and its large opening and closing choruses.⁷²

Despite these continuities, *Das Unaufhörliche* represented a decisive turn away from his previous experiments and towards autonomous art music. To begin with, Hindemith’s choice to collaborate with Gottfried Benn was a deliberate rejection of Brecht’s (and the *Jugendmusikbewegung*’s) belief in the socio-political function of art. Benn was an Expressionist poet and essayist who worked professionally in Berlin as a dermatologist and doctor of venereal disease.⁷³ By 1930, he had published a few collections of short stories and poetry and was a prominent figure in Berlin literary circles.⁷⁴ Today, Benn stands as an important figure in twentieth-century German literature, known primarily for his existential, often nihilistic, prose and poetry. He also remains a controversial figure because of his initial support of National Socialism, believing that it would act as a force for renewal after the economic and political upheavals of the 1920s, and that its tenets were compatible with his own brand of expressionism.

⁷⁰ Benn to Hindemith, 29 July 1930, 16. “Dieser Text, genannt: ‘Das Unaufhörliche’ ist kein Lehrstück, sondern mehr eine Dichtung.” Of course, it’s possible that Hindemith never suggested a new Lehrstück and Benn is just making clear that he’s no Brecht.

⁷¹ Benn to Hindemith, 2 May 1931, 29. “Wir wollen hier gewissermaßen demonstrieren (Im Sinne der ‘Maßnahme’ demonstrieren und im Sinne des *Lehrstücks*), wie *das U.* arbeitet.”

⁷² Strobel, *Paul Hindemith*, 53, 75; Hinton, *Idea of Gebrauchsmusik*, 213–224.

⁷³ His work during the First World War at a hospital and army brothel in Brussels no doubt contributed to his choice of specialization.

⁷⁴ J. M. Ritchie, *Gottfried Benn: The Unreconstructed Expressionist* (London: Oswald Wolff, 1972), 19; Jonathan Petropoulos, *Artists Under Hitler: Collaboration and Survival in Nazi Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 119.

Hindemith had set three of Benn's poems in April 1930 for men's chorus (*Fürst Kraft, Du mußt dir alles geben*, and *Vision des Mannes*) and approached Benn about a collaboration in late June or early July 1930—right after the fallout with Brecht over the rejection of Brecht's Lehrstück *Die Maßnahme* for the New Music Berlin festival.⁷⁵ The impetus behind his request seems to have been Benn's radio dialogue, "Can Poets Change the World?" ("Können Dichter die Welt ändern?" 6 June 1930), in which Benn upheld art and the artist as autonomous and non-political and denied the ability of artistic creations to change the world for the better.⁷⁶ This stance resonated with Hindemith's own beliefs in the primacy of music and music-making and must have seemed especially attractive after the repeated difficulties and ideological differences with Brecht and the *Jugendmusikbewegung*.⁷⁷ Benn's insistence on the autonomy of art would also ensure that Hindemith's music would not be hijacked for any socio-political aim, nor could he be accused of taking a specific political stance, as his publishers had feared might happen through his collaboration with Brecht.

Benn's ambivalence toward modern culture may also have resonated with Hindemith's own. As seen in Chapter Two, Hindemith had satirized aspects of modern life in works such as *Kammermusik Nr. 1, Suite "1922"*, and *Neues vom Tage*. Benn went even further, railing against

⁷⁵ On 8 July 1930, Benn wrote to Hindemith, "Your request to produce a text for you to consider is a great honor for me and the thought also excites me" ("Ihre Aufforderung nun, einen Text zu machen, der für Sie in Betracht käme, ist für mich sehr ehrenvoll u. der Gedanke regt mich auch an"). Fehn, *Briefwechsel*, 15–16.

⁷⁶ In the dialogue, Benn claimed that works of art were great and lasting because they stand apart from history; they exert no influence on history and they are detached from the world around them. Gertrud Hindemith apparently called this essay the reason (*Anlass*) behind the oratorio. Rathert, 72; Fisher, 29; Schubert, *Hindemith*, 74.

⁷⁷ As Alexander Fisher notes, "Hindemith and Benn shared a conception of art as an activity with ethical value unto itself rather than in the service of extra-artistic goals." Fisher, 32. See also Ian Kemp, *Hindemith*, 26; "Hindemith Turns to Benn," Hindemith-Institut, accessed 6 October 2017, <https://www.hindemith.info/en/life-work/biography/1927-1933/work/hindemith-turns-to-benn/>.

materialism and consumerism in his poetry and essays, believing that Western culture (which he often identified with “the white race”) had lost its spiritual direction through its faith in modern technology and science.⁷⁸ This shared ambivalence may have been the reason why Hindemith decided to set Benn’s poem “Fürst Kraft” (Prince Power), a satire about a modern-day business tycoon, for men’s chorus.⁷⁹ In fact, scholar Andres Briner has suggested that this decision to set these poems was an attempt to encourage Benn in the direction of these particular themes.⁸⁰ *Das Unaufhörliche* would, indeed, feature this ambivalence toward modern society, especially in the baritone solo “Aber die Fortschritte der modernen Technik!” (But the Progress of Modern Technology!), which described “coal mines, oil wells, [and] rubber plantations” as the “grave of the mythless white race.”⁸¹ To drive the satirical message home, Hindemith set the solo to an overtly cheerful, blustering march.⁸²

While Hindemith’s choice of librettist represented a rejection of Brechtian socio-political uses for art, his choice of genre—an oratorio—was also a shift away from experiments like *Lehrstück*.⁸³ After opera, the oratorio was the most prestigious vocal-instrumental genre, having a long, distinguished pedigree reaching back to sixteenth-century Italy. During the nineteenth

⁷⁸ Fisher, 26 – 27; Petropoulos, 118–119.

⁷⁹ Fehn, *Change and Permanence*, 146; Briner, “Im Zeichen Friedrich Nietzsches. Zur Zusammenarbeit von Gottfried Benn und Paul Hindemith für das Oratorium *Das Unaufhörliche*,” *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 28 (1999): 55.

⁸⁰ Briner, “Im Zeichen,” 55. “Offenbar versuchte der Komponist, den Dichter in dieser Richtung zu unterstützen, ja zu lenken.”

⁸¹ “Minen/ Öltürme, Rubberplantagen,/ Grab der mythenlosen weißen Rasse.” Benn would also suggest a new *Lehrstück* on the theme “City and Land,” describing it as “Industrial Center, amusement-jazz-cinema metropolis versus countryside, snow, forests, seeds, old human existence” (“Industriezentrum, Vergnügungs-Jazz-Kino-metropole gegen Landschaft, Schnee, Wälder, Saaten, alten menschlichen Bestand”). Benn to Hindemith, 18 December 1930, 22.

⁸² This march was reused from *Lehrstück*, perhaps representing a further dig at Brecht.

⁸³ Scholars have also suggested that Hindemith chose to write an oratorio because it was one genre he had not yet composed. See Wolfgang Rathert, “*Das Unaufhörliche*—ein verkanntes Hauptwerk Hindemiths?” *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 28 (1999): 79; Rothe, 46.

century, oratorios were generally performed in concert halls.⁸⁴ Historian Celia Applegate notes that during this time, “advocates of serious music regularly ranked the sacred cantata and oratorio with the symphony as ‘occupying the highest rank’ among potential concert music”; even Ann Clark Fehn, who stressed the continuity from Hindemith’s *Lehrstück* to his oratorio, noted the importance of the genre, believing that “he could use the term ‘oratorio’ to correspond to the dignity and scope of the new work.”⁸⁵

The choice of this serious, pedigreed genre may have also signaled a return to upholding the German musical legacy. By composing an oratorio, Hindemith was following in the footsteps of past German masters such as Bach, Handel, Haydn, and Mendelssohn. Because of their contributions, the oratorio came to be considered a particularly German genre, despite its Italian origins. One writer observed in 1837 that among oratorio composers, “the most and best are always Germans,” while another in 1872 stated that “it was primarily German composers in whose works the art form of oratorio has culminated in its completion and maturity.”⁸⁶ Scholars such as Howard E. Smither and Celia Applegate have also shown how the genre became entangled with the growing German nationalism of the early nineteenth century, beginning with Mendelssohn’s revival of Bach’s *St. Matthew’s Passion* in 1829 at the Berlin Singakademie.⁸⁷ Performances by mass choirs (often with a performing force numbering in the hundreds, if not thousands) at choral music festivals throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were

⁸⁴ Howard E. Smither notes that oratorios were usually performed in a concert hall, or else in a church that functioned as a concert hall during the nineteenth century. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio*, vol. 4, *The Oratorio in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 7.

⁸⁵ Applegate, *Bach in Berlin*, 189; Fehn, *Change and Permanence*, 148.

⁸⁶ Cited in Smither, 10–14. Smither devotes a large section to these festivals. Smither, 40–53.

⁸⁷ Smither, 7–29; Applegate, *Bach in Berlin*.

a source of national pride, showing the Germans as truly “the people of music.”⁸⁸ These nationalist sentiments were still evident in the twentieth century, as Michael Walter observes that in the 1930s, “In composing oratorios or oratorio-like works such as the Soviet mass cantatas, a composer was able to express a commitment to the people and a serious ambition at the same time. Such works stood in the tradition of Bach’s and Handel’s oratorios, and the participation of numerous singers in the choruses could be interpreted as a musical representation of the people.”⁸⁹ A more direct impetus driving Hindemith, however, was most likely the article “The Contemporary Oratorio” by Richard Petzoldt in the April 1930 issue of *Die Musik*. Petzoldt lamented the absence of modern oratorios and expressed hope that Hindemith would soon write one, noting that such a work, “would bring the music-loving dilettante closer to new compositions.”⁹⁰

By and large, critics viewed *Das Unaufhörliche* as a watershed moment in Hindemith’s career, declaring his triumphant return to the realm of art music. For many, the oratorio was a culmination of his recent stylistic change first announced by the *Konzertmusik* works of the previous year. The reviewer for the *Deutsche Sängerbundzeitung* observed that Hindemith:

strives towards “simplification” in every respect. Orchestration and large forms are the first evidence of it. But how transparent is the score, how clear the voice-leading, how

⁸⁸ Schilling’s *Encyclopädie* from the 1830s claimed that such festivals “never fail... in the awakening of a noble national pride,” while Johann Gottfried Hientzsch in the 1850s viewed music festivals as “magnificent proof of what an area, a province, [or] a state is capable of accomplishing by the voluntary cooperation of artistically skilled musical forces. They are national festivals of music.” Quoted in Smither, 43.

⁸⁹ Walter, 296.

⁹⁰ Richard Petzoldt, “Das zeitgenössische Oratorium,” *Die Musik* 22, no. 7 (April 1930): 497, 499. “...wäre zu wünschen, dass Hindemith einmal von neuem Gesichtspunkt an das uns beschäftigende Kapital heranträte... Das Bestreben muss jetzt dahin gehen, dem musikliebenden Dilettanten die neuen Kompositionen näher zu bringen.”

uncomplicated the harmony. Moderation everywhere, also in sound. There's no hint of "atonality" (if one understands this expression as confusion and shapelessness).⁹¹

Herbert Connor made a connection between the style of the oratorio and the *Konzertmusik* series, believing that Hindemith had "delivered what he had undertaken in his earlier choral attempts, in *Marienleben*, and especially in his latest concert works: the amalgamation of sounding and concerted elements."⁹² Heinrich Strobel also saw the oratorio as the crowning accomplishment of Hindemith's more relaxed style: "With Hindemith's latest *Konzertwerken*, one could point to the onset of new, antipolyphonic elements... That's even truer for *Das Unaufhörliche*. The process of the loosening up and simplification of style seems to come to an end here."⁹³

Critics also frequently observed a new sense "monumentality" in the work, especially in the large choral movements. Connor, for example, noted that the "large, monumentally built choruses of *Das Unaufhörliche*... show what kind of power of sentiment actually lurks behind Hindemith's ostensibly soulless motoricism."⁹⁴ Herbert Peyser, writing for the *New York Times*,

⁹¹ Dr. Ewens in *Deutsche Sängerbundzeitung*, 5 December 1931, quoted in Christiane Lehnigk, introduction to *Das Unaufhörliche*, vol 7, no. 1 of Finscher and Schubert, *Paul Hindemith: Sämtliche Werke*, xv. "...er in jeder Beziehung nach 'Vereinfachung' strebt. Orchesterbesetzung und Großform sind ein erster Beweis dafür. Aber wie durchsichtig ist die Partitur gehalten, wie klar die Stimmführung, wie unkompliziert die Harmonik. Mäßigung überall, auch im Klang. Von 'atonal' ist keine Rede (wenn man unter diesem Ausdruck Verwirrung und Formlosigkeit versteht)."

⁹² Herbert Connor, review of *Das Unaufhörliche*, *Die Musik* 25, no. 2 (November 1932): 143. "Hindemith hat gehalten, was er in seinen früheren Chorversuchen, was er im 'Marienleben' und insbesondere in seinen letzten Konzertmusiken versprochen hat: die Verschmelzung von klanglichen und konzertanten Elementen."

⁹³ Strobel, "Das neue Oratorium von Hindemith," 422–423. "Man konnte bei Hindemiths letzten Konzertwerken auf den Einbruch neuer, antipolyphoner Elemente...hinweisen. Das gilt in noch höherem Maße für das 'Unaufhörliche.' Der Prozess der Auflockerung und Vereinfachung des Stils scheint hier zu Ende zu kommen."

⁹⁴ Connor, 143. "Die großen, monumental aufgebauten Chöre des 'Unaufhörlichen' bilden die Probe auf Exempel, sie zeigen was für eine Kraft der Empfindung in Wirklichkeit hinter der scheinbar seelenlosen Motorik Hindemiths steckt."

noted that, “the choruses, which have length, breadth and thickness, reveal Hindemith in the act of being ‘monumental.’”⁹⁵ Otto Steinhagen also obliquely pointed to the work’s monumentality when he stated that oratorio contained numbers “of such power and size that Hindemith had up until now not yet written, above all the first and last choruses.”⁹⁶

This monumentality of the choruses, as well as the Hindemith’s adherence to the genre’s traditional large-scale structure, underscored his re-commitment to past German masters. The *Magdeburgische Zeitung* stated that Hindemith “had drawn on the heritage of the fathers, the Bachian tradition with its musical spirit, its structure, its logic, its masses of sound,”⁹⁷ while Alfred Einstein praised the work’s “architectonic, oratorio-like forms” (*architektonische, oratorische Formen*), noting that “both large choruses at the beginning and end have the objective, oratorio-style and even the seriousness of an oratorio through the power of the organ.”⁹⁸ The reviewer for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* invoked the entire span of music history, writing that “[Paul Hindemith] combines Gregorian melos, the architectonicism of Bach’s passions, the mood-lyricism of Mahler, even Beethoven’s rhythm with the musical elements of the present-day, in his own musical language.”⁹⁹ Herbert Peyser also (sarcastically)

⁹⁵ Herbert F. Peyser, “Hindemith’s ‘Das Unaufhörliche,’ Pretentious Oratorio Heard for First Time,” *New York Times* 13 December 1931. Peyser believed that Hindemith “sought the opportunity to prove that he too can be severe, serious and profound with the most solemn of them.”

⁹⁶ Otto Steinhagen, review of *Das Unaufhörliche*, *Die Musik* 24, no. 4 (January 1932): 276. “Darunter stehen Stücke, wie er sich in solcher Kraft und Größe bisher noch nicht geschrieben hat, vor allem der Eingangs- und der Schlusschor.”

⁹⁷ E. Kolliner in *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 27 November 1931, quoted in Lehnigk, xv. “Besonders in den grandiosen polyphonen Ecksätzen verfügt er über das Erbe der Väter, die Bachsche Tradition, mit ihrem Musikgeist, ihrem Aufbau, ihrer Logik, ihren Klangmassen...”

⁹⁸ Alfred Einstein, *Berliner Tageblatt*, 23 November 1931, quoted in Lehnigk, xv. “Die beiden großen chorischen Ecksätze haben den objektiven oratorischen Stil und die oratorische Schwere schon durch den Machtklang der Orgel.”

⁹⁹ Robert Oboussier in *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 25 November 1931, quoted in Lehnigk, xv. “Er verbindet gregorianisches Melos, Bachsche Passionsarchitektonik, Mahlers Stimmungslyrik,

acknowledged Hindemith's fidelity to the oratorio tradition "laid down by the conscript fathers."¹⁰⁰

Finally, to a greater extent than the *Konzertmusik* series, critics believed the oratorio represented a change in his aesthetic stance; he was finally growing up and moving past the scandals, soulless objective music, and experiments of the previous decade towards a more serious and expressive style. Walter Berten interpreted the oratorio as "an answer" to Bruno Stürmer's "Open Letter" of 1930, believing that the work had "rehabilitated" (*rehabilitiert*) Hindemith from his "earlier 'enfant terrible pranks' of craftsmanlike impudence."¹⁰¹ Heinz Pringsheim echoed the sentiment:

Das Unaufhörliche has also become an event in Hindemith himself: he has changed, virtually maturing from boy to man. There's still the old Hindemith with his juicy abundance of musical identities, with his brash temperament that he now wisely knows to tame, but there is also a new Hindemith, whose existence one could already certainly sense from the contemplative slow movements of his concertos; a Hindemith for whom playing with tones and sounds, movement for movement's sake, and music as sport no longer suffices...¹⁰²

Writing for *The Musical Times*, Hugo Leichtentritt also observed a change of mood, and a new expressiveness:

sogar Beethovens Rhythmik mit den musikalischen Elementen der Gegenwart, der eigenen Tonsprache."

¹⁰⁰ Peyser.

¹⁰¹ Berten, "Paul Hindemith und die deutsche Musik," 539. "früheren 'Enfant terrible-Streichen' handwerklicher Frechheit"

¹⁰² Heinz Pringsheim, *Allgemeine Musikzeitung*, 27 November 1931, quoted in Lehnigk, xv. "*Das Unaufhörliche* ist auch in Hindemith selbst Ereignis geworden; auch er hat sich gewandelt, ist gewissermaßen vom Knaben zum Manne gereift. Er ist noch der alte Hindemith mit seiner saftigen Fülle musikalischer Gestalten, mit seinem kecken Temperament, das er nun klug zu zügeln weiß, aber da ist auch ein neuer Hindemith, dessen Existenz man freilich aus den grüblerischen langsamen Sätzen seiner Konzerte schon längst ahnen konnte, ein Hindemith, dem das Spiel mit Tönen und Klängen, dem Bewegung um der Bewegung willen, dem Musik als Sport nicht mehr genügt..."

After years of “objective” music, of humor and parody, of non-sentimental, inexpressive, and mechanical music, Hindemith seems to have perceived the monotony of his individual mannerism. In his oratorio he faces a new situation, he discovers the need for profoundly serious and expressive music... Hindemith’s music shows in some parts at least an expressiveness, a majestic and solemn grandeur, far beyond anything he has so far achieved.¹⁰³

Herbert Gerigk, who would become an outspoken music critic working on behalf of Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, lauded the work as heralding a new style of German music, believing that Hindemith, along with German music in general, was finally moving past the experiments and “objective” music of the 1920s:

Here, a distinctive new style has been realized, which stands clearly outlined before us. Subsequently, we are now able to disregard the significance of something like “Cardillac” (which is already dead on the stage) as a developmental stage that concerns not only Hindemith, but German music in general. In light of the ever more strongly propagated cultural reaction, it must be clearly declared: here a national art has arrived of which we all have reason to be proud.¹⁰⁴

Critics were not the only ones who recognized and applauded Hindemith’s turn toward serious music. After receiving Benn’s text for the first part of the oratorio, his publisher Willy Strecker described it as “really excellent and incredibly concentrated. It’s an entirely new form of poetry, and I’m exceedingly anxious to see what you have done with it... Do you have any plans about whom we can entrust with the premiere and when? With such a work, we have to

¹⁰³ Hugo Leichtentritt, “Musical Notes from Abroad. Berlin,” *The Musical Times*, 73, no. 1067 (1 January 1932): 75.

¹⁰⁴ Herbert Gerigk, *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, Essen, 23 November 1931, quoted in Lehnigk, xv. “Hier ist ein eigener neuer Stil verwirklicht worden, der heute klar umrissen vor uns steht. Nachträglich vermögen wir nun erst die Bedeutung eines ‘Cardillac’ (der für die Bühne bereits tot ist) als Entwicklungsetappe zu übersehen, in einem Zusammenhang, der nicht allein Hindemith sondern die deutsche Musik überhaupt angeht. Angesichts der immer stärker propagierten Kulturreaktion muss einmal in aller Schärfe ausgesprochen werden, dass hier eine nationale Kunst vorliegt, auf die stolz zu sein wir allen Anlass haben.”

premiere it in a special location.”¹⁰⁵ Willy’s eagerness to see the music was such that the following week he confessed, “I’m wound up to get to know your score, just like the pants of a high school senior before exams.”¹⁰⁶ When the score finally arrived, Willy reported that members of the firm had dedicated a Saturday to studying it, joking that “we performed a sort of celebratory dance around the (hopefully) ‘golden calf.’”¹⁰⁷ Clearly, the firm had high hopes that the work would be a success—both artistically and financially.

Regarding the music, Willy’s comments remarkably foreshadowed those of the critics. After receiving the completed first section of the oratorio, he first noted the clarity of the writing, as well as a new cohesion between text and music, implying that Hindemith had finally found a proper librettist in Benn:

I must sincerely congratulate you on this work. It has truly become what I had hoped for: the great masterpiece that the world has expected from you. Only now do I entirely understand the text and see how you needed this type of poetry, which gives you freedom to assemble the words as you see fit without interrupting a sentence or a phrase. It is masterly how everything sits, how clearly everything is formed; not one note too many in the orchestration; and how the choir and orchestra coalesce in an unprecedented way and [so that] everything has to sound.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 19 February 1931. “Ich habe nunmehr in Ruhe den Text des ersten Teiles gelesen und finde ihn ganz ausgezeichnet und unerhört konzentriert. Eine ganz neue Form von Dichtung und ich bin aufs äußerste gespannt, zu sehen, was Sie daraus gemacht haben... Haben Sie denn schon irgendwelche Pläne, wem man die Uraufführung anvertrauen kann und zu welchem Termin? Mit einem solchen Werk müssen wir an einer besonderen Stelle herauskommen.”

¹⁰⁶ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 25 February 1931. “Ich bin gespannt, wie die Hose eines Abiturienten von dem Examen, Ihre Partitur kennen zu lernen.”

¹⁰⁷ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 21 March 1931. “Trotz Samstag wurde der Schott’sche Betrieb still gelegt, um sich dem Studium der Partitur zu widmen. Wir führten eine Art Freudentanz um das hoffentlich ‘goldene Kalb’ auf.”

¹⁰⁸ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 25 March 1931. “Ich muss Sie aufrichtig zu diesem Werk beglückwünschen. Es ist wirklich das geworden, was ich erhoffte, das große Meisterwerk, das die Welt von Ihnen erwartete. Erst jetzt verstehe ich ganz den Text und sehe, wie Sie diese Art Dichtung benötigten, die Ihnen Freiheit gibt, die Worte zusammenzubauen, wie Sie sie brauchen, ohne einen Satz oder eine Phrase zu unterbrechen. Es ist meisterhaft, wie alles sitzt, wie klar alles geformt ist, in der Orchestergestaltung keine Note zu viel, wie Chor und Orchester in unerhörter Weise zusammengehen und alles klingen muss.”

Strecker was especially full of praise for the work's lyricism, simplicity (*Einfachheit*), and monumentality (*Monumentalität*), making the oratorio was a "truly great work" (*wirklich große Werk*) that "surpasses all your previous works."¹⁰⁹ He also indicated that he, too, approved of Hindemith's leaving complicated modernist trends behind in order to forge a new style, adding, "I can imagine that the stalwarts will be pretty astonished and maybe even will cry about desertion, because this work is truly the first great creation that doesn't have anything more to do with theories and atonality and the 12 tone system, etc. etc, but rather is the simple, clear expression of a new time and a new style."¹¹⁰ *Das Unaufhörliche* was the "masterpiece" that not only the world, but his publishers as well, had awaited from their composer.

Hindemith himself was (uncharacteristically) positive about the work, writing to Willy after completing the first section, "For now I'm more satisfied with it than hardly anything else,"¹¹¹ to which Willy replied, "When you yourself are so satisfied with the progress of the work, I certainly anticipate something really special."¹¹² In response to Willy's query about who they could trust with the work, he wrote, "I've thought for a long time about where the piece could be premiered. I think Klemperer with the Philharmonic Chorus would probably still be the

¹⁰⁹ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 1 July 1931. "das Ganze ist von einer Einfachheit und Monumentalität, die meiner Ansicht nach Ihr ganzes bisheriges Schaffen übertrifft."

¹¹⁰ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 23 March 1931. "Ich kann mir denken, dass die Unentwegten etwas erstaunt sind und vielleicht sogar über Fahnenflucht schreien werden, denn dies Werk ist wirklich die erste ganz große Schöpfung, die nicht mehr mit Theorien und Atonalität und 12 Tonsystem etc. etc. zu tun hat, sondern einfacher, klarer Ausdruck einer neuen Zeit und eines neuen Stils ist."

¹¹¹ Hindemith to Schott, 17 February 1931. "Ich bin einstweilen damit so zufrieden wie mit kaum etwas sonst."

¹¹² W. Strecker to Hindemith, 19 February 1931. "Wenn Sie selbst von dem Fortgang der Komposition so befriedigt sind, so erwarte ich mir allerdings etwas ganz Besonderes."

best, although I don't like Berlin at all."¹¹³ Despite these reservations, he still opted for a famous conductor, a prestigious German orchestra (the Berlin Philharmonic), and a chorus whose history included premiering Bruckner's *Te Deum* and Mahler's *Das klagende Lied*.¹¹⁴ In order to maximize the work's accessibility, Hindemith also requested that an introduction from Benn explaining the piece from Benn be printed in the libretto and score, which Willy believed would "bring the profound subject matter closer to the general public."¹¹⁵

Most importantly, however, Hindemith appeared to acknowledge a change in his compositional direction with *Das Unaufhörliche*. After expressing to his publishers his hesitations about a Berlin premiere, he added, "But it now seems as if, gradually, a demand for serious and great music is coming back. (Stravinsky's *Psalms* were a big success)."¹¹⁶ This oft-cited statement can mean several different things. First, it shows that Hindemith viewed the oratorio as "serious and great music." Second, it illustrates his concern about the work's reception; since Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* had a positive reception, Hindemith's own *Das Unaufhörliche* would hopefully also be "a big success." Third, like his works for radio, film, mechanical instruments, and amateur music, ideas that he described as being "in the air," he viewed this demand for serious music as sparking a new compositional trend—one on which he

¹¹³ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 3 March 1931. "Ich habe mir lange überlegt, wo man das Stück aufführen könnte. Ich glaube, Klemperer mit dem philharm. Chor wäre wohl immer noch das Beste, obwohl ich Berlin gar nicht mag."

¹¹⁴ The choir was founded in 1882 by Siegfried Ochs as a "singing society" (*Gesangsverein*).

¹¹⁵ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 1 July 1931. "es ist gut, dass er durch seine vorzügliche Einleitung den tiefen Inhalt auch dem weiteren Publikum näher bringt." Benn also had a chat with the Philharmonic Chorus about the meaning of the text, presumably in order for them to understand what they're singing about and so they can convey the emotions and meaning properly. G. Hindemith to W. Strecker, 10 November 1931.

¹¹⁶ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 3 March 1931. "Aber es scheint so, als ob jetzt allmählich wieder mal die Welle für ernste und große Musik käme. (Stravinskys *Psaumen* waren ein großer Erfolg)."

could also capitalize.¹¹⁷ This suggests that his return to the concert hall and serious music was a deliberate choice and not simply the outgrowth of his amateur music.

Philharmonisches Konzert (1932)

Hindemith's next work for the concert hall, *Philharmonisches Konzert*, which premiered on 15 April 1932, represented a further step along the path back to the concert hall and the German art music tradition, as well as toward developing a more accessible, monumental style.¹¹⁸ Conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler had commissioned the work for the fiftieth anniversary concert of the Berlin Philharmonic. Like the previous *Konzertmusik* series, the title *Philharmonisches Konzert* referred to both the form of the work (a concerto for orchestra) and its purpose as music for the concert hall, as well as honoring the orchestra for which it was commissioned.¹¹⁹ Moreover, the work also underscored Hindemith's familiarity with the symphony orchestra as medium and with the Berlin Philharmonic in particular. While living in Berlin, Hindemith had personal connections with individual members of the ensemble, such as concertmaster Simon Goldberg, often playing with them in chamber groups. Moreover, he had performed his *Kammermusik Nr. 5* and *Konzertmusik* op. 48 with the orchestra as a soloist. Hindemith demonstrated his intimacy with the personnel of the orchestra through the form of the

¹¹⁷ Hinton also believes that this statement shows Hindemith's "eye on general trends as on his own work." Hinton, "Germany, 1918–45," 102. See also Rathert, 79.

¹¹⁸ Hinton, for example, claims that this work seemed "to signal an end to the aesthetic preoccupations of the preceding decade." Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, ix. The Hindemith Institute's website also sees this as the decisive piece for Hindemith's new style, stating that, "This stylistic change was then consolidated and confirmed in 1932 with the *Philharmonisches Konzert* that Hindemith contributed to the 50th anniversary of the Berlin Philharmonic." "Konzertmusiken," Hindemith-Institut, accessed 18 October 2017. <http://www.hindemith.info/en/life-work/biography/1927-1933/>.

¹¹⁹ Sannemüller, "Das Philharmonische Konzert," 79. "zeigt er [der Titel] die repräsentative Stellung, die diese Komposition durch Widmung und Aufführung am künstlerischen und gesellschaftlichen Ereignis des Orchesterjubiläums einnimmt."

work—six variations on an original theme—meant to showcase the talents of the different sections and soloists of the orchestra. As the critic for the *Musical Times* observed, “Hindemith has set himself the task of showing the brilliant technical prowess of the Orchestra in all its parts, giving to single instruments as well as the various groups a chance to prove their virtuosity.”¹²⁰ Heinrich Strobel also noted Hindemith’s “enchantingly light, masterly-scored set of variations that highlighted, one after another, the individual instruments in the most colorful way and culminated in an energetic concertino of the three concertmasters of the string section.”¹²¹ Despite his efforts to the contrary, writing virtuosic music still seemed to come most naturally to him.

While critical response to the *Philharmonisches Konzert* was mixed,¹²² most critics viewed—and heartily welcomed—the work as a continuation of the stylistic changes of the previous *Konzertmusik* series and oratorio, praising Hindemith’s newfound lyricism, accessibility, and simplicity.¹²³ Adorno in particular saw the work as a turning point in Hindemith’s career, believing it had broken the “stagnation” or “torpor” (*Erstarrung*) of his

¹²⁰ Hugo Leichtentritt, “Musical Notes from Abroad. Berlin,” *The Musical Times* 73, no. 1072 (1 June 1932): 555.

¹²¹ Strobel, “Die Krisensaison geht zu Ende,” 202. “Hindemith schrieb für ihn eine bezaubernd leichte, meisterhaft gesetzte Variationenreihe, die nacheinander die einzelnen Instrumente in der buntesten Art herausstellt und in einem vitalen Concertino der drei Konzertmeister des Streichkörpers gipfelt.”

¹²² Some critics like Josef Rufer and Julius Korngold thought the work was an example of the contrapuntal, soulless Hindemithian style of the last ten years. Alfred Einstein didn’t think it was sophisticated enough for the event, while Hans Joachim Moser described it as “lacking content” (*inhaltslos*). Quoted in Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, x.

¹²³ Paul Stefan called it “one of the loveliest and most profound works [for a special occasion] in a long time; an old masters-like gift offered completely in the style of the old masters” (“Ganz gewiß ist es eine der schönsten und gehaltvollsten Gelegenheits-Kompositionen seit langen; eine altmeisterliche Gabe, völlig in der Art der alten Meister geboten”). Stefan, *Die Stunde*, 8 November 1932, quoted in Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xi. See also reviews by Heinrich Stobel in the *Börsen-Courier* and Stuckenschmidt in *B.Z. am Mittag*, quoted in Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, x.

previous works. Even if, as a commission, it was arguably just a “minor work” (*Nebenwerk*), Adorno argued:

To me it seems more important than many of his masterpieces, because for the first time, his neoclassicism, along with his idling, is put to an end. There are no terraces but rather dynamics; the melody is nimble and relieved of randomness; the harmony is controlled. At the same time, it doesn't matter that he clearly reverts back to tonality, as it is already inherent in the principal motive. What matters is that he deliberately poses harmonic and melodic issues instead of just rhythmic and contrapuntal ones...¹²⁴

It was the context in which the *Philharmonisches Konzert* appeared, however, that really signaled Hindemith's rapprochement with serious music and the German musical legacy. The two concerts that commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the Berlin Philharmonic not only celebrated the orchestra but also the history of German music.¹²⁵ The first evening's concert included Bach's Suite in B Minor for Flute and String orchestra and Bruckner's seventh symphony, while the second concert featured Beethoven's Ninth. As scholar Roger Allen has noted, the Berlin Philharmonic “was regarded as the ultimate authority in matter of performance of the canon of German masterworks. The fiftieth anniversary of its foundation was therefore an event of some national cultural significance, especially given the political uncertainties of the

¹²⁴ Theodor Adorno, review of *Philharmonisches Konzert*, *Die Musik* 25, no. 4 (January 1933): 296. “Mir scheint es wichtiger als manches chef d'oeuvre. Denn hier zum ersten Mal ist dem Neoklassizismus samt seinem Leerlauf Einhalt geboten. Es gibt keine Terrassen, sondern Dynamik; die Melodik ist plastisch geprägt und der Zufälligkeit enthoben; die Harmonik kontrolliert. Dabei verschlägt es nichts, dass diese deutlich auf die Tonalität zurückgreift, wie sie schon im melodischen Kopfmotiv angelegt ist; es kommt zunächst nur darauf an, dass an Stelle bloß rhythmischer und kontrapunktischer bewusst harmonische und melodische Probleme gestellt sind...”

¹²⁵ As Gerd Sannemüller observes, the programming of these concerts was meant to “reflect significant epochs in German music history and highlight Hindemith as the representative for New Music” (“Dieses Festprogramm...wollte bedeutende deutsche musikgeschichtliche Epochen in einer Auswahl spiegeln und Hindemith als Repräsentanten der Neuen Musik hervorheben”). Sannemüller, “Das Philharmonische Konzert,” 76.

turbulent final months of the Weimar Republic.”¹²⁶ This concert was also poignantly significant because of the financial difficulties that threatened the very existence of the Philharmonic, owing to disagreements over who—city, state, or nation—should fund the institution.¹²⁷ Including Hindemith in the lineup of these concerts as the representative of modern German music positioned him as the heir to this musical lineage. Furtwängler made this clear in his initial letter regarding the commission, writing, “For the program I’d like to let the young generation of German composers have its say in a representative manner, and therefore (as you are, in my eyes, its most outstanding representative), I write to you with the question, whether you would be able to write something for this purpose.”¹²⁸ To sweeten the deal, Furtwängler added the following postscript: “Of course the Philharmonic’s Jubilee will be advertised on the largest scale in terms of publicity, press, and so on, and a premiere by you, as the single contemporary representative, would certainly be a special highlight.”¹²⁹ Hindemith was clearly proud of the

¹²⁶ In her memoir, Furtwängler’s secretary Berta Geissmar recalled that the celebrations of the anniversary “were opened by an inaugural assembly at which all the persons of importance in Berlin’s public life were present.” Geissmar, *The Baton and the Jackboot: Recollections of a Musical Life* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1944), 62. See also Roger Allen, *Wilhelm Furtwängler: Art and the Politics of the Unpolitical* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2018), 106; Fritz Trümpi, *The Political Orchestra: The Vienna and Berlin Philharmonics during the Third Reich*, trans. Kenneth Kronenberg (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 38.

¹²⁷ Potter, “Berlin Philharmonic,” 43.

¹²⁸ Furtwängler to Hindemith, 26 May 1931, quoted in Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, ix. “In dem einen Programm möchte ich die junge deutsche Komponisten-Generation in repräsentativer Weise zu Wort kommen lassen und ich wende mich deshalb an Sie als ihren in meinen Augen hervorragendsten Vertreter mit der Frage, ob Sie uns nicht für diesen Zweck etwas schreiben könnten.”

¹²⁹ Furtwängler to Hindemith, 26 May 1931, quoted in Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34* ix. “Natürlich wird das Jubiläum der Philharmoniker in größten Maßstab bezüglich Öffentlichkeit, Presse usw. aufgezogen werden und eine Uraufführung von Ihnen als einigen Vertreter der Gegenwart würde sicher ein besonderes Glanzstück dafür sein.”

honor, specifically mentioning twice to his publishers that he was “the only one honored with a commission.”¹³⁰

The fact that Furtwängler consecrated Hindemith as the sole representative of new music could be taken as another sign that Hindemith had successfully moved beyond his works of the 1920s, as Furtwängler was notoriously conservative in his tastes.¹³¹ As Heinrich Strobel noted, “One must give credit to a conservatively-inclined musician like Furtwängler, since he also thought of contemporary music for his jubilee.”¹³² Furtwängler himself had, during the jubilee, given a speech on the crisis of musical life in Germany, laying the blame not only on the economic situation but also on new music, asking, “Can it be denied that production, which has always been the best measure of worth and an indicator of musical life, is dwindling and drying up at a troubling rate? Can it be denied that the public is staying away more and more from the concert halls?”¹³³ Yet he also sincerely believed in Hindemith’s talent and viewed him as the hope for German music. As early as 1919, according to Hindemith, Furtwängler had “warned me against getting mixed up with compositional experiments (or what he thought were experiments

¹³⁰ Hindemith to Schott, 22 January 1932. “ich bin der Einzige, den er einer Aufgabe gewürdigt hat.” A letter from Hindemith to Dr. Strecker 13 June 1931 also mentions that he was the only one invited (*als einzig Aufgeforderter*).

¹³¹ Martin Kitchen calls describes Furtwängler’s musical tastes as “distinctively conservative and strongly tinged with a nationalist prejudice.” Kitchen, *The Third Reich: Charisma and Community* (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2008), 206. See also Kater, *Composers*, 277; Allen, 83.

¹³² Strobel, “Die Krisensaison geht zu Ende,” 202. “Man wird es einem an sich konservativ eingestellten Musiker wie Furtwängler hoch anrechnen müssen, dass er bei seinem Jubiläum auch der jungen Musik gedachte.” See also Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt’s article “Furtwängler äußert sich,” in which he claims that Furtwängler used the jubilee to make an “artistic-cultural-political credo” against new music and non-German music. Stuckenschmidt, “Furtwängler äußert sich,” *Melos* 11, no. 5/6 (May/June 1932): 198

¹³³ Furtwängler, “Die Klassiker in der Musikkrise,” 62. “Ist es zu leugnen, dass die Produktion, die seit jeher der beste Wert- und Gradmesser jedes Musiklebens war, in beängstigendem Maße schrumpft und versiegt? Ist es zu leugnen, dass das Publikum aus den Konzertsälen mehr und mehr fortbleibt?”

back then).”¹³⁴ Furtwängler had also conducted several of Hindemith’s works, including the premiere of his Viola Concerto, Op 48, and his faith in Hindemith would come to the fore in his championing of Hindemith’s opera *Mathis der Maler* (discussed in the next chapter).¹³⁵

Artistic Currents of the 1930s

Several conclusions can be drawn from this survey of the three *Konzertmusik* pieces, the oratorio *Das Unaufhörliche*, and the *Philharmonisches Konzert*. First, many of Hindemith’s contemporaries saw a change of direction in these works. They believed he was turning away from the “soulless” counterpoint that characterized his concert works of the 1920s (epitomized by the *Kammermusik* series) and moving towards a more melodic, transparent, and tonally centered language. Accompanying this shift in style was the abandonment of his music festival experimentation and a return to serious art music. Most significant, however, was the fact that critics—and his publishers—almost unanimously welcomed this change.

There seem to have been several personal reasons behind this shift. In the case of the *Das Unaufhörliche*, Hindemith’s falling-out with Brecht likely led to his collaboration with Gottfried Benn and rededication to artistic autonomy. The growing calls by critics ranging from Bruno Stürmer to Adorno for Hindemith to drop the experimentation may have been an additional factor; if these represented the “stick” of negative press, the positive reviews for the *Konzertmusik* series and the oratorio could have been the “carrot” encouraging him to carry on in the direction of serious music. Returning to the concert hall was a way to keep the praise—and

¹³⁴ Hindemith, “Wilhelm Furtwängler” in *Diener der Musik: Unvergessene Solisten und Dirigenten unserer Zeit im Spiegel der Freunde*, ed. Martin Müller and Wolfgang Mertz (Tübingen: Rainer Wunderlich Verlag, 1965), 184. “Ich lernte ihn früh kennen, schon 1919, und wenn er mir damals in freundschaftlichen Gesprächen warnend abriet, mich in kompositorische Experimente (oder das, was er damals dafür hielt) einzulassen...”

¹³⁵ Stuckenschmidt claimed Furtwängler conducted five performances of Hindemith’s music, in contrast to eighteen works by Strauss. Stuckenschmidt, “Furtwängler äußert sich,” 198.

performances—coming. Hindemith may have also come to the realization that his experimental works had remained experiments, never finding a home outside the music festivals. Except for some performances of *Lehrstück* by progressively minded educators, it was his concert works and operas that were getting performed, not his works for traultonium, radio plays, or mechanical instruments.¹³⁶ Finally, by returning to art music and the concert hall, Hindemith was returning to an institution that he had never really abandoned, both as a composer and performer. Despite his proclamations about the importance of the amateur, Hindemith's forays into alternative forms of music-making were always driven by the belief that these steps were necessary, if not desirable, to keep German music afloat despite the alleged demise of the concert hall. Music for its own sake was always the primary focus.

In addition to these personal reasons, however, Hindemith's change of direction was also part of a larger international trend during the 1920s and 1930s. Scholars from various disciplines have noted the general shift towards conservatism in the 1920s and 1930s and a reining-in of the avant-garde "isms" of the previous decades. In the visual arts, for example, there were calls for a new realism in Italy, France, Germany, the Soviet Union, Spain, and America, resulting in the movements of Neue Sachlichkeit, Socialist Realism, and American regionalism.¹³⁷ Like their counterparts in the visual arts, composers also turned away from the musical experiments of the

¹³⁶ There were performances of *Lehrstück* in Munich (under the direction of Hermann Scherchen), Dresden, Mainz, Breslau, and Frankfurt. Stephan, xviii.

¹³⁷ Marie Luise Syring, "... Sie bedroht, trommelt, bricht durch—Kunst als Kampf... Geschichte der Realismusdebatte in der Sowjetunion, Deutschland, Frankreich, Spanien und Italien," in "*Die Axt hat geblüht...*": *Europäische Konflikte der 30er Jahre in Erinnerung an die frühe Avantgarde*, eds. Jürgen Harten, Hans-Werner Schmidt, and Marie Luise Syring (Düsseldorf: Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 1987), 103, 114. More controversially, in his *Architektur und bildende Kunst 1933–1945* (1977), Robert Scholz defended the art produced in the Third Reich by placing it within a larger, international context of realism and conservatism. Scholtz, *Architektur und bildende Kunst 1933–1945* (Preussisch Oldendorf: Schütz, 1977), 9, 11.

1910s and 1920s, trying to find a middle ground between a style that was both modern yet firmly rooted in the past, a sort of “streamlined romanticism.” Scholars such as Michael Walter and Albrecht Riethmüller have identified several features that marked this trend, such as large-scale or “monumental” genres of the nineteenth century (symphony, oratorio), “serious” music on religious or ethical themes, use of folklore or folk music, and most importantly, a simplified musical language meant to be accessible to “the people.”¹³⁸ Works that embodied these features included: Stravinsky’s *Symphony of Psalms* (1930), Schoenberg’s *Moses und Aron* (1932), William Walton’s *Belshazzar’s Feast* (1931), and Arthur Honegger’s *Jeanne d’Arc au Bûcher* (1938) (religious themes);¹³⁹ or Copland’s ballets *Billy the Kid* (1938) and *Rodeo* (1942), several symphonies by Roy Harris based on American subjects, and works on Mexican subjects by Carlos Chávez (national music based on folklore or indigenous traditions).¹⁴⁰

Just as Hindemith had recognized in 1931 a new “demand for serious and great music,” so too did his contemporaries identify this sea change. Heinrich Strobel, in his discussion of the International Gesellschaft für Neue Musik’s 1930 festival at Bad Pyrmont, wrote:

It is undeniable: the German section of the I.G.N.M seized on the idea of highlighting new concert music just in the nick of time. One has to ask: in a time when concertizing is declining more and more, when new music is able to hold its ground only with the most

¹³⁸ Albrecht Riethmüller, “Die Dreißiger Jahre: Eine Dekade kompositorischer Ermüdung oder Konsolidierung?; Zusammenfassung der Diskussion,” in *Bericht über den Internationalen Musikwissenschaftlichen Kongress, Bayreuth 1981*, eds., Christoph-Hellmut Mahling and Sigrid Wiesmann (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1984), 179. Carl Dahlhaus also identified the tendencies in music of the 1930s to “avoid the extremes of new music” and to “establish (real or fictional) national traditions.” Dahlhaus, “Politische Implikationen der Operndramaturgie: Zu einigen deutschen Opern der Dreißiger Jahre,” in Mahling and Wiesmann, *Bericht*, 149. See also Joan Evans, “‘International with National Emphasis’: The *Internationales Zeitgenössisches Musikfest* in Baden-Baden, 1936–1939,” in Kater and Riethmüller, *Music and Nazism*, 108; Painter, 232, Walter, 286–288.

¹³⁹ Marius Flothuis, “Elan und Ermüdung: Musik um 1930 in England, Frankreich und den Niederlanden,” in Mahling and Wiesmann, *Bericht*, 154–155; Walter, 300–301; Riethmüller, 176–177.

¹⁴⁰ Evans, 108. See also Walter, 290–291; Dahlhaus, 149; Auner, *Music*, 148–149.

extreme effort in a petrified concert industry—can concert music still be viable? The signs speak against it. But the young authors aren't worried about the sociological and economic difficulties. They write concert music in large quantities.¹⁴¹

Hans Mersmann, possibly referring to Hindemith, also called attention to this tendency in 1932, observing that “leading musicians, who previously put a concept at the heart of their work, today are again writing purely artistic music.”¹⁴² There appeared to be a reorientation not only to art music, but also towards larger nineteenth-century forms. Henry Prunières, in a *New York Times* article from 1932, observed that composers of all nationalities were returning to traditional forms that had recently seemed abandoned, writing, “The International Society of Contemporary Music at Vienna and the biennial festival of Venice reveal the fact, paradoxical as it may seem, that the music of differing peoples seems to be tending toward unity.”¹⁴³ Despite what he described as the differing musical styles of “French grace, German force, Italian lyricism, and Russian savagery,” the leading composers from several countries “are returning to more precisely articulated forms. The symphony, which everyone thought dying, has been born again.” Likewise, “the concerto was thought to be an outmoded form. I can remember when the appearance of a pianist in Paris to play a concerto was greeted by groans and whistles. Yet we

¹⁴¹ Heinrich Strobel, “Junge Musik in Pyrmont,” 382. “Aber es ist unbestreitbar: die deutsche Sektion der I. G. N. M. griff in rechten Augenblick die Idee auf, neue Konzertmusik herauszustellen. Man muss sich fragen: kann in einer Zeit, in der die konzertmäßige Musikübung immer mehr zurückgeht, in der sich neue Musik nur mit äußerster Mühe in einem erstarrenden Konzertbetrieb zu behaupten vermag, kann in dieser Zeit Konzertmusik noch entwicklungsfähig sein? Die Anzeichen sprechen dagegen. Aber die jungen Autoren kümmern sich wenig um die soziologischen und wirtschaftlichen Schwierigkeiten. Sie schreiben Konzertmusik in Menge.”

¹⁴² Hans Mersmann and Heinrich Strobel, “Zehn Thesen zur heutigen Lage,” *Melos* 11, no. 1 (January 1932): 12. “Führende Musiker, die früher eine Idee in den Mittelpunkt ihres Werkes stellten, schreiben heute wieder eine rein artistische Musik.”

¹⁴³ Henry Prunières, “Tendencies of Modern Composers: Recent Festivals Show Similar Problems in Differing Scores,” *New York Times*, 23 October 1932.

see today the flourishing piano concertos of Stravinsky, Hindemith, Berg, Bartók, Toch, Milhaud, Poulenc, de Falla, Prokofiev, Roussel, Ravel, Casella, and others...”¹⁴⁴

Several critics also sensed that contemporary music was finally “settling down,” seeking a reconnection or synthesis with the past after the postwar rejection of romanticism. In a 1930 article, Hans Mersmann, Hans Schultze-Ritter, and Heinrich Strobel identified an international “calming” (*Beruhigung*), “simplification” (*Vereinfachung*), and “determination for absolute music” (*ein absoluter Musikwille*), which, in the case of Germany, they attributed to the current economic crisis.¹⁴⁵ Two years later, the authors concluded that that the “stylistic-inventive phase” of new music was over; now, new music was characterized not just as a “counter-stroke against the nineteenth century, but rather also [by] its connections to it.”¹⁴⁶ Composer Wolfgang Fortner agreed, attributing the “cooling down” of experimentation and a re-engagement with the past to a younger generation of composers who came of age after the First World War. While Hindemith’s generation began their compositional careers “in a time that, through war and in the direct postwar time, was in a way inwardly agitated,” by the 1930s:

It seems only self-evident that after this great storm, after the noise, after the frenzy, after an uncritical excitement for everything new, under the influence of the changed picture of the times, a certain disillusionment had to happen, a cooler, objective judgement of things. And it is evident that the bearers of this new mindset belong precisely to the young generation who no longer need to combatively reject the recent past, but now should help to establish the new style, to separate valuable new discoveries from an extraneous revolutionary gesture.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Prunières, “Tendencies.”

¹⁴⁵ Mersmann, Schultze-Ritter, and Strobel, “Die Situation in Deutschland,” 348–349.

¹⁴⁶ Mersmann and Strobel, “Zehn Thesen,” 11. “Die Neue Musik ist heute nicht nur als Gegenstoß gegen das 19. Jahrhundert, sondern auch in ihren Verknüpfungen mit ihm erkennbar... Die stilschöpferische Phase der Neuen Musik ist abgeschlossen.”

¹⁴⁷ Wolfgang Fortner, “Pyrmont 1931,” *Melos* 10, no. 5/6 (May/June 1931): 179. “Diese Generation begann ihre entscheidenden Werke in einer Zeit zu schaffen, die durch Kriegs- und unmittelbare Nachkriegszeit in einer Weise innerlich erregt war, dass alle diese Werke schon einen gemeinsamen Zug aufzeigten, nämlich den der revolutionären Tat. Es scheint nur selbstverständlich, dass nach diesem großen Sturm, nach dem Rausch, nach der Ekstase, nach

Finally, a reviewer for *The Musical Times* in 1931 stated that *Zeitoper* had “outworn its effectiveness,” pointing to Ernst Krenek, the composer of the *Zeitoper* par excellence, *Jonny spielt auf*, who had “returned to the timeless opera with his ‘Das Leben des Orest,’ and it is to be expected that the German modernists in general will follow his lead.”¹⁴⁸

Commentators interpreted this development of a “streamlined romanticism” as composers striving for comprehensibility in their works, once again reaching out to the public. The combination of traditional forms, serious subject matter, and a simplified yet modern musical idiom seemed to strike the perfect balance between the demands that serious music should “progress” and that it should still be appealing to audiences. Arthur Browne in 1932 stated that “the problem of relating contemporary composition with the understanding of contemporary audiences has become increasingly urgent for all to solve... There are signs of a coming reconciliation between composers and public, and such reconciliation has been due largely to Hindemith and the modern German school.”¹⁴⁹ However, it was Hindemith’s concert works, specifically the *Konzertmusik* series and the oratorio, that Browne saw as effective attempts to close the composer-audience gap, and not the works for amateurs, which he viewed as simply “experiments.” As he concluded, “Neo-classicism offers more scope than

mancher kritiklosen Begeisterung für alles Neue, unter Einwirkung des gewandelten Zeitbildes, eine gewisse Ernüchterung, eine kühlere sachliche Beurteilung der Dinge eintreten musste, und es kann einleuchten, dass die Träger dieser neuen Geisteshaltung eben der jungen Generation angehören, die sich nicht mehr gegen eine jüngste Vergangenheit kämpferisch abzustoßen brauchte, sondern die nun helfen sollte, den neuen Stil aufzubauen, wertvolles Neugefundene von einer äußerlichen revolutionären Geste zu scheiden.”

¹⁴⁸ “Musical Notes from Abroad. Vienna,” *The Musical Times* 72, no. 1055 (1 January 1931): 78. Thank you to my advisor, Pamela Potter, for sending me this article.

¹⁴⁹ Browne, 43.

Gemeinschaftsmusik, and is surely a worthier subject for composers of proved ability.”¹⁵⁰

Herbert Trantow also seemed to refer to a new middle ground in concert music, as composers overcame not only the extreme subjectivity of late romanticism but also the soulless products of the last decade: “We’ve conquered the compositional technique of our generation—we have once again obtained the feeling for down-to-earth-ness in that we no longer compose in an airless room, but for the public and not against the listener.”¹⁵¹ In a more critical light, Adorno also referred to the “fatal conflict between the urge to be comprehensible and ‘direct’ and the demands of a pure, *inner compositional* legitimacy.”¹⁵²

This stylistic and aesthetic turn in music stemmed from a nexus of interrelated reasons. One was the desire for some sort of stable, common musical practice following the uncertainty growing out of a multiplicity of compositional styles and functions of the 1920s.¹⁵³ While scholars today view this musical diversity and experimentation as evidence for the cultural vitality of the Weimar Republic and the 1920s in general, for intellectuals and musicians of that time, this diversity was more akin to chaos. In 1930, Hans Gutman recollected the “anarchy in art” in Germany after the war, attributing the situation to the country’s financial ruin and relative

¹⁵⁰ Browne, 57.

¹⁵¹ Trantow, “Neue Geistigkeit,” 263. “Wir haben uns die Kompositionstechnik unserer Generation erobert—wir haben wieder Gefühl für Bodenständigkeit in dem Sinne bekommen, dass wir nicht mehr im luftleeren Raum komponieren, sondern für ein Publikum, nicht gegen dem Hörer.”

¹⁵² Adorno, review of choral music, *Die Musik* 26, no. 9 (June 1934): 712. “die tödliche Auseinandersetzung zwischen dem Drang, verständlich und ‘unmittelbar’ zu werden und den Anforderungen an rein *innerkompositorische* Legitimität.”

¹⁵³ Joseph Auner notes that “the need to proclaim a mainstream in the 1920s and 1930s thus reflects the emergence of many competing trends, styles, and schools, as well as the increasing impact of the new technological and social developments that were profoundly changing the nature of the music and music-making.” Auner, “Proclaiming the Mainstream,” 237. See also Walter, 286; Neumeyer, 8.

isolation from other counties.¹⁵⁴ Hans Redlich, in his article “The Compositional Situation in 1930,” viewed Hindemith’s notorious eclecticism as symptomatic of “all the phases of the permanent crisis of creative work in the last ten years,” such as neoromanticism, parody, jazz, Baroque forms, Zeitoper, film music, and music for mechanical instruments.¹⁵⁵ Albert Theile stated in 1930 that “after years of the wildest anarchy... the era of intellectual disintegration is today at an end; it was the consequence of illusions of which one is ashamed. We are pressing toward a new spiritual synthesis; this was first visible in architecture; literature and new music followed it.”¹⁵⁶ German composer Leo Kauffmann (1901 – 1944) even called on the younger generation of composers to clean up the mess of the various “isms” of the previous decades:

Does the young generation know what the task is today? Today it is necessary to govern the chaos, to oppose subversion and reaction, to offer a clearly-defined goal in response to the reassessment of all artistic values, to scatter good seeds into the plowed-up fields of futurism, Dadaism, in- and expressionism, objectivity and neo-romanticism, to order the dizzying plethora of materials, of experiences, of directions and models, and to finally stack up the building blocks properly and sustainably.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Gutman, “Young Germany,” 3. Another article from 1930, “The Situation in Germany,” also referred to the “aesthetic crisis of new music” (*ästhetische Krise der neuen Musik*). Mersmann, Schulze-Ritter, and Strobel, *Die Situation in Deutschland*, 348. In 1923, English critic Edwin Evans noted that German music was “passing through a crisis.” Evans, “Donaueschingen and Salzburg Festivals,” *The Musical Times* 64, no. 967 (1 September 1923): 632.

¹⁵⁵ Hans F. Redlich, “Die Kompositorische Situation von 1930,” *Anbruch* 12, no. 6 (June 1930): 189. “Hindemiths Produktion spiegelt mit ziemlicher Genauigkeit alle Phasen der permanenten Schaffenskrise der letzten zehn Jahre wieder...”

¹⁵⁶ Albert Theile, “Von Europäischem Geist,” *Melos* 9, no. 8/9 (August/September 1930): 342. “nach Jahren wildester Anarchie... Die Aera geistiger Zersetzung ist heute zu Ende, sie war eine Folge von Trugbildern, deren man sich schämt. Wir drängen hin zu einer neuen geistigen Synthese; die Architektur hat dies zuerst sichtbar werden lassen, Literatur und neue Musik sind ihr gefolgt.”

¹⁵⁷ Leo J. Kauffmann, “Ziele der jungen Generation,” *Melos* 10, no. 5/6 (May/June 1931): 183. “Weiß die junge Generation, welche Aufgabe im Heute liegt? Dass es heute gilt, das Chaos zu regieren, dem Umsturz und der Reaktion entgegenzustehen, der Umwertung aller künstlerischen Werte ein klar umrissenes Ziel entgegenzusetzen, den guten Samen in den futuristisch, dadaistisch, in- und expressionistisch, sachlich und neoromantisch umgepflügten Acker zu streuen, die verwirrende Fülle des Materials, der Erlebnisse, der Richtungen und Vorbilder zu ordnen und die Bausteine endlich richtig und haltbar aufzuschichten.”

Young composers in Italy, including Respighi, also produced a manifesto in 1932 that railed against the experiments in “atonal and pluritonal hullabaloo, objectivism and expressionism,” while calling for a return to a musical mainstream and tradition.”¹⁵⁸ Similarly, French critic Henry Prunières also spoke of the “antagonistic attitudes” even from before the war (targeting specifically Debussy and the Impressionists, Strauss and the post-romantics, and the classicism of Max Reger) and called for a unification of styles in the hands of a composer up to the task:

The musical language must organize itself, a new syntax must be created... What we need now is a master organizer like Carissimi, Lully, Purcell, Handel, Bach, or Mozart—a man who absorbs and synthesizes in his work all this dispersed effort.¹⁵⁹

These calls for stability after the “chaos” of postwar musical experimentation echo the larger desire for stability after the chaos of the worldwide economic crisis in 1929. Indeed, the language used to describe music of the 1920s (crisis, confusion, anarchy, chaos, international) often mirrored the frequent critiques of capitalism; after the stock market crash, free-market capitalism was often seen as unwieldy, uncontrollable, or irresponsible. Like unchecked capitalism, unchecked modern music and experiments were seen as undisciplined and irresponsible, and in severe need of reining-in.¹⁶⁰ Albert Theile linked what he saw as a new “European spirituality” and return to “the law” in the arts to the fact that after the war and subsequent stormy decade, “Europe has become humbler. The economic convulsion that are

¹⁵⁸ Quoted in Walter, 290.

¹⁵⁹ Prunières, “Tendencies.”

¹⁶⁰ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Three New Deals: Reflections on Roosevelt’s America, Mussolini’s Italy, and Hitler’s Germany*, trans. Jefferson Chase (New York: Henry Holt, 2006), 105.

becoming more and more strongly noticeable compel the spirit.”¹⁶¹ Hindemith himself would later invoke this sense of wild speculation on the part of composers in the introduction to his own system for order, his *Unterweisung im Tonsatz*:

The discovery, in the last century, of the extreme limits of power and subtlety in the effect of musical tone extended the boundaries of the tonal domain at the disposal of the composer into hitherto undreamed-of distances. New combinations of tones came to be recognized, and new ways of bending a melodic line were discovered. It seemed as if the sun had risen upon a new, glowing, iridescent land, into which our musician-discoverers rushed headlong. Blinded by the immense store of materials never used before, deafened by the fantastic novelty of sound, everyone seized without reflection at whatever he felt he could use.¹⁶²

The desire for some sort of grounding, whether in a unified musical style, folklore and folksong, or traditional forms and genres, also parallels what historian Wolfgang Schivelbusch has described as the 1930s’ “most powerful collective psychological impulse”: “The desire to recover some ground beneath one’s feet—in an entirely literal as well as metaphorical sense.”¹⁶³ This need for “grounding” can be seen in what Schivelbusch describes as “new emphasis on soil in all its forms,” found not only in the notorious “blood-and-soil” rhetoric of the Nazis, but also in various “back-to-the-land” or reagriculturalization movements.¹⁶⁴ Bernard F. Reilly, Jr. has also observed the “nostalgia for agrarian life” in 1930s American, Italian, and German art, especially during a time when industrialization appeared to have failed.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ Theile, 343. “Europa ist bescheidener geworden, die immer stärker fühlbar werdenden Erschütterung verpflichten den Geist.”

¹⁶² Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition*, 4th ed., trans. Arthur Mendel (Mainz: Schott, 1942), 2–3.

¹⁶³ Schivelbusch, 105.

¹⁶⁴ Schivelbusch, 115–126. There were proposals for the creation of semi-rural “subsistence homesteads” in the United States, where people could cultivate a small plot land in order to feed themselves and reduce government spending on welfare.

¹⁶⁵ Bernard F. Reilly, Jr., “Emblems of Production: Workers in German, Italian, and American Art during the 1930s,” in *Designing Modernity: The Arts of Reform and Persuasion*

The growing realization that modern music had failed to attract audiences—or continued to scare them away—also contributed to the creation of a more audience-friendly style of music and a return to traditional forms. As described in the previous chapters, bridging the gap between composers and the public was a pressing concern for Hindemith and his contemporaries, as the demise of the bourgeoisie as a stable audience forced composers to broaden their base. It was this concern, born out of the sense that concert life was doomed, that spurred his experiments with technology and youth music, *Lehrstück* or radio plays, but they generally remained just experiments, rarely heard outside of new music festivals.¹⁶⁶ Despite the attempts to educate the public about modern music through radio programming or amateur and children’s music, critics began to admit defeat and claim that it was the music itself that was the problem.¹⁶⁷ Arthur Browne in 1932 stated that “it cannot be denied that during the past twenty years the musical public has found most contemporary idioms very difficult to appreciate, and indeed has deemed them hardly worthwhile to examine in order to appreciate them.”¹⁶⁸ Likewise, the article “The Situation in Germany” also spoke to the failure of modern music in the concert hall, noting, “One tried to give New Music a secure place in the programs of opera and concerts. But it didn’t succeed; modern music had to withdraw to local festivals...”¹⁶⁹ Hans Gutman also referred to the

1885–1945; *Selections from the Wolfsonian*, ed. Wendy Kaplan (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 297.

¹⁶⁶ Janik, 48.

¹⁶⁷ Auner observes that one purpose of Schoenberg’s *Verein* was to “ultimately increase the audience for modern music” by educating the public. Auner, “Proclaiming the Mainstream,” 233.

¹⁶⁸ Browne, 43.

¹⁶⁹ Mersmann, Schultze-Ritter, and Strobel, “Die Situation in Deutschland,” 348. “Man hat in Oper und Konzert versucht, der neuen Musik einen festen Platz in den Programmen zu geben. Aber das ist nicht gelungen; die moderne Musik musste sich in lokale Veranstaltungen zurückziehen.” The authors also attribute part of the failure of modern music to the “large reactionary movement” (*Reaktionsbewegung*) currently happening in Germany, citing Frick’s banning of jazz in Thuringia.

failure of what Ludwig Strecker had called “music festival music,” observing that “the younger men [of Germany] have come to the conclusion that music—good as well as bad—is futile if it cannot attract an audience. The development of productive individuals is much less important, therefore, than the discovery of some common basis upon which musicians and their public may once more meet.”¹⁷⁰ Georg Marzynsky (the leader of the German section of the I.G.N.M.) noted the younger generation’s desire to “tear away the invisible partition that exists in concerts between the podium and the public, between the music and the listener.”¹⁷¹

Of course, reaching out to the people through an accessible style also had political as well as economic motivations. In the Soviet Union, this took the form of the artistic policy of Socialist Realism, under which art should be rooted in folklore, easily grasped by the proletariat, and consistent with the Communist Party line.¹⁷² For composers outside of the Soviet Union, such as Hanns Eisler, Marc Blitzstein, and other associated with the Communist-affiliated Composers’ Collective in the United States, using an accessible musical language was a way of communicating their message to the masses.¹⁷³ Jane Fulcher has noted that in mid-1930s France, “a major goal of republican politics was to bring the people and high culture together” in response to the success of leisure programs in fascist regimes.¹⁷⁴ Thus, there was a similar aim to

¹⁷⁰ Gutman, “Young Germany,” 7.

¹⁷¹ Heinrich Strobel and Georg Marzynski, “Gespräch über Pyrmont,” *Melos* 10, no. 5/6 (May/June 1931): 178. “Die unsichtbare Scheidewand, die im Konzert zwischen Podium und Publikum, zwischen der Musik und den Zuhörern besteht, wollen sie wegreißen.”

¹⁷² The key text for this policy was Maxim Gorky’s essay *On Socialist Realism* (1933), which was promoted by Andrei Zhdanov at the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934. Walter, 288.

¹⁷³ Carol J. Oja has noted the Collective’s embrace of folk song, especially “once its members acknowledged that their modernist idiom was not communicating with the masses.” Oja, “Marc Blitzstein’s ‘The Cradle Will Rock’ and Mass-Song Style of the 1930s,” *The Musical Quarterly* 73, no. 4 (1989): 459.

¹⁷⁴ Jane F. Fulcher, *The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France 1914–1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 205.

make high culture “widely accessible... to persuade, to engage emotions in the interest of democracy, using elements of ‘the modern,’ while limiting the vocabulary to the simple or to the immediately comprehensible.”¹⁷⁵

The focus on “the people” was not limited to the political left. In the United States, Italy, and Germany, appealing to the masses served to keep them away from the lure of communism, especially after the stock market crash.¹⁷⁶ Bernard F. Reilly, Jr., has pointed to the use of public art in these countries to instill in citizens “a new sense of belonging to an integrated society wherein the individual contributed to large-scale national projects and production programs,” raising the living standard for all classes.¹⁷⁷ Posters, murals, sculpture, and buildings frequently glorified industrial and agricultural labor, often in a realist style. The American Federal Music Project, instituted in 1935 as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), was also intended to show citizens that the government was working on their behalf by not only keeping musicians employed but also by encouraging art music to uplift and cultivate the masses.¹⁷⁸ In Germany, as discussed in Chapter One, the National Socialist party increased spending on serious music, supporting struggling musical institutions and creating new ones, while programs like *Strength Through Joy* also created job opportunities for musicians. While the definition of who “the people” were differed, the goals of these two programs were arguably the same: bring good (art) music to the people, keep musicians employed, and stave off social unrest.

¹⁷⁵ Fulcher, 206.

¹⁷⁶ Reilly, 288; Potter, *Suppression*, 196–197. Creating the idea of a national “people,” united by citizenship and cultures (and in Germany, “blood”) also helped mitigate any revolutionary tendencies to from an international communist brotherhood.

¹⁷⁷ Reilly, 289, 309.

¹⁷⁸ The WPA was a work program under the auspices of FDR’s New Deal. Kenneth J. Bindas, *All of This Music Belongs to the Nation: The WPA’s Federal Music Project and American Society* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 1.

While Hindemith himself may not have deliberately set out to write easily comprehensible music in order keep workers from communism, there are several parallels to the idea of using of art to pacify the masses.¹⁷⁹ Several composers, for example, spoke of the duty of (art) music to provide a diversion for workers. Krenek believed that because music consumers are “overworked and distracted,” music needed to be striking enough to be noticed, “but at the same time easy and quick to consume.”¹⁸⁰ Herbert Trantow also emphasized the balance between writing music that could easily be grasped and provide spiritual content, directly comparing the composition of such music to industrial production:

Production is justified when it delivers quality goods that contribute to the elevation of the general living standard. Thus, one must write music that the listener perceives as “self-evident” (otherwise one can’t expect his interest), yet at the same time leads him beyond himself. When the composer succeeds in doing this, he has achieved productive work: for a time, he has let the listener forget his usual environment and has contributed to “elevating his (psychic) living standard.”¹⁸¹

Carl Hagemann, director of the Berlin Funk-Stunde, also argued in 1928 that the art music programing on the radio helped relieve the modern city worker from drudgery, “bringing his life back into equilibrium.”¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ As seen in earlier chapters, anxieties about a Bolshevik Revolution often bled through music criticism, whether after the Spartacist Revolt (1919) or the apparent failure of capitalism (1929), as uncontrolled, chaotic new music was frequently decried as “Bolshevist.”

¹⁸⁰ Ernst Krenek, “New Humanity and Old Objectivity,” in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, 588.

¹⁸¹ Trantow, 263. “Produktion hat ihre Berechtigung in sich selbst, wenn sie Qualitätsware liefert, die zur Hebung des allgemeinen Lebensstandards beiträgt. Also muss man eine Musik schreiben, die der Hörer als ‘selbstverständlich’ empfindet (denn sonst kann man nicht sein Interesse verlangen), die ihn aber gleichzeitig über sich selbst hinausführt. Dann, wenn dem Komponisten dieses gelungen ist, hat er produktive Arbeit geleistet: er hat dem Hörer eine Zeit lang seine gewöhnliche Umwelt vergessen lassen, hat also ‘zur Hebung seines (psychischen) Lebensstandards beigetragen.’”

¹⁸² Carl Hagemann, “Sitzung des Programmausschusses der deutschen Rundfunkgesellschaften,” 5./6.6.1928, quoted in Karl Christian Führer, “Broadcasting” 730.

The idea of a unified, classless nation-state striving together also provided a sense of security and refuge during a time of economic strife. Schivelbusch notes the “rediscovery” of the people in the 1930s, characterized in phrases such “the common American” in the New Deal or in the “*Volk* community” in National Socialism. This sense of striving together as a nation, bound together by citizenship and culture (and in Germany, “blood”), resonated with the emergence and popularity of national styles and themes in music.¹⁸³ Joan Evans observes that the economic and political upheavals of the 1930s led not only to stylistic simplification, but also to the “pronounced and widespread use of folk-music elements.”¹⁸⁴ Examples of this trend included Copland’s ballets *Billy the Kid* (1938) and *Rodeo* (1942), the flourishing of “Americanist” symphonies by composers such as Roy Harris, Howard Hansen, and William Schuman.¹⁸⁵ Hindemith himself would base his viola concerto *Der Schwanendreher* on German folk songs in 1935.

Finally, a return to serious music with depth and feeling may have been a reaction to the perceived “coldness,” shallowness, and cynicism of the previous decade’s music, itself a reaction to prewar romanticism and sentimentality.¹⁸⁶ The glowing reviews that accompanied Hindemith’s return to “sincerity” and “feeling” in the early 1930s clearly demonstrated the

¹⁸³ In Mexico, the blossoming of nationalist styles (marked by the “evocation of a pre-colonial past”) accompanied the post-revolutionary period in the 1920s and 1930s, evidenced in works such as Carlos Chávez’s *Sinfonia India* (1935–36). Walter, 291.

¹⁸⁴ Evans, 108. Evans looks specifically at the programming at the Baden-Baden international music festivals between 1936 and 1939.

¹⁸⁵ Evans, 108. See also Bindas, 61; Walter, 290–291; Dahlhaus, 149; Auner, *Music*, 148–149.

¹⁸⁶ Auner has referred to the new fashion after the war for “irony, sarcasm, parody, or simply no emotion at all” as a reaction to, and indictment of, pre-war romanticism, sentimentality, and earnestness. Auner, *Music*, 88. Potter also speaks of the “satire, bitterness, cynicism, demoralization, and angst that characterized so many of the cultural creations in the 1920s.” Potter, *Suppression*, 236

growing fatigue with the satiric and unemotional “motoricism” that characterized his earlier works. Another indication of this attitude can be seen in composer Herbert Trantow’s article “Neue Geistigkeit” (New Spirituality) that appeared in *Melos* in 1931. In it, Trantow called for a “new spirituality” in music, believing that “the new objectivity” (*die neue Sachlichkeit*) has “led to sheer craftsmanship which ignores content and sound.”¹⁸⁷ Trantow also entertained the idea that there may be “a kernel of truth” in the Nazi Party’s “exaggerated and one-sided attacks” on the supposed “cold, naked materialism of art that we label New Music....”¹⁸⁸ The same year, in the article “New Humanity and Old Objectivity,” Ernst Krenek declared “we are bored to death with the ‘tempo of the age,’” further noting that he now “conceive[d] of a work of art as the intellectual form of an emotional content, and so can see little point in an art that rejects emotion as too human and not mechanical enough and intellect as too exhausting.”¹⁸⁹ In France, a group of young composers (*Jeune France*) also demanded a return to sincerity and emotion in a 1936 manifesto, proclaiming that:

While the conditions of life become more and more hard, mechanical, and impersonal, music must without delay bring its spiritual force and its generous effects to those who love it. A group of friends, Yves Baudrier, André Jolivet, Daniel-Lesur, and Olivier Messiaen, the Jeune France...undertakes the dissemination of youthful works that are equally far from academic and revolutionary triteness. The tendencies of this group will be diverse: it will be united by instigating and propagating a music that is alive in the same élan of sincerity, liberalness, and artistic conscience.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Trantow, 262. “Das jetzt wieder als selbstverständlich geforderte musikantische Können hat teilweise zu einer bloßen Handwerklichkeit geführt, die das Inhaltliche und Klangliche ignoriert...”

¹⁸⁸ Recent research has explored how the Nazi culture used positive messages to counter these negative emotions in order to better mobilize the populace. See Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross, and Fabrice d’Almeida, eds., *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). Trantow, 262. “Man lese die Hitlerpresse und überlege sich den dort erhobenen Vorwurf des kalten nackten Materialismus der Kunst, die wir als Neue Musik bezeichnen: in diesen völlig überspitzten und einseitigen Angriffen steckt ein Körnchen Wahrheit...”

¹⁸⁹ Krenek, “New Humanity and Old Objectivity,” 588.

¹⁹⁰ Cited in Walter, 289.

Musicologist Alexander Ringer probably best summed up this fatigue in his closing remarks for the 1981 symposium “Music in the 1930s,” noting that especially in times of stress, most people wanted music to be a comfort, rather than a struggle.¹⁹¹

You also have to agree that most people don’t like modern music, period... One should not ignore such truths, or rather truisms. What we have characterized as “fatigue” in view of music of the 1930s, is, in my opinion, also a fatigue in the struggle over music. As a public, one had to, in a certain sense, struggle with this music. There’s already enough struggling, the daily struggle for survival. Music is a comfort, edification, it’s all possible things, but not a struggle. In this sense, I believe, one has to also see what operating at that time [the 1930s].¹⁹²

Conclusion

Hindemith’s turn to a more accessible, less-contrapuntal musical language, which accompanied his return to writing serious concert works, stemmed from a mixture of personal, professional, and financial reasons. First, his difficulties with the *Jugendmusikbewegung* and Bertolt Brecht caused him to distance himself from music that had a social-political function. In Gottfried Benn, he found a poet who shared his distrust of aspects of modern civilization and a

¹⁹¹ An article about the 2009–2010 Madison Symphony Orchestra season also emphasized a “comfort food” approach to programming in the midst of the recession: “This is the comfort season, with most repertoire picks falling within the lush timbres of the 1800s Romanticism. Music from the first half of the 20th century comes in second, but most of this will have soft edges.” Sandy Tabachnick, “Madison Classical Groups Will Soothe Recession-Frazzled Spirits in 2009 – 2010,” accessed 18 March 2019, <https://isthmus.com/music/madison-classical-groups-will-soothe-recession-frazzled-spirits-in-2009-2010/>.

¹⁹² Alexander L. Ringer, quoted in Riethmüller, 182. “Man muss sich wohl auch darüber einig sein, dass die meisten Menschen moderne Musik nicht gerne haben, Punktum... An solchen Wahrheiten, eigentlich Binsenwahrheiten, sollte man nicht vorübergehen. Das, was man im Blick auf die Musik der Dreißiger Jahren als ‘Ermüdung’ charakterisiert hat, ist m. E. auch eine Ermüdung in dem Kampf um die Musik. Als Publikum hat man sich die Musik in gewissem Sinne erkämpfen müssen. Es gibt ja genug Kampf, Lebenskampf täglich. Musik ist Tröstung, ist Erbauung, ist alles Mögliche, aber nicht Kampf. In dem Sinne muss man, glaube ich, auch sehen, was damals vorgegangen ist.”

belief in the autonomy of art. Second, the increasing calls for him to drop his music festival experiments and to assume his place as the leader of young German composers, coupled with the positive reviews for his simplified musical language and serious attitude, may have been an incentive to return to the concert hall. Third, Hindemith himself recognized (and tried to capitalize on) the larger trend of great, serious works, just as he had seized on the various other trends of the 1920s. This rediscovery of large-scale genres, feeling, seriousness, and even folk tunes in Hindemith's music (or in German music in general) cannot be attributed to Nazi suppression of modernism or a general regression of music under Hitler, but rather was part of an ongoing international shift in the arts. This shift included a fusion of modern and traditional elements, a curbing of the unchecked experiments and diversity of the previous decades, and a tendency to embrace folk culture or have a national emphasis, all in an attempt to recover a stable and unified aesthetic "grounding." These characteristics, in turn, mirrored society's desire for stability and unity amid the upheaval of the Depression.

Despite the global economic crisis, the early 1930s seemed a promising time for Hindemith. His recent works for the concert hall, especially the oratorio, had generally received positive reviews, with critics welcoming his return to serious music. Moreover, the combination of his accessible, yet modern music language and traditional forms seemed to finally be an effective means of reaching out to the public while still furthering the progress of German music. For scholars and his contemporaries, the apotheosis of this combination would take place in 1934, with the premiere of his Symphony *Mathis der Maler*, discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Six:

Mathis der Maler

The opera *Mathis der Maler* (1935), based on the life of the sixteenth-century German painter Mathias Grünewald, is arguably Hindemith's most famous work. The symphony based on the opera is part of the standard orchestral repertoire and the opera itself is still occasionally staged.¹ *Mathis* also occupies a prominent place in Hindemith research, receiving the lion's share of scholarship, while serving as Hindemith's representative work in music history textbooks.² As scholar Giseller Schubert has observed, the work "without doubt counts as one of Hindemith's major works; his musical oeuvre is even frequently quite simply identified with it."³

There are several reasons for the prominence of *Mathis* in scholarship. Musicologists and theorists alike view the work as the culmination of the simplified, more tonal, and less contrapuntal style Hindemith had developed in the *Konzertmusik* series, *Das Unaufhörliche*, and *Philharmonisches Konzert*. Ian Kemp, for example, states, "Although Hindemith had been

¹ Between 1 January 2018 and December 2019, the Schott website shows 57 scheduled performances of the symphony. Schott, accessed 21 March 2019, <https://de.schott-music.com/shop/authordata/performance/list#Top>. In 2017, there were three separate productions of the opera, according to an operabase.com search.

² Luttmann's *Paul Hindemith: A Research and Information Guide* of 2009 lists thirty-three separate pieces of scholarship on the opera, and sixteen on the symphony. The only other individual work that garners this much attention is the opera *Cardillac* with twenty-four. List of textbooks that use *Mathis* as Hindemith's representative work include: Grout, 873; Auner, *Music*, 146; and Ross, 318.

³ Schubert, introduction to *Mathis der Maler*, vol. 1, no. 9 of Finscher and Schubert, *Paul Hindemith: Sämtliche Werke*, ix. "Die Oper *Mathis der Maler* zählt zweifellos zu Hindemiths Hauptwerken; mit ihr wird sogar vielfach sein musikalisches Oeuvre schlechthin identifiziert." Monographs on Hindemith demonstrate the veracity of this statement, as Ian Kemp has a chapter titled "*Mathis der Maler* and the Later Music," and Neumeyer devotes all of Part II to *Mathis* alone. Part III is titled "the Music before *Mathis*" and Part IV is entitled "The Music after *Mathis*."

developing in this direction since 1930, the implications of this language were not fully realized until the *Mathis* symphony.”⁴ Having “perfected” this new style, *Mathis* supposedly initiated the so-called “middle period” of Hindemith’s career, described in one textbook as such: “For *Mathis* and his other works from the 1930s on, Hindemith developed a new, neo-romantic style, with less dissonant linear counterpoint and more systematic tonal organization.”⁵ Finally, scholars consider the work as significant because it demonstrates the theories he would later codify in *Unterweisung im Tonsatz* (1937); Hindemith himself used excerpts from the work as an example in the first volume of his treatise.

Despite the importance of *Mathis* in terms of Hindemith’s compositional development, the most compelling reason for its significance is the widespread belief that it encapsulates his experience under, and resistance to, the National Socialist regime. To start, the opera’s subject matter, Grünewald’s support of the Peasants’ Rebellion with the during a time of war and oppression, can easily be read as a political statement or a parable of the Third Reich.⁶ Indeed, the third act features a book-burning scene where Catholic citizens burn Lutheran books, which scholars interpret as a clear reference to—or even indictment of—the book burnings that happened on 10 May 1933 by the German Students’ Association as part of their campaign “Against the un-German Spirit.”⁷ Moreover, because *Mathis* is a *Künstleroper*, an opera that

⁴ Kemp, *Hindemith*, 35. See also Neumeyer, 5.

⁵ Grout, 873. See also Neumeyer, 187; Morgan 226.

⁶ Claire Taylor-Jay provides a summary of scholars that follow this interpretation. Taylor-Jay, 162–163.

⁷ Ehrhard Bahr, “Nazi Cultural Politics: Intentionalism vs. Functionalism,” in Cuomo, *National Socialist Cultural Policy*, 12. For other scholars who view the book-burning scene as a critique of the Nazi regime, see Morgan, 228; Kemp, *Hindemith*, 30; Michael Meyer, *Politics of Music in the Third Reich* (New York: P. Lang, 1991), 132; and Jürgen Mainka, “Von innerer zu äußerer Emigration. Eine Szene in Paul Hindemiths Oper *Mathis der Maler*,” in *Musik und Musikpolitik im faschistischen Deutschland*, ed. Hans-Werner Heister and Hans-Günter Klein (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1984), 265–72.

features an artist as the central character, it is tempting to view the character of Mathis as a representation of Hindemith himself. Siglind Brühn, in her monograph on *Mathis der Maler*, for example, argues that “Hindemith *is* Mathis. He has not merely created an intriguing character whose musical and emotional experiences he would observe with detached amusement, but an artist trapped in what he, the librettist and composer, saw as his own dilemma.”⁸ The fact that Hindemith wrote the libretto himself only reinforces this autobiographical reading. Thus, scholars generally consider Mathis’s eventual retreat from politics and return to painting an allegory for Hindemith’s own “inner emigration,” a term used to describe his supposed disillusionment and subsequent withdrawal from public life during the National Socialist regime.⁹

Hindemith’s inability to secure a premiere for the opera in Germany also cements the idea of *Mathis* as an antifascist manifesto.¹⁰ Scholars have attributed to this failure to the libretto’s “politically sensitive” subject matter, or claim that the music was simply too modernist for the regime.¹¹ This, in turn, is seen as symptomatic of Hindemith’s (perceived) treatment by

⁸ Bruhn, 351. See also Kemp, *Hindemith*, 30; Briner, Rexroth, and Schubert, 140; Watkins, *Proof*, 404.

⁹ See Taruskin, *Early Twentieth Century*, 767; Gudrun Breimann, *Mathis der Maler und der “Fall Hindemith”: Studien zu Hindemiths Opernlibretto im Kontext der kulturgeschichtlichen und politischen Bedingungen der 30er Jahre*, European University Studies. Musicology, vol. 165 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1997), 171. Giselher Schubert believes that Hindemith was signaling his actual emigration to America, because in early versions of the text, one of the characters suggests leaving Germany for Italy or America. Schubert, introduction, to *Mathis*, ix.

¹⁰ It premiered in Zurich in 28 May 1938, after Hindemith’s emigration to Switzerland.

¹¹ Morgan, 228. Andrée Hayum suggests that “Hindemith’s compositional freedom of interplay between traditional elements and sequences must have been perceived as a special brand of modernist indulgence and irreverence.” Hayum, *The Isenheim Altarpiece: God’s Medicine and the Painter’s Vision* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 146. Schubert implies that Grünewald was not acceptable in Nazi Germany by concluding that “the subject represent[ed] a challenge to the Nazi German view of art that sees through it and fends it off.”

the Nazi party, such as his inclusion in the 1938 *Entartete Musik* (Degenerate Music) exhibition, his denunciation by Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, his targeting by the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur* (Fighting League for German Culture), and the 1936 ban on performances of his works. The opera is also tied to the most notorious event of Hindemith's experience under the Third Reich: *Der Fall Hindemith* (The Hindemith Case), in which Hindemith's acceptability as a composer was publicly debated in the press. As Stephen Hinton notes, "the whole affair concerning Hindemith's reputation became referred to by this formula [*Der Fall Hindemith*]. Inextricably bound up with this affair was the hugely successful premiere of Hindemith's most significant work from this period, the Symphony *Mathis der Maler*."¹²

This traditional view of *Mathis der Maler* has increasingly come under fire in recent decades. Scholars such as Fred Prieberg, Claudia Maurer Zenck, Michael Kater, Karen Painter, and Claire Taylor-Jay have challenged the idea of *Mathis* as a symbol of resistance or inner emigration.¹³ As evidence, they point out that the German subject was unlikely to be objectionable to Nazi ideology as well as to the fact that Hindemith and his publishers showed the libretto and score of *Mathis* to various party officials (including Goebbels) in order to demonstrate the work's "fundamentally German material" (*grunddeutschen Stoffes*).¹⁴ They have also documented Hindemith's attempts to work with the new regime in the first years, as well as his attempts to rehabilitate himself after *Der Fall Hindemith*.

Schubert, "The Aesthetic Promises of a Nazi Conception of Music," in Kater and Riethmüller, *Music and Nazism*, 72.

¹² Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xii. See also Janik, 71.

¹³ Fred K. Prieberg, *Musik im NS-Staat* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982), 68 – 69; Claudia Maurer Zenck, 65–129; Kater, *Composers*, 33–43.

¹⁴ Draft of a letter from Willy Strecker to Gustav Havemann, mid-March 1935.

Despite this scholarship dating back almost forty years, the status of *Mathis* as a declaration of resistance has proven hard to dislodge. The recent 2018 critical edition of the opera put out by the Hindemith Institute doubles down on the autobiographical association. In the foreword, Giseller Schubert suggests that “in this choice of subject, political motives doubtless played a crucial role”¹⁵ and also sees an autobiographical element in this choice, claiming Hindemith:

had to reassess and clarify his relationship to the totalitarian regime. Hindemith unmistakably undertook this clarification in the opera *Mathis der Maler*, comprising much more than mere autobiography: What position must an artist assume in a totalitarian state? What meaning does artistic activity have in times of upheaval and violence? What influences can extra-musical powers wreak on an artwork? How can an artist connect with an oppressed people? Such questions must have preoccupied Hindemith, and he recognized such questions in the historical figure of the painter Matthias Grünewald.¹⁶

Schubert also denigrates the work of Claudia Maurer Zenck and Michael Kater as “thoroughly manipulative... resentment-filled insinuations,” stating that their work will not be addressed in the critical edition.¹⁷ The antifascist ethos of the opera remains intact outside of scholarship as well. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, for example, as part of their Sight and Sound series of

¹⁵ Schubert, “Genesis und Geltung. Der Weg zu Hindemiths Oper *Mathis der Maler*, in “*Theater ist ein Traumort*”: *Opern des 20. Jahrhunderts von Janáček bis Widmann*, eds., Hanspeter Krellmann and Jürgen Schläder (Berlin: Henschel, 2005), 149. “In dieser Sujet-Wahl spielen politische Motive zweifellos eine entscheidende Rolle.”

¹⁶ Schubert, “Genesis und Geltung,” 149. “[Hindemith] musste sein Verhältnis zu totalitären Regimen überdenken und klären. Diese Klärung unternimmt Hindemith unverkennbar in der Oper *Mathis der Maler*, ohne dass sie sich jedoch in solchen autobiographischen Motiven erschöpft: Welche Position muss ein Künstler in totalitären Staaten beziehen? Welchen Sinn hat die künstlerische Tätigkeit in Zeiten des Umbruchs und der Gewalt? Welchen Einfluss können außermusikalische Kräfte auf ein Kunstwerk nehmen? Wie kann sich ein Künstler seinem unterdrückten Volk verbinden? Solche Fragen mochten Hindemith bedrängen, und solche Fragen erkannte er in der historischen Gestalt des Malers Matthias Grünewald wieder.”

¹⁷ Schubert, introduction to *Mathis*, footnote 126, xxvi. “Auf die vor ressentiment-beladenen Unterstellungen nicht zurückschreckenden, durchaus auch manipulativen Arbeiten von Claudia Maurer Zenck oder Michael H. Kater braucht hier nicht eingegangen zu werden...”

2016, performed the Symphony *Mathis der Maler* (in conjunction with their exhibit on Max Beckmann), noting on their website:

The political climate in Nazi Germany sparked an interest in Hindemith to compose an opera based on the life of the painter Matthais Grünewald—specifically the artist's struggle for freedom of expression during the German Peasants' War of 1524–25, in which the country's impoverished serfs revolted against their wealthy feudal lords. The plot of the opera, *Mathis der Maler* (Matthais the Painter), conflicted deeply with Nazi ideology, which called for the government to dictate cultural trends to ensure the elimination of formalism and the avant-garde.¹⁸

This chapter examines the creation of *Mathis der Maler* (the opera and the symphony) in the context of the early years of the National Socialist regime. I first look at Hindemith's initial attempts to compose an opera with the writers Gottfried Benn and Ernst Penzoldt before eventually deciding to write a libretto himself based on the life of Mathias Grünewald. I then turn to the possible reasons behind Hindemith's choice of Grünewald, arguing that rather than an antifascist manifesto, the German subject matter of the opera was meant to establish—or at least safeguard—his position under the regime, while the figure of Mathis provided Hindemith the opportunity to make a statement about the creation of art and the position of the artist in society. The chapter also explores the political and artistic goals of his *Mathis* symphony. Not only did the symphony represent a continuation of his new, more accessible style as well as his return to serious music, it also represented a litmus test for Hindemith's acceptability under the new

¹⁸ Michael Cirigliano II, "Artists in Exile: Paul Hindemith and Max Beckmann," The Met150, accessed 22 March 2019, <https://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/met-live-arts/2016/paul-hindemith-and-max-beckmann>. Reflecting popular knowledge about this work, the Wikipedia page on the symphony states that the opera's plot, "which turned on an artist's duty to pursue his vision irrespective of political considerations, was anathema to Nazi ideology." Likewise, the page on the opera notes that the plot "mirrored Hindemith's own struggle as the Nazis attained power and repressed dissent. The opera's obvious political message did not escape the government's notice." "*Mathis der Maler* (opera)," Wikipedia, accessed 12 December 2017, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathis_der_Maler_\(opera\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathis_der_Maler_(opera)).

regime. The final part of the chapter traces the difficulties Hindemith faced in trying to stage the opera, demonstrating how internal rivalries within the Nazi party were to blame for his lack of success, rather than the opera's subject or music.

Operatic Forays

Following the lukewarm reception in 1929 of *Neues vom Tage*, Hindemith had been searching for a new opera subject and librettist.¹⁹ Critics had pinpointed the revue-style libretto by Marcellus Schiffer as the main problem with the opera and increasingly urged Hindemith to find better material. Adorno, for instance, claimed Hindemith “has the obligation to look for a good and adequate text,”²⁰ while critic Hans Gutman believed that “Hindemith’s further stage productions will be successful or not according to whether he finds the right poet, a person who, up till now, has eluded him.”²¹ Peter Epstein, while praising the music of *Neues vom Tage*, also stated that Hindemith had not yet found a text that matched his musical talent, one which could “finally prove the extent of his skill.”²²

Once again, Hindemith initially seemed to find “the right poet” in Gottfried Benn. The two men began discussing a second, operatic collaboration during the creation of *Das Unaufhörliche* in summer 1931. As with the oratorio, Benn’s penchant for serious philosophical questions, along with his distrust of modern life, stood in sharp contrast to the modernity of

¹⁹ Stephen Hinton has referred to “Hindemith’s pained attempts to write a new opera” and his “sense of demoralizing frustration” in trying to find a topic. Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xi. See also Schubert, introduction to *Mathis*, x.

²⁰ Theodor Adorno, review of *Neues vom Tage* in Darmstadt, *Die Musik* 22, no. 11 (August 1930): 839. “dann hätte Hindemith die Verpflichtung, eben einen guten und adäquaten Text sich zu suchen...”

²¹ Hans Gutman, “Tabloid Hindemith,” 36–37.

²² Epstein, “Paul Hindemiths Theatermusik,” 587. “Noch ist das Bühnenwerk nicht geschrieben, in dem er einen seiner musikalischen Begabung entsprechenden Text vertont und damit endgültig die Ausmaße seines Könnens bewiesen hätte.”

Neues vom Tage and its perceived banality and superficiality. Moreover, Benn and Hindemith enjoyed a close working relationship, even taking family excursions together (fig. 6.1).²³ Benn's first suggestion for an opera subject was *Die weiße Rasse* (the white race), a topic addressed in the eighth movement of *Das Unaufhörliche* ("Aber die Fortschritte der modernen Technik!") where Benn described technology as "the grave of the mythless white race." The topic reflected Benn's growing concern over the supposed "degeneration" of modern European society, describing the subject in a letter to Hindemith and his wife Gertrud in August 1931 as being "very dear to me; it preoccupies me incessantly. It is *the* theme, the next, that primarily hovers over me, the single framework for my next work and thoughts."²⁴ Benn elaborated on his plans for a "white race" opera the following month:

First and foremost, the basic question: a revue or not? A revue with a woman and a man, a pair, from which everything derives, whom we introduce and again gather (baritone and soprano). The starting point [of the opera] could be the question between the two: should we propagate, should we propagate *this race*, how does it look, who it is, where does it come from, where is it going, what are its ideas, its ideals, its body (Ballet! You have to write—I'm so drawn to it—the prettiest ballet music; beautiful women, that's the only thing that's effective, beautiful white women!). We must show the idiocy, the senselessness, the persistence, and finally the solidarity of the race.²⁵

²³ Benn's daughter Nele (1915–2012) was especially close to Gertrud Hindemith. Fehn, *Briefwechsel*, 149–181.

²⁴ Benn to the Hindemiths, 15 August 1931, 44. "Es steht mir eigentlich als Thema sehr nahe, beschäftigt mich unausgesetzt, ist *das* Thema, das nächste, das mir überhaupt vorschwebt, der einzige Rahmen für meine nächsten Arbeiten u. Gedanken." See also his letter from 25 August 1931.

²⁵ Benn to Hindemith, 20 September 1931, 51. "Vor allem die Grundfrage: Revue oder was? Revue mit Commère u. Compère, ein Paar, auf das sich alles bezieht, die wir öffnen u. wieder sammeln (Bariton u. Sopran), der Ausgangspunkt könnte sein zwischen beiden die Frage: sollen wir uns fortpflanzen, sollen wir *diese Rasse* fortpflanzen, wie sieht sie aus, wer ist sie, wo kommt sie her, wo geht sie hin, welches sind ihre Ideen, ihre Ideale, ihr Körper (Ballett! Sie müssten—ich bin so sinnlich eingestellt—schönste Ballettmusik schreiben, schöne Frauen, das ist doch das Einzige, was wirkt, schöne weiße Frauen!) wir müssten das Dumme, das Sinnlose, das Fortgetriebene u. schließlich doch so Enggehaltene der Rasse schildern."

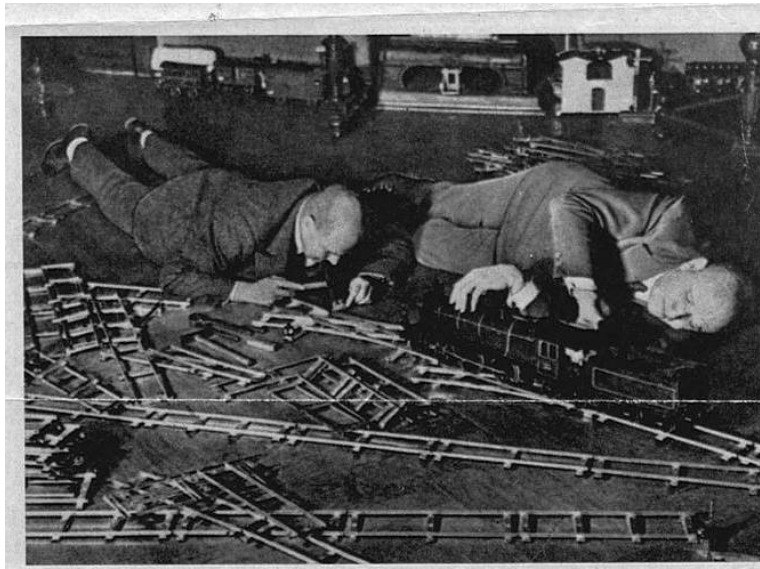


Figure 6.1. Hindemith and Benn enjoying Hindemith's model railway.
Hindemith-Institute,
<http://www.hindemith.info/en/life-work/unknown-hindemith/>.

As there are no extant letters from Hindemith in response to Benn, it is difficult to speculate about his reaction to the “white race” idea.²⁶ Benn’s multiple letters regarding this topic and its appearance in their oratorio, however, suggests that Hindemith was not, at least initially, opposed to the idea.²⁷ (At any rate, the topic must not have been too objectionable, as he continued to work with Benn for another year.) Ann Clark Fehn has suggested that the project failed to launch due to Hindemith’s frequent absences from Berlin that winter, preventing the

²⁶ These letters must have existed, however, as Benn specifically refers to them in his own responses to Hindemith. See his letters from 2 September 1931 and 20 September 1931. There are only three extant letters from Hindemith to Benn.

²⁷ In general, scholarship has generally sidestepped the issue of how much Hindemith tolerated (or even shared) Benn’s problematic beliefs. Historians tend to either focus purely on the musical and literary aspects of their joint oratorio or, when Benn’s beliefs are acknowledged, portray Hindemith as simply naive or even ignorant of those beliefs. Alexander Fisher, for example, states that Hindemith remained “unaware of Benn’s proclivity for the irrational and nihilistic” and was “not necessarily familiar with the private, poetic Benn of... the proposed *Die weiße Rasse*.” Fisher, 33, 52. An exception to this is Alexander Rothe, who argues that Benn’s mystical and irrational ideas “find their parallels in the music of Paul Hindemith.” Rothe, 41.

necessary creative back-and-forth that had driven the creation of the oratorio.²⁸ Benn expressed his concerns about this to Hindemith: “W[hite] R[ace]. If we want to work this winter [on it], I’m all for it. Alone, I can hardly begin. Too many questions that we would have to discuss. Once again, we will have to adopt the step-by-step method and gradually construct it (with suggestions from Frau Hindemith).”²⁹

Whatever his thoughts on the topic, Hindemith must have ultimately vetoed it, as Benn began to cast about for a new subject during the spring of 1932. Once again, he turned to themes that dealt with larger philosophical questions that corresponded to his own nihilistic beliefs. His next idea was to portray a victim of the current economic crisis named Rönne, a character that served as an alter-ego for Benn in several of his earlier prose works.³⁰ After losing his job, his wife, and his home, and receiving no support from society, Rönne realizes that “everything that is weak, without connections or capital is doomed. The powerful make all the laws, they take all rights for themselves alone, the poor must perish, and no one even looks after them.”³¹ With this subject matter, Benn hoped to show:

That everything that exists in natural life: History, Socialism, Philosophy is completely hopeless, tragic and inadequate, and must always be by its nature, that there is no other solution than the arrangement of one’s according to the *spiritual* “I,” as the absorption of life and its hopeless laws into that spirit which witnesses them, struggles with them,

²⁸ Fehn, *Briefwechsel*, 195–196; Fisher, 40.

²⁹ Benn to Hindemith, 20 September 1931, 50. “W. R. Wollen wir diesen Winter arbeiten, ich wäre dafür. Allein kann ich kaum beginnen. Zuviel Fragen, die wir besprechen müssten. Wir werden doch wieder die Methode des Zug-um-Zug u. allmählichen Aufbaus anwenden müssen (mit Ratschlägen von Frau Hindemith).”

³⁰ “Dr. Rönne” appeared in a series of novellas between 1914 and 1916, all published under the title *Gehirne* (Brains).

³¹ Benn to Hindemith 29 May 1932, 58. “Rönne erkennt, dass alles, was schwach ist, ohne Konnektionen, kapitallos dem Untergang geweiht ist, alle Gesetze schuf die Macht, alle Rechte nimmt sie sich allein, der Arme muss zugrunde gehen und keiner sieht ihm auch nur nach.”

suffers from them, and finally accepts them with heroic patience. No greater thing exists for human beings.³²

Hindemith seems to have disliked this topic as well, and in the summer of 1932, Benn offered two new proposals based on popular science books by the American microbiologist Paul Henry de Kruif: *Microbe Hunters* (1926, which appeared in German in 1927 as *Mikrobenjäger*) and *Hunger Fighters* (1928, 1929 in German as *Bezwinger des Hungers*).³³ The first featured different figures in medical research history discovering diseases or microbes, such as Louis Pasteur; the second followed a similar format, profiling scientists who worked to improve wheat production as well as vitamin research. Once again, these topics reflected Benn's own current preoccupations. In the case of *Microbes Hunters*, Benn wanted to revisit the question he had addressed in his essay "Irrationalism and Modern Medicine" ("Irrationalismus und moderne Medizin," 1931), specifically: "Is hygiene and medicine sensible (namely: keeping infants alive in greater numbers, increasing the life span, indulgently continuing to nourish old men) when 1) the economic and work situation is such, that for an unforeseeable time the majority of those getting rehabilitated can't enjoy life in a higher sense..."³⁴ *Hunger Fighters* would explore the negative implications of the development of new strains of disease-resistant wheat by the

³² Benn to Hindemith, 29 May 1932, quoted and translated in Fisher, 40–41.

³³ Fehn suggest that Hindemith did not find the topic exciting enough for an opera. Fehn, *Briefwechsel*, 197.

³⁴ Benn to Hindemith, 28 July 1932, 62. "hat die ganze Hygiene und Medizin Sinn, (nämlich: die Säuglinge in größerer Zahl am Leben zu erhalten, das Lebensalter heraufzusetzen, die Greise milde weiter zu pöppeln) wenn 1) die Wirtschafts- und Arbeitslage doch so ist, dass voraussichtlich für unabsehbare Zeit die Mehrzahl der so Sanierten doch nicht im Genuss des Lebens in einem höheren Sinne leben kann..."

American Mark Alfred Carleton, a topic he had also addressed in his essay, “Does Carleton deserve a monument?” (“Gebührt Carleton ein Denkmal?” 1932).³⁵

As with the white race topic, Hindemith’s direct reactions to these suggestions are missing. However, he, along with his wife Gertrud, seem to have vetoed them based on the absence of a specific plot—not necessarily on the subject matter.³⁶ Benn alluded to these reasons in a letter from 17 August, stating that he had shelved the wheat project, as “the sharp opposition of your wife also figured into my consideration, as she really has an instinct for these things, and I told myself that maybe she’s right. But she is wrong insofar as (in my opinion) maintaining that there is totally no substance and no plot...”³⁷ Moreover, Hindemith’s continual rejections of Benn’s ideas only seemed to exacerbate Benn’s difficulty in coming up with a topic,³⁸ and he

³⁵ According to Thomas Wegmann, Carleton’s innovations led to over-production and falling prices, which put farmers in financial difficulty. Wegmann, “Die Moderne tiefer legen. Gottfried Benns Ästhetik der parasitären Störung,” in *Gottfried Benns Modernität*, ed. Friederike Reents (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), 70.

³⁶ Ann Clark Fehn has suggested that Hindemith may have felt that the Rönne topic, about the lack of permanence in life, was too similar to that of *Das Unaufhörliche*. Fehn, *Briefwechsel*, 197.

³⁷ Benn to Hindemith, 17 August 1932, 64. “Mir ging auch sehr die scharfe Opposition Ihrer Frau in meinen Überlegungen nach, sie hat ja sehr viel Instinkt für diese Dinge, und ich sagte mir, dass sie vielleicht recht hat. Unrecht hat sie nur insofern, als es meiner Meinung nach überhaupt keinen Stoff und keine Handlung gibt...”

³⁸ Benn also suggested an opera based on the novel *Viktoría* (1898) by Norwegian writer Knut Hamsun (1859–1952), a tragic love story between a miller’s son and a squire’s daughter, who, at the end of the novel, dies of tuberculosis. Even this seemingly innocuous suggestion may have been in part motivated by Benn’s ideology, for, according to Helmut Berthold, Hamsun’s “radical, sometimes cynical critique of civilization with his conservative-patriarchal basic attitude consistently corresponded to his [Benn’s] own stance, and found in the time of his Nazi-affinity a special resonance, as Benn summarily labeled the artistically incorruptible author as the representative of a Nordic-Germanic aesthetic with buzzwords like Erde, Heimat, Land, Nation, and Volk” (“Hamsuns radikale, mitunter zynische Zivilisationskritik bei konservativ-patriarchalischer Grundeinstellung entspricht seiner eigenen Haltung zwar durchgehend, findet aber in der Zeit der NS-Affinität besonderen Widerhall, als Benn den künstlerisch unbestechlichen Autor kurzerhand als Repräsentanten einer nordisch-germanischen Ästhetik mit Schlagworten wie Erde, Heimat, Land, Nation und Volk etikettiert”). Helmut Berthold, “Knut

vented his frustrations in the same letter, complaining, “It’s hard to work when every idea is criticized from the outset and is discounted with doubts before it has any time at all to develop in the editing phase.”³⁹ Benn’s own private reluctance to collaborate on an opera after the negative reviews of his text for *Das Unaufhörliche* may have also compounded his frustration. While Hindemith’s music was almost unanimously praised, critics generally viewed Benn’s poetry as confusing and vague. Benn expressed these frustrations, as well as his own self-doubt about being able to write text that could be adequately set to music, over the winter of 1931 (a month after the oratorio premiere) in a letter to the philosopher Ewald Wasmuth:

The thing really kept me busy, namely the futility of trying to write good text for music, the scant understanding of the art of words (*Wortkunst*), the directly slanderous accusations of the provincial press, the mistake, basically, of taking on the music world and critics, which is not for me, for which I’m not responsible. Hindemith now really wants to work with me again on an opera, but I can’t decide. The music would probably once again dominate the situation both externally and internally, and ultimately, I can bring my verses or thoughts alone to people without music.⁴⁰

On his part, Hindemith’s letters to his publishers reveal his growing impatience with Benn’s slow progress and inability to create a concrete scenario. As early as January 1932, he wrote, “I’m incessantly consulting with Benn. It’s going slowly but will probably become

Hamsun,” in *Benn-Handbuch: Leben, Werk, Wirkung*, ed. Christian M. Hanna and Friederike Reents (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler Verlag, 2016), 40.

³⁹ Benn to Hindemith, 17 August 1932, 64. “Es ist schwierig, zu arbeiten, wenn einem jeder Gedanke von vornherein kritisiert und mit Einwänden widerlegt wird, bevor er überhaupt Zeit fand, sich in jene Bearbeitungssphäre hineinzuleben.”

⁴⁰ Benn to Ewald Wasmuth, 17 December 1931, in Fehn, *Briefwechsel*, 85–86. “Die Sache hat mich sehr beschäftigt, die Sinnlosigkeit nämlich, gute Texte für Musik zu versuchen, das geringe Verständnis für Wortkunst, die direkten injurialen Anwürfe der Provinzpresse, der Fehlgriff im Grunde, mich der Musikwelt u Kritik zu stellen, die für mich nicht, für die ich nicht zuständig bin. Hi.[ndemith] will nun dringend mit mir weitermachen, eine Oper, aber ich kann mich nicht entschließen. Die Musik würde doch wieder die Situation äußerlich u. innerlich beherrschen, und schließlich kann ich ja meine Verse oder Gedanken allein an den Mann bringen ohne Musik.”

something serious and proper.”⁴¹ Later that summer, nothing had changed; Benn “produces a lot, but hasn’t shown me anything yet. But that should happen soon.”⁴² Two months later, Hindemith again reported that “Benn is digging and shoveling... When I have even a vague sketch from him, you’ll get a report.”⁴³ At the same time, he began scouting out other possible librettists, telling his publishers that “one can definitely have several irons in the fire.”⁴⁴

Amid these growing tensions, Hindemith suggested the theme of “cultural colonization,” which he described (perhaps as an appeasement to Benn) as “indeed, not out-of-date today.”⁴⁵ Yet in contrast to Benn’s preference for a contemporary setting, Hindemith wanted a historical one: the introduction of Gregorian chant into Germany by the Romans, focusing on the St. Gall cloister school during the time of Charlemagne. As he told Benn, “There are several stories from which a plot can be concocted, and because the people also brought the first beginnings of musical culture into barbaric Germany, one can musically do a lot using Gregorian chants.”⁴⁶ For Hindemith, these stories included the figures and highlights from medieval music history, such as Notker Balbulus and Tutilo, or the journey of monks from Rome to Metz and the presentation of Gregorian chants, or “the fact that the Germans, because of their awful voices (through

⁴¹ Hindemith to Schott, 22 January 1932. “Mit Benn berate ich immerzu weiter. Es geht langsam, wird aber vielleicht was Ernstes und Richtiges.”

⁴² Hindemith to W. Strecker, 16 July 1932. “Benn produziert gewaltig, er hat mir aber noch nichts gezeigt. Das soll aber nächstens stattfinden.”

⁴³ Hindemith to L. Strecker, 10 September 1932. “Benn gräbt und schaufelt... Wenn ich einen auch nur vagen Entwurf von ihm habe, bekommen Sie einen Bericht.”

⁴⁴ One possibility was Carl Zuckmeyer, who wrote the script for the film *Der blaue Engel* (1929). Hindemith to Schott, 22 January 1932. “Man kann ja mehrere Eisen im Feuer haben.” See also the letter from 18 January 1932.

⁴⁵ Hindemith to Benn, 20 August 1932, 79. “Könnte man nicht an einem alten Beispiel zeigen, wie kulturell kolonisiert wird, ein Thema, was heute ja nicht unaktuell ist.”

⁴⁶ Hindemith to Benn, 20 August 1932, 79. “Darüber gibt es mancherlei Geschichten, aus denen sich eine Handlung brauen ließe und da die Leute auch die ersten Anfänge der Musikkultur ins barbarische Germanien gebracht haben, ließe sich auch musikalisch viel machen mit Anwendung der Gregorianischen Gesänge.”

drunkenness and screeching) at first couldn't be bothered to sing, etc."⁴⁷ The topic also offered the opportunity to depict colorful scenes from medieval German life: "Something could happen in the primeval forest, conversions could take place in the farming settlements, in the cloister itself one could show the connections to the outside world, the effects of trade routes, the people from the town, emperor comes now and then to visit—and so on."⁴⁸ (Hindemith would envision something similar in *Mathis*, suggesting in one draft that the fourth scene "will be a large folk scene with medieval stuff of all sorts."⁴⁹)

With a historical setting that highlighted the "beginning" of German art music, Hindemith may have thought he had landed on an eminently respectable topic—one (literally) years away from the jazz- and technology-inflected modernity of *Neues vom Tage*. Hindemith jokingly referred to the respectability of the topic in a letter to his publishers in August 1932, reporting that he and Benn had "put aside the recently-tendered wheat project. It wasn't fertile enough. Therefore, we are now considering a very promising plan, which, in its German, upright, highly-tragic and heartfelt manner, may be able to make the hearts of the publishing firm, from the youngest footboys to the oldest clerks, leap with joy."⁵⁰ The last part of the statement

⁴⁷ Hindemith to Benn, August 1932, 79. "In dem Buch von Schubinger... finden sich vielerlei Geschichten, die verwertbar sein könnten, so die Reise der ersten angeforderten Mönche von Rom nach Metz, der eine der krankheitshalber in St. Gallen bleibt, die Überbringung einer Kopie der von Gregor dem Großen festgelegten Kirchengesänge und ihre feierliche Niederlegung am Altar der Klosterkirche, die Tatsache, dass die Germanen ihrer durch Suff und Geschrei scheußlichen Stimmen wegen zunächst gar nicht zum Singen zu brauchen waren usw."

⁴⁸ Hindemith to Benn, before 31 August 1932, 81. "In Urwäldern könnte einiges passieren, in Bauernsiedlungen könnten Bekehrungen stattfinden, im Kloster selbst könnte man die Beziehungen zur Außerwelt zeigen, die Wirkungen des Handelsweges, die Leute aus der Stadt, Kaiser kommen hie und da mal zu Besuch—and so on."

⁴⁹ Hindemith to W. Strecker, November 1933. "Wird große Volksszene mit Mittelalter aller Art."

⁵⁰ Hindemith to Schott, 30 August 1932. "...die Herren das jüngst vorgelegte Weizenprojekt wieder beiseite gelegt haben. Es sei nicht ergiebig genug. Dafür habe man nun einen vielversprechenden Plan ins Auge gefasst, der in seiner deutschen, biedereren,

suggests that he thought this subject would be a commercial and artistic success, as opposed to *Neues vom Tage*.⁵¹ Ludwig Strecker seemed to agree, responding, “I’m really interested in your hints regarding an opera subject. Quite frankly, the wheat business had worried me.”⁵²

Although Benn dutifully researched the St. Gall monastery, his heart was still set on a contemporary theme—particularly in light of the current political climate and ascent of the Nazi party. His first response to the St. Gall project was to relate the medieval meeting of civilizations to the influence of Italian fascism on Germany, stating: “Thus, the Germans are taught and instructed in fine Roman discipline—how topical, how ingenious, each gains something: Brüning and Hitler, Mussolini and Göring. What a great combination: the Romans and the Barbarians!”⁵³ Not surprisingly, Benn gave up on the topic only two weeks later, telling Hindemith that, “neither St. Gall nor Charlemagne are very interesting to me. Something modern would be better. In a time when such new, interesting things are being formed—is it good to be historic?”⁵⁴

hochtragischen und tiefgefühlten Art geeignet sein dürfte, die Herzen des Verlags vom jüngsten Laufburschen bis zum ältesten Ladenhüter höher schlagen zu lassen.”

⁵¹ This letter was part of a larger joke. Someone at the Schott firm had mistakenly sent Hindemith a letter meant for a Herr Zehnter, rejecting an opera Zehnter had submitted for publication. Hindemith had written back to the firm pretending to be Zehnter, lambasting them for publishing “the dreadful rubbish I have foisted on you during the past ten years or so under the name of Hindemith.” Ludwig played along, noting that “Zehnter’s” music was much better than Hindemith’s and nearer to their supposedly conservative tastes.

⁵² L. Strecker to Hindemith, 3 September 1932. “Sehr interessiert haben mich Ihre Andeutungen hinsichtlich eines neuen Opernstoffes. Die Weizen-Angelegenheit hatte mir offengestanden Sorge gemacht.”

⁵³ Benn to Hindemith, 31 August 1932, 66. “Also die Germanen werden in der feinen römischen Zucht belehrt u. unterwiesen—wie aktuell, wie raffiniert, jeder bekommt etwas: Brüning u. Hitler, Mussolini u. Göring, welche großartige Combination: die Römlinge u. die Barbaren!”

⁵⁴ Benn to Hindemith, 15 September 1932, 67. “Auf Ihren letzten Brief fand ich noch keine rechte Antwort, weder St. Gallen noch Karl der Große sind mir sehr nahe gekommen. Was Modernes wäre doch besser. In einer Zeit, wo so neue interessante Dinge sich prägen,—historisch zu sein, ist das gut?”

Undeterred, Hindemith kept pushing for a historical topic, suggesting another landmark occurrence in German history: Johannes Gutenberg and the printing press. Gutenberg was from Mainz, the location of the Schott firm, and Willy Strecker noted that it would be easy to obtain sources from the local Gutenberg museum. Even better, he observed, since not much was known about Gutenberg, they could take artistic license with him.⁵⁵ Perhaps with Hindemith's preference for a historical topic in mind, Willy also suggested a second figure from Mainz, the painter Matthias Grünewald (c. 1480-1528), who would later become the subject of *Mathis der Maler*, writing to Hindemith in September 1932:

Another figure is Mathias Grünewald (Willms's idea), who also must have worked in our region and could furnish a super artistic figure; much more revolutionary and spirited than Gutenberg. Recently, a bad novel about him has appeared; otherwise he has been researched a lot without anyone really knowing anything about him. With Grünewald, the Peasants' War and Renaissance as good parallels to the present time could come into question.⁵⁶

Examining this statement about Grünewald already disputes the received wisdom about *Mathis der Maler*. First, the idea to use Mathias Grünewald as a subject was that of Franz Willms, the arranger at the Schott firm, demonstrating that Hindemith originally did not set out to write an artist's opera nor deliberately chose a figure that somehow paralleled his life. Most importantly, it was Willy Strecker, not Hindemith, who drew connections between the political

⁵⁵ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 26 September 1932. "Das Gutenberg-Material wäre mit Leichtigkeit im hiesigen Gutenberg-Museum zu beschaffen, da der dortige Direktor Ruppel ein Spezialist auf diesem Gebiet ist und vor Stolz platzt, wenn er einen Interessenten findet. Soweit ich feststellen konnte, weiß man erfreulich wenig über Altmeister Gensfleisch, so dass man... das Thema sehr frei behandeln kann."

⁵⁶ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 26 September 1932. "Eine andere Figur ist Mathias Grünewald (Idee von Willms), der auch in unserer Gegend gearbeitet habe muss und eine großartige Künstlerfigur abgeben könnte; viel revolutionärer und temperamentvoller vielleicht als Gutenberg. Es ist letzthin ein schlechter Roman über ihn erschienen und auch sonst wird er viel erforscht, ohne dass man eigentlich etwas über ihm weiß. Bei Grünewald kämen die Bauernkriege und Renaissance als gute Parallele zur heutigen Zeit in Frage."

upheavals of the early sixteenth century and the current day. Yet Willy made these connections in the fall of 1932, *before* the book burnings and before Hitler's appointment as chancellor. It is possible that he saw the economic, class, and political struggles of the Weimar Republic as analogous to those of the Peasants' War, particularly after the summer of 1932, when Nazis and Communists were often engaged in street battles after the ban on the SA (*Sturmabteilung*) and SS (*Schutzstaffel*) paramilitary organizations was lifted on 18 June.⁵⁷ Willy also wrote the letter after the General Election of 31 July 1932, in which the NSDAP became the largest party in the Reichstag. While it may be a stretch to suggest that Willy saw the promise of a "Renaissance" under a National Socialist government, perhaps he did see a need for some sort of renewal or "rebirth" after the difficulties of the past decade. Willy ended the letter questioning whether these topics "reside within Benn's philosophy."⁵⁸

Willy's doubts were well-founded, as Benn passed on Gutenberg and Grünewald, and by October 1932, the collapse of the operatic project seemed imminent. Hindemith had completely lost patience with Benn's lack of progress and indecision, writing to his publishers in October:

A polite man doesn't say, 'this is disgusting,' but it really is. I sit here like a dried-up spinster. Benn just isn't sparking at all. He gets nothing done because he's hyper-critical. He's really slaving away and certainly something will emerge, but how long should one have to wait for it? The St. Gall thing apparently didn't tempt him enough, the same with Gutenberg and Grünewald. Now he's puzzling further. We'll just have to see what happens.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Fulbrook, 53.

⁵⁸ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 26 September 1932. "...ich weiß nicht, ob sie der Bennschen Philosophie liegen."

⁵⁹ Hindemith to Schott, 10 October 1932. "Verehrte Brüder, der vornehme Mann sagt zwar nicht 'es ist zum Kotzen,' es ist aber wirklich so. Ich sitze da wie eine trockene Jungfrau. Benn funkelt eben gar nicht. Er kommt vor lauter Überkritik zu nichts. Er plagt sich sehr und sicher kommt auch etwas zum Vorschein, aber wie lange soll man darauf warten? Die St. Galler Sache reizte ihn anscheinend nicht genug, Gutenberg und Grünewald ebenso. Nun knobelt er weiter—man muss halt sehen, was passiert."

Hindemith himself, however, did not seem to think much of Gutenberg nor Grünewald as potential opera subjects. Although he liked the historical setting of Gutenberg's time, he commented that the man himself "seems to have been a pretty humorless gentleman."⁶⁰ He was also skeptical about Grünewald, given the difficulty of creating drama around the act of painting, noting:

Grünewald would be good if he wasn't a painter. The essence and purpose of an opera about Grünewald could only be about painting, and one is not able to avoid letting the man paint in rapture: a really flimsy basis for the music and in my opinion, weird. Remember the "Gezeichneten" [a 1915 opera by Franz Schreker] where the exalted lady went into raptures before the easel. Something similar would probably also have to happen here.⁶¹

Ludwig Strecker also shared Hindemith's doubts, pragmatically noting that a Gutenberg opera would lack a female lead. Following this outburst, there was no further correspondence between the two artists regarding the opera, and the once-promising partnership seems to have simply dissolved.

Historians frequently attribute the collapse of the Benn-Hindemith partnership to Hindemith's alleged repudiation of Benn's embrace of National Socialism.⁶² To be sure, Hindemith appears to have ignored a letter from Benn inviting him to a *Stammtisch* for the

⁶⁰ Hindemith to Schott, 10 October 1932. "Er scheint ein ziemlich trockener Herr gewesen zu sein."

⁶¹ Hindemith to Schott, 10 October 1932. "Grünewald wäre gut, wenn er nicht gerade Maler wäre. Wesen und Zweck einer Oper um Grünewald könnte doch nur die Malerei sein und man käme ja nicht drum herum, den Mann in Begeisterung malen zu lassen; ein für die Musik sehr dürftiges und für meine Begriffe komisches Motiv. Erinnern Sie sich an die 'Gezeichneten,' wo die exaltierte Dame vor der Staffelei in Verückung gerät? Etwas Ähnliches müsste wahrscheinlich auch hier passieren."

⁶² Fehn, *Briefwechsel*, 199; Breimann, 58–59.

artistic elite of the new Reich.⁶³ Likewise, after Benn's public declaration of support for the party in April 1933, Hindemith sarcastically wrote to his wife that Benn:

really seems to have been severely bitten by the bug. It's like one of those swaddled babies who catch a cold when they come into the air: he seems to have lived all these years on the moon and is now completely amazed that there's still a world. That's nice, but from here to the brotherly kiss [a greeting ritual between socialists and communists] he could have switched to a somewhat slower speed. I'd like to see his disappointment after a couple of months.⁶⁴

While Hindemith may have disapproved of Benn's support of National Socialism, this arguably only solidified their estrangement, as their partnership had already collapsed in the fall of 1932, well before Benn's public endorsement of the party the following spring.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the correspondence between the two men shows that this collapse was based on several practical and artistic reasons rather than ideological ones. First of all, they failed to agree on a topic, with Benn's preference for a modern, philosophical issue conflicting with Hindemith's desire for a "serious and proper" text on a historical German subject. Second, Benn's hesitation about creating a libretto may have contributed to his inability to produce a substantial opera scenario.

⁶³ Hindemith also seems to have not responded to a letter (addressed to Gertrud) from 21 October 1933 in which Benn waxed enthusiastic about the movement and indicated his belief that it corresponded to Hindemith's own artistic hopes.

⁶⁴ Hindemith to G. Hindemith, 25 May 1933, in *"Das private Logbuch": Briefe an seine Frau Gertrud*, eds. Friederike Becker and Giseler Schubert (Mainz: Schott, 1995), 101. "Den scheint's ja wirklich ganz arg gepackt zu haben. Es ist halt wie mit den eingewickelten Kindern, die sich erkälten, wenn sie an die Luft kommen: er scheint die ganzen Jahre auf dem Mond gelebt zu haben und ist nun ganz verwundert, dass es noch Welt gibt. Ganz schön, aber von hier bis zum Bruderkuss hätte er eine etwas langsamere Windeseile einschalten können. Seine Enttäuschung nach ein paar Monaten möchte ich mal sehen."

⁶⁵ On 24 April 1933, Benn delivered a radio address titled "The New State and the Intellectuals" (Der neue Staat und die Intellektuellen) in which he urged subordination to the state. He followed this with an essay about art and national work in the *Berliner Tageblatt* on 30 April and his radio address "Answer to Literary Emigrants" (Antwort an die literarischen Emigranten) on 24 May. Becker and Schubert, footnote 303 in *"Das private Logbuch": Briefe an seine Frau Gertrud*, 101.

This lack of productivity, in turn, increasingly irritated Hindemith, causing him to seek out other writers, and eventually to write his own text. Lastly, the substantial payment Benn received for his efforts from Hindemith's publishers was a lingering sore spot for Hindemith, who even offered to cover half of cost as "a penalty for my gullibility regarding a poet."⁶⁶ The fact that Benn and Hindemith spent time together socially, as well as professionally, also makes it difficult to believe that Benn's (temporary) allegiance to National Socialism would have come as a complete shock. Based on the evidence, then, Hindemith's decision not to work with Benn appears to have been more prosaic than heroic.

In the midst of these difficulties with Benn, a new opportunity appeared to arise in mid-October 1932 in the figure of writer Ernst Penzoldt (1892–1955). Hindemith was put into contact with Penzoldt through the director of the Berlin Städtischer Oper, Carl Ebert, who had staged Penzoldt's comic play *Die Portugalesische Schlacht* in 1931.⁶⁷ After the Benn debacle, Hindemith was understandably cautious, warning the Streckers, "Don't get your hopes up too much, so you won't be disappointed. I'll let you know soon about the prospects."⁶⁸ The prospects must have been good, as Penzoldt, who lived in Munich, spent two days in Berlin later that month discussing possible scenarios with the Hindemiths. While *Die Portugalesische Schlacht*, set during the sixteenth century, was first under discussion, the men eventually settled on Penzoldt's novella *Etienne und Luise* (1929), about a German girl who hides an escaped French

⁶⁶ Hindemith to L. Strecker, 20 January 1933. "Ich selbst werde mir die 500 als Strafsumme für Leichtgläubigkeit einem Dichter gegenüber auferlegen."

⁶⁷ Hindemith met with Ebert on 7 October 1932. Gunther Nickel and Susanne Schaal, "Die Dokumente zu einem gescheiterten Opernplan von Paul Hindemith und Ernst Penzoldt," *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 28 (1999): 88.

⁶⁸ Hindemith to Schott, 6 October 1932. "Machen Sie sich noch nicht zu große Hoffnungen, um so weniger werden Sie enttäuscht. Ich berichte Ihnen bald über die Aussichten."

prisoner-of-war in her bedroom during the First World War.⁶⁹ At first glance, the relatively contemporary setting of *Etienne und Luise* seems to contradict Hindemith's apparent desire for a historical topic. The plot, however, does not comment on or celebrate modern life, a defining characteristic of *Zeitopern*; the WWI setting was simply the background for the story. The fact that both Penzoldt and Hindemith had served in the war (and were both profoundly disillusioned by it) may have been another reason Hindemith was willing to set the novel.⁷⁰

Unlike Benn, Penzoldt seems to have been an eager and prompt correspondent, and between November 1932 and February 1933, Hindemith and Penzoldt were busy developing the plot and libretto. Because of the distance, Gertrud commented (perhaps with a final jab at Benn) that "the men have to work by letter. But that's okay; black and white is more certain and productive than thought-impregnated air."⁷¹ Hindemith also frequently ran ideas by his publishers for their advice, something he had never done before, suggesting the pressure he may have felt to have a success.⁷² As Hindemith himself observed, "Never in my life have I written so many letters as I have about this opera."⁷³ Work on the libretto progressed rapidly, with plans for a premiere the following winter.

⁶⁹ This choice may have been Penzoldt's, as Gertrud reported to Ludwig that he "will do something modern." G. Hindemith to L. Strecker, 25 October 1932. "Er war 2 Tage hier und wird eine moderne Sache machen."

⁷⁰ Nickel and Schaal, 96; "Ernst Penzoldt: Leben und Werk," accessed 18 May 2019, <http://ernst-penzoldt.de/portrait/>.

⁷¹ G. Hindemith to L. Strecker, 30 October 1932. "Nun müssen die Männer schriftlich arbeiten. Das ist aber ganz gut, schwarz auf weiß ist sicherer und ergiebiger als gedankengeschwängerte Lüfte."

⁷² For the published documentation on this aborted opera project, see Nickel and Schaal, 88-99.

⁷³ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 26 January 1933. "Noch nie in meinem Leben habe ich so viel Briefe geschrieben wie um diese Oper."

In spite of all the letters, the hard work, and Hindemith's seeming excitement about the opera, it was never produced. Scholars have attributed the aborted attempt to the political environment after Hitler's appointment as chancellor on 30 January 1933, believing that the opera's material was too sensitive (a German girl who hides and eventually falls in love with a French prisoner-of-war) under the new regime.⁷⁴ To be sure, the changing political situation in Germany did impact the opera. In December 1932, Ludwig Strecker suggested that, due to rising national sentiment, the character of Etienne should be Russian instead of French, as "the French are still, up to this day, perceived as our torturers." Ludwig also advised that the opera not conclude with the Armistice of 1918 but with the earlier peace treaty with Soviet Russia, "the only German triumph and the only German peace that we can still talk about without clenching our fists."⁷⁵ Hindemith and Penzoldt took this advice, turning "Etienne" into "Stepan Micheilowitsch Borodin," as well as significantly strengthening the role of the German soldier Martin, the rival for Luise's affections.⁷⁶ Ludwig also expressed concern about a scene in which Martin helps Stepan escape, noting that, "It could be that from a nationalistic view you're bringing up a touchy subject, which one could label with the alien concept of pacifism."⁷⁷

⁷⁴ See Schubert, "Genesis und Geltung," 149; Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xiii; Nickel and Schaal, 89; and Frederike Becker, "Des Künstlers Entsagung: Die 'Dichtung' *Mathis der Maler*, ihre Entstehungsgeschichte und einige kritische Anmerkungen zur Legendenbildung um Paul Hindemiths Libretto," in *Biographische Konstellation und künstlerisches Handeln*, ed. Gisela Schubert (Mainz: Schott, 1997), 129.

⁷⁵ L. Strecker to Paul Hindemith, 5/7 December 1932. "Der einzige deutsche Sieg und der einzige deutsche Friede, von dem man noch sprechen kann, ohne die Hände zu ballen... [Die Franzosen], die ja noch bis in die heutige Zeit hinein als unsere Folterknechte empfunden werden."

⁷⁶ Penzoldt to Hindemith, 13 January 1933, in "Die Dokumente zu einem gescheiterten Opernplan," 208. Luise ends up with Martin and there are sympathetic portrayals of him in the trenches declaring his love for Luise.

⁷⁷ L. Strecker to Hindemith, 14 January 1933. "Es könnte sein, dass man aus nationaler Gesinnung heraus den Finger auf diese Wunde legt, die man mit dem Fremdwort Pazifismus bezeichnen könnte." Four days later, Ludwig asked Hindemith to contribute some "funny soldier

Despite these changes and Hindemith's insistence that he had no misgivings about the material, he soon changed his mind in March 1933, following the burning of the German parliament on 27 February (allegedly by Communist operatives), an event the Nazis used as a pretext for the subsequent suspension of civil liberties and the mass arrest of political enemies.⁷⁸

As he wrote to the Strecker brothers:

You haven't heard anything from me in a while. It was so chaotic here that writing was out of the question. Regarding the opera, I'm sending you a letter from Penzoldt. Naturally, the prospects [for the opera] are bad for the coming weeks, and as far as it will be possible to produce a new opera in fall, I also don't know. Based on what I see here in the music and theater scene, I believe that all the theater posts will soon be filled with staunch nationalist lads. Early next year, after overcoming the initial difficulties, the prospects for an opera by Penzoldt and me may be very good. Maybe not this particular text, although one also can't know that. At any rate, caution is called for, and in the meantime I'm for postponing work on this material and looking for something else. I've already been on the lookout and I've conceived of something that is harmless, interesting, and (in the next year or the year after next) is especially current: the event of the implementation of the first railroad.⁷⁹

songs" (*lustige Soldatenlieder*) for a planned book of songs for singing societies, in order to "free our unadventurous singing brothers from the stereotype of the difficulty and modernity of Hindemith" ("der unsere biedern Sangesbrüder von dem Vorurteil gegen die Schwierigkeit und Modernität von Hindemith befreien soll"). L. Strecker to Hindemith, 18 January 1933.

⁷⁸ Fulbrook, 57–58.

⁷⁹ Hindemith to Schott, ca. 10 March 1933. "Verehrte Brüder, Sie haben einige Zeit nichts von mir gehört. Hier war so ein Durcheinander, dass an Schreiben gar nicht zu denken war. Wegen der Oper schicke ich Ihnen hierbei einen Brief Penzoldts. Natürlich sind für die nächsten Wochen die Aussichten schlecht, und wie weit es im Herbst möglich sein wird, neue Opern herauszubringen, weiß ich auch nicht. Nach allem, was ich hier im Musik- und Theaterbetrieb sehe, glaube ich, dass alle Theaterposten in Kürze mit stramm nationalen Jungens besetzt sein werden. Im nächsten Frühjahr, nach Überwindung der ersten Schwierigkeiten, dürften dann die Aussichten für eine Oper von Penzoldt und mir sehr gut sein. Vielleicht nicht gerade für diesen Text, obwohl man das auch nicht wissen kann. Jedenfalls ist aber Vorsicht geboten und ich bin dafür, die Arbeit an diesem Stoff einstweilen zurückzustellen und etwas anderes zu suchen. Ich habe mich schon umgetan und bin auf ein Stoffgebiet gekommen, das harmlos, interessant und im nächsten und übernächsten Jahre besonders aktuell ist: die Ereignisse bei der Inbetriebnahme der ersten Eisenbahnen. In England und in Deutschland gibt es da sehr nette Ereignisse, aus denen sich gut eine heitere Oper machen ließe."

Clearly, Hindemith wanted to avoid anything remotely political or controversial given the circumstances.⁸⁰ This decision, however, was an act of self-censorship borne out of uncertainty and a desire to play it safe, rather than a result of a top-down censorship.⁸¹ Hindemith reiterated this warning to Penzoldt, assuring him that, “regarding the material I still have no misgivings. But because one has to account for the idiocy and poison of the crowd as an uncertain factor and since we can’t know whether the height of this sickness will already have peaked next year, we have to sit tight with this text.”⁸² He then acknowledged the futility of challenging the status quo, believing that while the “general stupidity, multiplied by the fear of the weak, by far surpasses reasonableness, Hercules himself would think it a ridiculous undertaking to fight against such debasement—as downright non-heroes, it is not our place.”⁸³ The letter ended with Hindemith sarcastically reassuring Penzoldt, whose production of *Die Portugalesische Schlacht* was postponed, that he had nothing to fear, as Penzoldt was an “impeccable, light- and color-true German.”⁸⁴

⁸⁰ The Russian “Stepan” might have now been a liability given the anti-Bolshevism of the Nazis.

⁸¹ As Kim Kowalke has noted, “even minimal threats of coercion by the state had the notable effect of creating an environment of anxiety in which self-censorship by publishers became the norm.” Kowalke, “Music Publishing,” 173.

⁸² Hindemith to Penzoldt, between 10 and 12 March, in “Die Dokumente zu einem gescheitertern Opernplan,” 242–243. “Auch wegen des Stoffes habe ich nach wie vor keine Bedenken. Weil man aber als unsicheren Faktor in unserer Rechnung die Doofheit und Verhetztheit der Menge einstellen muss und man nicht wissen kann, ob der Grat dieser Krankheiten nächstes Jahr schon erreicht sein wird, müssen wir mit diesem Text abwarten.”

⁸³ Hindemith to Penzoldt, between 10 and 12 March 1932, in “Die Dokumente zu einem gescheitertern Opernplan,” 242. “Die allgemeine Dummheit, multipliziert durch die Angst der Wachweichen übersteigt bei weitem das gottgewollte Maß. Gegen solchen Marasmus anzugehen wäre selbst Herkulesen ein lächerliches Unternehmen—uns als ausgesprochenen Nichthelden steht es gar nicht zu.”

⁸⁴ Hindemith to Penzoldt, between 10 and 12 March 1932, in “Die Dokumente zu einem gescheitertern Opernplan,” 242. “... und da Sie ja als einwandfreier, licht- und farbenechter Deutscher nichts zu fürchten haben, werden Sie im nächsten Winter cum gloria über die Bühnen geschleift werden.” Hindemith was likely referring to Penzoldt not being Jewish; Penzoldt

The potential appointment of party stooges (“staunch nationalist lads”) in administrative posts of cultural institutions also seems to have prompted Hindemith’s decision to postpone the opera. Carl Ebert, the director of the Städtische Oper who had put Hindemith in contact with Penzoldt, lost his job on 13 March 1933.⁸⁵ There was also a purge of many prominent Jewish figures in artistic life in February and March 1933—even predating the “Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service” of 7 April 1933, which forced Jews and political opponents out of civil service positions.⁸⁶ Bruno Walter, for example, was prevented from conducting the Berlin Philharmonic on 19 and 20 March. The same month, the mayor of Frankfurt dismissed all Jews working in the city’s art and cultural institutions.⁸⁷ Willy commented on the upheaval and uncertainty in musical life following the Nazis’ accession to power that April, writing to Ludwig that “Hindemith reports from Berlin that the opinions there and the leaders are changed more often than one changes a shirt... From all sides, one gives contradictory instructions, no one is certain of his position, and one sails on a terrible zigzag course.”⁸⁸ In the Berlin Hochschule itself, “[Georg] Schünemann [director of the school] is crowing and demands to know why he has lost his position. One implores him to be calm, offers him the conservatory in Frankfurt and whatever else is to be had, and suggests that his firing may have only been a groundless,

himself, in conveying his first impressions of Hindemith, had described him as a “short non-Jew from Frankfurt” (*kleiner Frankfurter Nichtjude*). Penzoldt to Ernst Heimeran, 24 October 1932, in “Die Dokumente zu einem gescheiterten Opernplan,” 111.

⁸⁵ Ebert was offered control of opera houses in Berlin by Hermann Göring but refused. “Carl Ebert,” Universität Hamburg, Institut für Historische Musikwissenschaft. Lexikon verfolgter Musiker und Musikerinnen der NS-Zeit (LexM), accessed 2 March 2020, https://www.lexm.uni-hamburg.de/object/lexm_lexmperson_00002560.

⁸⁶ Fulbrook, 59.

⁸⁷ Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 105.

⁸⁸ W. Strecker to L. Strecker, 4 August 1933. “Von Berlin berichtete er, dass man dort die Ansichten und die leitenden Männer viel öfter wie die Hemden wechselt... Von allen Seiten gäbe man die widersprechendsten Befehle, keiner sei seiner Stellung sicher und man segelte in einem schrecklichen Zickzackkurs.”

momentary question of mood.”⁸⁹ Hindemith himself reported that, “the school is in complete turmoil. All the Jewish teachers, apart from one or two completely irreplaceable ones like [Curt] Sachs or [Carl] Flesch, of course have to go.”⁹⁰

Hindemith had good reason to act cautiously given the changes in arts personnel. In 1930, his music had been temporarily removed from concert halls in the state of Thuringia under the order of party member Wilhelm Frick, who was appointed secretary of the interior and of public education after the National Socialists had won a majority in state elections.⁹¹ The removal was carried out under Frick’s “Ordinance Against Negro Culture” (“Wider die Neger-Kultur, für deutsches Volkstum”), which also removed modernist art from museums and singled out books and films that the Nazis deemed “cultural-bolshevist” or pacifist. The Thuringian parliament stopped Frick’s activities in April 1931. Hindemith was also the target of Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg. Rosenberg was the editor-in-chief of the National Socialist newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter* (The Folkish Observer), and founded the Fighting League of German Culture (Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur or KdfK) in 1928, an organization devoted to attacking artistic “modernism” and preserving German values.⁹² Hindemith served as a high-profile

⁸⁹ W. Strecker to L. Strecker, 4 August 1933. “Schünemann trumpft auf und verlangt zu wissen, weshalb er seine Stellung verloren hat. Man beschwört ihn ruhig zu sein, bietet ihm Hoch’sches Konservatorium Frankfurt und was sonst irgendwie zu haben ist an und behauptet seine Entlassung sei nur eine grundlose augenblickliche Stimmungsfrage gewesen.”

⁹⁰ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 15 April 1933. “Bei uns an der Schule ist ganz großer Durcheinander. Alle jüdischen Lehrer außer ein oder zwei ganz unersetzlichen wie Sachs oder Flesch müssen natürlich gehen.”

⁹¹ Hildegard Brenner, *Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1963), 32–33.

⁹² For a detailed account of the KdfK, see Alan Steinweis, “Weimar Culture and the Rise of National Socialism: The Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur,” *Central European History* 24, No. 4 (1991): 402–423. See also David Dennis, *Inhumanities: Nazi Interpretations of Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 4; Erik Levi, *Music in the Third Reich* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 9.

lightening rod that Rosenberg could use to stir up controversy in order to mobilize his base. Thus, the *Völkischer Beobachter* occasionally denigrated Hindemith, calling his conception of art “as far as possible from the German essence,” and Hindemith himself as a “mediocrity” (*Kleingeist*) who “enjoyed Jewish protection.”⁹³ His Expressionist operas *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen*, *Das Nusch-Nuschi*, and *Sancta Susanna*; *Neues vom Tage*; collaboration with Bertolt Brecht; and eclectic experiments at new music festivals were frequently touted as proof of Germany’s artistic decline as a result of Jewish/Bolshevik influence. Citing Hindemith’s famous eclecticism, for example, critic Wilhelm Jensen stated that, “Hindemith is at home everywhere, just not in the soul of the German people. As leader of the new German music from Hitler’s spirit that we have longed for, he does not come into question.”⁹⁴

Although the KdfK was just a pressure group and ostensibly an apolitical organization (although clearly dominated by National Socialist influence), it seemed poised to play a major part in cultural life after 1933. As Hindemith had predicted, many members of the Kampfbund received prominent positions in cultural administration, such as Hans Hinkel, who was appointed by Hermann Göring to head the Prussian Theater Commission.⁹⁵ Willy Strecker warned Hindemith about the organization’s potential power:

Every small provincial town seems to have its own Kampfbund-dictator, who gives directives, at his own discretion, that must certainly be issued from a central office according to commonsense principles. In our area, for example, Stravinsky was put on the list of Bolshevik-Russian Jews, whose works are no longer permitted to be played.

⁹³ “Jubiläum der Berliner Philharmonik,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, 27 April 1930. “der jüdische Protektion genießt und in seiner Kunstauffassung deutschem Wesen so fern wie nur möglich steht...” Other articles attacking Hindemith include “Ein atonales Jugendliederbuch,” 2 April 1930 and “‘Ein Lehrstück’ oder Hindemith und Brecht als Erzieher,” 11 January 1930.

⁹⁴ Wilhelm Jensen, “Musik und Volkstum,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, 12 October 1933. “Kurz, Hindemith ist überall zu Hause, nur nicht in der deutschen Volksseele. Als Führer zu der von uns ersehnten neuen deutschen Musik aus Hitlers Geist kommt er nicht in Frage.”

⁹⁵ Steinweis, “Weimar Culture,” 419.

You yourself, with 50% of your earlier works, are supposed to be banned as a culture-bolshevist.⁹⁶

Willy admitted that “maybe it is still too early for some sort of negotiations with the influential people of the Kampfbund, as passions have not yet calmed down. But no doubt, we will have to work together on an informative campaign...”⁹⁷

In accord with his caution regarding *Etienne und Luise*, Hindemith continued to lay low, believing that things would eventually calm down.⁹⁸ He clarified this position in his response to Willy’s proposal, judging that the time was not yet right to launch a public relations campaign:

Since I know how mistrustful the people are and since I have also seen that some who wanted to curry favor are completely sunk, right now I (who never want to curry favor) don’t want to undertake the informative campaign you requested. If you will leave it up to me to wait for the most favorable time to do such a thing, you can be assured that I will try everything possible. Of course, one of these days I’ll have to get the Kampfbund to officially champion my things, but it is still too soon. In the current state of general uncertainty, it is not possible to do much anywhere. But if you are planning any kind of special action or conversion attempts with smaller Kulturbünde, go ahead. I only think it is best to show no fear or uncertainty. We don’t have, by God, any skeletons in the closet.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 5 April 1933. “Jede kleine Provinzstadt scheint einen Kampfbund-Diktator zu haben, der nach eigenem Ermessen Richtlinien gibt, die unbedingt von einer Zentralstelle nach vernünftigen Grundsätzen ausgestellt werden müssten. So ist in unserer Gegend z.B. Strawinsky auf die Liste der bolschewistisch-russischen Juden gesetzt worden, deren Werke nicht mehr gespielt werden dürfen; Sie selbst sollen zu 50% mit Ihren früheren Werken als Kultur-Bolschewist verboten sein...”

⁹⁷ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 5 April 1933. “Es ist vielleicht noch zu früh zu irgendwelchen Verhandlungen mit den maßgebenden Leuten des Kampfbundes, so lange die Gemüter sich noch nicht beruhigt haben. Aber es muss zweifellos eine gemeinsame aufklärende Aktion vorbereitet werden...”

⁹⁸ Hindemith appeared to stick with this approach, as Willy reported to Ludwig in August that Hindemith “expects a complete turnaround in a couple of months; until then, one has to behave calmly and not do anything reckless” (“In ein paar Monaten erwartet Hindemith einen kompletten Umschwung, man muss sich nur bis dahin ruhig verhalten und nichts Unbesonnenes tun”). W. Strecker to L. Strecker, 4 August 1933.

⁹⁹ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 15 April 1933. “Da ich nur weiß, wie misstrauisch die Leute sind und da ich auch gesehen habe, dass einige, die sich anbieten wollten, vollkommen versunken sind, möchte ich, der ich mich ja nicht einmal anbieten will, diese von Ihnen gewünschte aufklärende Aktion nicht gerade jetzt unternehmen. Wenn Sie mir überlassen

Not only did Hindemith think things would eventually settle down, he believed his position was relatively secure. In March, he reassured Penzoldt that “based on what I’ve heard and seen, my ‘stock’ [*Konjunktur*] is very good and I believe that an opera next year would go well, once the new national novices will have learned to shirk their management positions following the massive purge of artistic directors and others.”¹⁰⁰ He repeated these impressions to Willy the following month:

According to everything that’s proceeding here, I don’t think that we have any reason to look into the musical future with apprehension... With all the changes up until now, nothing has happened to me. Recently, right after I came back from England, I had a big meeting with the top people of the Kampfbund. It was only about teaching matters. But at any rate (after I had reassured them that was not a half- or other fraction of a Jew), I gathered that I am highly regarded by them.¹⁰¹

One reason for this optimism, and perhaps the source of his information about his “stock,” was his good relationship with KdFk member Gustav Havemann, a prominent violinist

wollen, hier den günstigsten Zeitpunkt für so etwas abzupassen, können Sie versichert sein, dass ich alles versuche, was möglich ist. Eines Tages muss ich natürlich einmal den Kampfbund dazu bekommen, offizielle für meine Sachen einzutreten, aber es ist noch etwas zu früh. In augenblicklichen Zustand der allgemeinen Unsicherheit wird nirgendwo allzu viel möglich sein; wenn Sie aber irgendwelche Sonderaktionen oder Bekehrungsversuche kleinerer Kulturbünde vorhaben, tun Sie’s nur. Nur hielte ich es für richtig, keinerlei Angst oder Unsicherheit zu zeigen. Wir haben ja auch bei Gott keinen Dreck am Stecken.”

¹⁰⁰ Hindemith to Penzoldt, between 10 and 12 March, in “Die Dokumente zu einem gescheiterten Opernplan,” 242–243. “Nach allem, was ich hier höre und sehe ist meine ‘Konjunktur’ sehr gut und ich glaube, dass eine Oper nächstes Jahr gut gehen würde, wenn erst mal nach dem großen Intendanten- und sonstigen Schub die neuen nationalen Innocenze ihre Direktionssitze drücken gelernt haben werden.”

¹⁰¹ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 15 April 1933. “Nach allem, was hier vorgeht, glaube ich, dass wir keinerlei Grund haben, mit Sorgen in die musikalische Zukunft zu sehen... Mir ist bei den ganzen Umänderungen bis jetzt gar nichts passiert. Neulich, gleich als ich aus England kam, hatte ich mit obersten Kampfbundleuten eine große Unterredung, die sich allerdings nur auf Unterrichtsangelegenheiten bezog. Jedenfalls entnahm ich aber daraus (nachdem ich sie beruhigt hatte, dass ich kein Halb- oder sonstiger Bruchteilsjude bin), dass ich gut im Kurs dort stehe.”

and a colleague of Hindemith's at the Berlin Hochschule. Havemann was a central figure in the KdfK's central branch in Berlin and led the *Kulturbund-Orchester* beginning in 1932.¹⁰²

Havemann also seized control of the largest musicians' union in April 1933 and would eventually become the head of the large Reich Musicians' Branch (Reichsmusikerschaft) with the creation of the Reich Music Chamber later that fall. Most importantly, he was a staunch supporter of Hindemith and therefore a powerful ally; Willy believed that no one would "dare touch [Hindemith]," as "Havemann, like Furtwängler, swears by him."¹⁰³ Hindemith also saw a potential ally in Fritz Stein, another member of the KdfK and newly appointed director of the Hochschule, whom Hindemith considered "would not be bad for our cause [*Richtung*]."¹⁰⁴

The Development of *Mathis der Maler*

It was in this state of cautious optimism that Hindemith began to embark on a new operatic project. Despite his initial willingness to continue his collaboration with Penzoldt on the railroad theme, he seems to have dropped the idea (and Penzoldt) by summer 1933. Instead, in a 17 June letter to his publishers, he suddenly announced, "I am very heavily engaged with [Matthias] Grünewald and hope gradually to be able to produce something."¹⁰⁵ Hindemith never

¹⁰² According to Karl Christian Führer, the orchestra was backed by the NSDAP and took its name from the KdfK. Führer notes how the involvement of respected artists like Havemann and the orchestra's attempts of bringing classical music to "the people" helped the NSDAP gain social respectability among the educated middle-classes. Führer, "German Cultural Life," 475.

¹⁰³ Willy added the caveat, "Of course, one doesn't know how long Havemann will remain." W. Strecker to L. Strecker, 4 August 1933. "Ihn selbst wagt man nicht anzutasten und Havemann wie Furtwängler schwören auf ihn. Wie lang Havemann bleiben wird weiß man natürlich nicht."

¹⁰⁴ Skelton suggests that Hindemith "possibly did not know" that Stein was a member of the Kampfbund and supporter of the Nazi party. Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 107. Hindemith to W. Strecker, 15 April 1933. "Das wäre nicht schlecht für unsere Richtung..."

¹⁰⁵ Hindemith to the Streckers, 17 June 1933. "Verehrte Brüder, ich will Ihnen nur kurz mitteilen, dass ich sehr stark mit dem Grünewald beschäftigt bin und allmählich hoffe, etwas herstellen zu können (+++)." Hinton and Breimann also allude to the apparent suddenness of his return to this subject. Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xiii; Breimann, 61.

explicitly stated the reasons for this abrupt reversion back to Grünewald, whom he had previously rejected as a viable topic. One possible, if rather mundane, explanation is that after nearly four years of searching for an opera topic, Hindemith was simply impatient to get started and decided that Grünewald was “good enough.” As he told his publishers in October 1932, “I’m loaded [with ideas] and could get started with theater music any day.”¹⁰⁶ Hindemith had shown some initial interest in the artist, and after the jettisoned project with Penzoldt, Grünewald might have appeared more appealing. Hindemith had also seen the painter’s famous Isenheim Altarpiece in the Alsatian town of Colmar while on vacation in September 1932, giving him a personal connection to the topic.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, Grünewald fulfilled Hindemith’s desire for a historical topic, and the Mainz location offered several interesting possibilities.¹⁰⁸ From a practical standpoint, Willy had pointed out that little was known about the painter, suggesting they could take artistic license with the character.¹⁰⁹

The national and cultural significance of Grünewald may have also been a factor behind Hindemith’s return to the artist. Giselher Schubert has argued that this topic represented Hindemith’s “affirmation of great German art... which was not to be corrupted by Nazi ideology,”¹¹⁰ suggesting that the choice of Grünewald could have been a direct response to

¹⁰⁶ Hindemith to the Streckers, 10 October 1932. “Ich bin geladen und könnte jeden Tag mit einer Theaternmusik loslegen.”

¹⁰⁷ Hindemith and his wife saw the altar before Willy had suggested Grünewald as a possible opera topic, according to a letter to Willy from 10 September 1932. See also his letter to Werner Reinhart, September 1932, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 154.

¹⁰⁸ Becker, 128. Hindemith had already noted that with the Gutenberg topic, “the time is interesting, in Mainz and Straßburg around 1440, all kinds of things were happening...” (Die Zeit ist interessant, in Mainz und Staßburg passiert um 1440 allerlei...). Hindemith to the Streckers, 10 October 1932.

¹⁰⁹ See footnote 56.

¹¹⁰ Schubert, introduction to *Mathis*, xii. “das durch die Wahl des Grünewald-Sujets bekundete Bekenntnis zu großer deutscher Kunst, die mit Grünewalds grell-realistischer Darstellung von grässlichster Qual, trostlosem Elend, grauenvollem Leiden, fürchterlichem

Alfred Rosenberg's critique of the Isenheim Altar in his *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*.¹¹¹ In fact, Rosenberg was actually quite positive about Grünewald and his contributions to German art, only stating that it was no longer viable to paint a tortured Christ like Grünewald did, as the new German church required a blond, heroic Christ.¹¹² However, Hindemith might have chosen Grünewald precisely because it *was* "great German art"—and would therefore fit in with rhetoric about promoting and protecting German culture. His predilection for a German topic in general seems more like an accommodation, or at least a response, to calls to restore the prestige and tradition of German art, rather than an affirmation of "true" German art in the face of Nazi encroachment. As Potter observes, "the stated cultural goal of the National Socialists was to revitalize *German* (not Nazi) culture, in all its forms."¹¹³ Indeed, Hindemith's publishers repeatedly referred to the inherent Germanness of the work. Willy described the material to Ludwig as "great and German, as well as international," believing that it could "become *the* German opera."¹¹⁴ Ludwig also spoke of "presenting a German artwork to the German people"

Schmerz, von Versuchung und christlich-religiöser Erhebung nicht von der Nazi-Ideologie zu korrumpieren war."

¹¹¹ Schubert, introduction to *Mathis*, xi. "Wahrscheinlich schließlich auch die Kritik am *Isenheimer Altar*, die Alfred Rosenberg in seiner nazistischen Kampfschrift *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* übte." In contrast, Pamela Potter has observed that "Grünewald's art was hardly reviled or ignored during the Third Reich," noting that a search revealed more than twenty Nazi-era titles on the artist. Potter, *Suppression*, 209.

¹¹² Rosenberg noted that Grünewald painted the risen Christ as "blond and slender" (*blond und schlank*) and calls a crucifixion by Grünewald "the greatest work of old German painting" (*größte Werk altdeutscher Malerie*). Alfred Rosenberg, *Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts; eine Wertung der seelischgeistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit* (München: Hoheneichen-Verlag, 1930), 578, 387.

¹¹³ Potter, *Suppression*, 9.

¹¹⁴ W. Strecker to L. Strecker, 4 August 1933. "Der Stoff ist groß und deutsch, dabei international... Er ist voller Begeisterung von dem Stoff der *die* deutsche Oper werden kann..." Willy also reassured Hindemith that he was writing "the new German opera" (*die neue deutsche Oper*). W. Strecker to Hindemith, 4 August 1933.

with *Mathis*.¹¹⁵ The publishers simultaneously highlighted the Germanness of *Plöner Musiktag*, in a 1934 *Melos* advertisement, calling it, in bold type, “a typical German work” (*ein typisch deutsches Werk*). After the uncertainty surrounding *Etienne und Luise*, creating something “German” may have been the safest bet in the current political climate, especially given the lack of a coherent policy about what constituted acceptable art under the new regime.¹¹⁶

The Isenheim Altar itself had become a symbol of German *Kultur*, pride, and national identity during the First World War. Originally displayed in the Alsatian town of Colmar (near Isenheim), the altar was moved to the Alte Pinakothek in Munich in 1917 for its protection, due to the fighting along the Western Front.¹¹⁷ (Alsace had been in German hands since the Franco-Prussian war in 1870-71). During its sojourn in Munich, hundreds of viewers (included luminaries such as Rainer Maria Rilke and Thomas Mann) filed past it daily, with many expressing fear that “this German treasure would be restored to the French in the event of defeat.”¹¹⁸ Indeed, when Alsace reverted to French hands in 1919, Germany unsuccessfully tried to keep the work.¹¹⁹ Giving over the altarpiece to the French likely resonated with the German sense of victimization after war—the same sense that prompted Ludwig to suggest changing the French “Etienne” to the Russian “Stepan” during the Penzoldt collaboration. Creating a German opera about Grünewald and featuring the Isenheim Alter could thus be viewed as a way to

¹¹⁵ L. Strecker to Hindemith, 5 November 1935. Ludwig was referring to the difficulties they were experiencing in trying to stage the opera. “Und das alles um dem deutschen Volk ein deutsches Kunstwerk anzubieten!”

¹¹⁶ Regarding music, Potter notes that policies “ranged widely, from one official insisting that at least one new German opera be performed each season to another approving performances of works by the ‘Jews’ Mendelssohn and Offenbach.” Potter, *Suppression*, 17–18. See also Painter, 219.

¹¹⁷ Watkins, *Proof*, 405. The altar painting had been relocated from the Isenheim monastery to the Musée National in Colmar in 1793.

¹¹⁸ Watkins, *Proof*, 405.

¹¹⁹ Hayum, 140–141. See also Watkins, *Proof*, 405.

“reclaim” the artist from the French. At the very least, Hindemith may have picked up on the growing interest in the artist during the 1920s, no doubt due to the Munich exhibition of the Isenheim Altar. Various research addressing Grünewald’s identity and life appeared throughout the decade, and artists Otto Dix, Max Beckmann, and Oskar Schlemmer—all of whom Hindemith knew personally—also appeared to reference Grünewald in their works, such as Dix’s famous triptych *Der Krieg* (1929 – 1932).¹²⁰

The most compelling reason behind Hindemith’s choice of Grünewald, however, was probably the opportunity to make a grand pronouncement on the creative process, the position of the artist in society, and the past, present, and future of German art. In particular, Hindemith could craft a narrative (or apologia) about *his* art, position in society, and place within German music history. As Claire Taylor-Jay has noted, the character of Mathis was “consistent with many of Hindemith’s expressed aesthetic and social ideals, for instance, his belief in the transcendent, spiritual power of music...”¹²¹ Using an artistic figure to achieve these aims was the hallmark of a slew of artist-operas (*Künstleroper*)—operas that feature an artist as the central character—that appeared in the early twentieth century.¹²² These included Richard Strauss’s *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1912/1916) and *Intermezzo* (1924); Pfitzner’s *Palestrina* (1917), Ernst Krenek’s *Orpheus und Eurydike* (1923), *Der Sprung über den Schatten* (1923), and *Jonny spielt auf* (1927); and Weill’s *Der Protagonist* (1925). Hindemith himself already had written a

¹²⁰ Breimann, 164–165; Watkins, *Proof*, 405–411. For an extensive list of Grünewald research, see Breimann, 74–91.

¹²¹ Taylor-Jay, 181

¹²² Zima defines *Künstleroper* as one that “takes the life of the artist or the creation of an artwork and imbues it with ideological significance and a healthy dose of *Kultur*, thus marking it as a uniquely German product.” These operas then serve as “a platform from which to express their own ideas about the relationships of the artist, art, and the society around him.” Zima, 4-5. See also Taylor-Jay, 1.

Künstleroper with *Cardillac* (1926), about a goldsmith who murders his clients in order to recover his creations.¹²³

It is precisely *Mathis*'s status as an artist-opera that has tempted scholars into reading the work as strictly autobiographical, supposedly reflecting Hindemith's situation in Nazi Germany.¹²⁴ The development of the libretto over the summer of 1933, however, challenges this interpretation. First of all, scholars often cite Hindemith's authorship of the text as evidence of the work's autobiographical nature. This decision, however, was largely motivated by his difficulties with Benn and struggle to find a suitable librettist. As he wrote to his publishers in October 1932, "In my desperation, I've decided to lay the eggs myself. Ultimately, I know what I want and these poets have only been able to make the words when I've dictated exactly what they should do."¹²⁵ Even in his successful collaboration with Penzoldt, Hindemith constantly "instructed" the writer on how to write text that could be set to music. Moreover, Hindemith explicitly stated that his previous troubles with poets were the reason for his literary undertaking, writing to composer Gian Francesco Malipiero: "I myself am currently very busy with an opera. Provoked by the perpetual adversity with poets, I'm finally doing the text myself, and I hope that it will become suitable."¹²⁶ It is also possible that, by writing the libretto himself, Hindemith wished to follow the example of other successful artist-operas such as *Palestrina*, *Jonny spielt*

¹²³ The libretto by Ferdinand Lion on based on E. T. A. Hoffman's *Das Fräulein von Scuderi* (1819).

¹²⁴ Taylor-Jay also disputes that the figure of Mathis was autobiographical. Taylor-Jay, 181.

¹²⁵ Hindemith to the Streckers, 10 October 1932. "In meiner Verzweiflung habe ich beschlossen, selbst Eier zu legen. Schließlich weiß ich, was ich will und die Worte haben diese Dichter doch immer nur machen können, wenn ich ihnen ganz genau vorgeschrieben habe, was sie tun sollen."

¹²⁶ Hindemith to Gian Francesco Malipiero, 1934, in Rexroth, *Briefe*, 156. "Ich selbst bin gerade sehr mit einer Oper beschäftigt. Veranlasst durch die ewige Not mit den Dichtern mache ich jetzt endlich den Text selbst und ich hoffe, dass er brauchbar wird."

auf, *Intermezzo*, and *Die Meistersinger*. And like these operas, writing his own libretto naturally offered him the opportunity to speak directly to the audience about German art.¹²⁷

In addition to Hindemith's authorship of the libretto, scholars frequently base their autobiographical reading of *Mathis* on the external similarities of Grünewald and Hindemith: both were artists living during a period of state oppression and upheaval.¹²⁸ Yet it was Willy Strecker, not Hindemith, who viewed the figure of Mathis, if not strictly autobiographical, as representing or being very close to Hindemith. As noted earlier, Willy had initially believed that the Peasants' War and the Renaissance made "good parallels to the present time" when he first suggested Grünewald as a topic.¹²⁹ Now he went further and connected the figure of Mathis directly to Hindemith himself, addressing him in one letter as "Hindemathis, the poet-composer,"¹³⁰ and describing Grünewald and his epoch as "a really great figure and a really great time that is close to us even today and to you in particular..."¹³¹ Later on in the letter, he makes the connection more explicit: "I can't think of any material that is closer to you (humanly as well as artistically) and will present greater challenges, and from this personal connectedness with the material I expect a counterpart to the 'Isenheim Altar.'" ¹³² While Hindemith naturally expressed

¹²⁷ Zima has observed that this writing of libretti by composers speaks to "a heightened desire on the part of the composer to speak directly to the audience." Zima, 15. See also John Bokina, *Opera and Politics: From Monteverdi to Henze* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 129.

¹²⁸ The fact that Grünewald worked in Mainz, not far from Hindemith's hometown of Frankfurt, is also considered evidence for an autobiographical reading. Kemp, *Hindemith*, 30.

¹²⁹ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 26 September 1932.

¹³⁰ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 26 September 1933. "Lieber Hindemathis, der Dichter-Komponist."

¹³¹ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 4 August 1933. "Es ist eine ganz große Persönlichkeit und eine ganz große Zeit, die uns gerade heute und Ihnen im besonderen nahesteht..."

¹³² W. Strecker to Hindemith, 4 August 1933. "Ich kann mir keinen Stoff denken der Ihnen menschlich wie künstlerisch näher liegt und größere Aufgaben stellt und von diesem persönlichen Verbundensein mit dem Stoff verhoffe ich mir ein Gegenstück zum 'Isenheimer Altar.'"

a sense of pride over his creation, even joking that “unfortunately I have developed a real sense of ownership,” there is no explicit indication that he considered Mathis as his autobiographical alter-ego.¹³³ In fact, Hindemith could be interpreted as resisting these parallels, for Willy relayed to Ludwig how “it was characteristic how Hindemith, almost full of shyness, always sought to conceal the human parallels to his personality and dug about for historical irrelevancies in order to hide the essential message.”¹³⁴

While Willy clearly saw a parallel between the current social and political turbulence and those of Grünewald’s time, the connections he made between Hindemith and Grünewald were primarily artistic rather than political.¹³⁵ He elaborated on this in a letter to Ludwig:

He [Hindemith] is full of excitement for the material that can become *the* German opera and which extraordinarily suits him. The artist’s fate of Grünewald, who went on his path misunderstood and resisted the foreign influence of the Italian Renaissance, is a parallel of his own personality and therefore interests him immensely... He is so caught up with the material, the familiar atmosphere and the magnitude of the allegation of the parallel of that time with ours and above all with the lonely fate of the artist, which he will accomplish with an excitement and personal stake as never before.¹³⁶

¹³³ Hindemith to W. Strecker, October 1933. “...leider habe ich mir so viel Verantwortungsgefühl angewöhnt.”

¹³⁴ W. Strecker to L. Strecker, 4 August 1933. “es war charakteristisch wie Hindemith beinahe voller Scheu die menschlichen Parallelen zu seiner Persönlichkeit immer zu verheimlichen suchte und historische Nebensächlichkeiten herauskramte, um das Wesentliche zu verstecken.” See also Taylor-Jay, 180.

¹³⁵ I don’t think Willy necessarily saw a parallel in a persecuted artist harassed by a dictatorial government. In the opera, Grünewald is the court painter *for* the government, Cardinal Albrecht of Mainz, who is not the villain of the opera.

¹³⁶ W. Strecker to L. Strecker, 4 August 1933. “Er ist voller Begeisterung von dem Stoff der *die* deutsche Oper werden kann und ihm außerordentlich liegt. Das Künstlerschicksal von Grünewald, das unverstanden seinen Weg ging und dem fremden Einfluss der italienischen Renaissance widerstand, ist eine Parallele seiner eigenen Persönlichkeit und interessiert ihn daher so ungemein... Er ist so gefangen von dem Stoff, von der ihm vertrauten Atmosphäre und der Größe des Vorwurfs der Parallele der damaligen Zeit mit der unsrigen und vor allem mit dem einsamen Künstlerschicksal, das er mit einer Begeisterung und persönlichen Teilnahme schaffen wird wie noch nie.”

One of these similarities was the misunderstood and isolated artist who stays true to his art amid political and cultural change. Indeed, the idea that Mathis and his art were misunderstood by “the people” whom he was trying to serve was one of the central themes in early versions of the opera. In the first draft, for example, Hindemith’s scenario mentions Mathis’s “efforts to serve the people with his art” and his realization in the concluding scene, “Never will the people understand what was built to honor them with so much pain. One can only serve God.”¹³⁷ A later draft also describes how “[Mathis] gave away everything for his people—even when he was misunderstood.”¹³⁸ There are many instances (if not his entire career) where Hindemith might have considered himself to be “misunderstood” in his “efforts to serve the people,” such as his continued attempts to bring audiences closer to contemporary music through technology, youth music, and a simplified musical language.

Another connection Willy saw to Hindemith was Mathis’s resistance to the “foreign”—and modern—influence of the Italian Renaissance. In the first draft of the libretto, a character praises the art of Albrecht Dürer and the “new accomplishments of the Italians,” labeling Mathis’s work as “the German ‘outdated’ art.”¹³⁹ Hindemith also envisioned a confrontation between Mathis and the painter Balthasar Nebel, in which “Mathis is steadfast about the level of his craftsmanship... His colleague (? Balthasar Nebel) is a tempter, who has heard of Dürer and the Italians and now, as a boastful follower, harasses Mathis. M[athis]’s ambition: to paint the

¹³⁷ Hindemith, draft from 19 September 1933, 9–10. “Seinem Bestreben, mit seiner Kunst nur dem Volke zu dienen.” “Nie wird das Volk verstehen, was ihm zu Ehren mit noch so viel Schmerzen gebildet wurde. Nur Gott kann man dienen.”

¹³⁸ Draft from 30 November 1933. “Er hat für sein Volk alles hergeben—auch wenn er missverstanden wird.”

¹³⁹ Hindemith, draft from 19 September 1933, 1. “Er [Capito] vertritt Mathis gegenüber den Typ des künstlerisch aufgeklärten Mannes, der Dürer und die neuen Errungenschaften der Italiener kennt und der deutschen ‘veralteten’ Kunst vorzieht.”

Volk and for the Volk, not like Dürer for the rich.”¹⁴⁰ Claire Taylor-Jay has suggested that Willy’s comment about Mathis resisting the foreign influence of the Renaissance “could betray a belief that Hindemith similarly resisted modernism.”¹⁴¹ Whatever the parallel (or even if there is a parallel), Hindemith clearly wanted to depict an artist staying true to German art and serving German Volk through his art.¹⁴²

If by writing an artist-opera Hindemith did, indeed, want to make some sort of personal statement (in addition to projecting the image of the misunderstood genius who humbly serves the German Volk), then the libretto of *Mathis* may have also been an attempt to atone for his past musical indiscretions. In the opera, Mathis tries to help the peasants by getting involved with the Peasants’ War, only to be disillusioned by their cause. He finally realizes that an artist can best serve the Volk by creating works of art, ultimately conveying the message that artists should remain apolitical and autonomous. Scholars have generally read this message as an allegory for Hindemith’s supposed inner emigration, retreating from public life into the ivory tower of composition.¹⁴³ Yet the fact that Hindemith felt (cautiously) optimistic enough in the summer and fall of 1933 to embark on a new opera project (*Mathis*) contradicts the idea that only six

¹⁴⁰ Hindemith’s Oktavheft “Entwürfe,” 2, quoted in Breimann, 107. “Mathis gefestigt, auf der Höhe seiner Arbeitskraft... Sein Mitarbeiter (? Balthasar Nebel) als Versucher, der von Dürer und den Italienern gehört hat und nun als großsprecherischer Mitläufer Mathis belästigt. M[athis] Bestreben, das Volk und für das Volk zu malen, nicht wie Dürer für die Reichen.”

¹⁴¹ Taylor-Jay, 180, footnote 124.

¹⁴² Moreover, like Wagner’s *Meistersinger*, there is the message that great art is a product of the artist who is rooted in the Volk. At the end of Act I, Scene 2, for example, Mathis and the peasant Regina sing, “What in deeds should blossom in you, thrives alone on the son of God/ when your absorbing roots reach deep/ in the source of your Volk” (Was an Taten in dir aufblühen soll,/Gedeiht an der Sonne Gottes allein,/Wenn deine saugenden Wurzeln tief hinein/In den Urgrund deines Volkes greifen).

¹⁴³ Taruskin interprets the message of the opera as “at a time of anxiety and threat... the true artist serves his art by withdrawal, enabling its preservation.” Taruskin, *Early Twentieth Century*, 767.

months into the Third Reich, he had already become so disillusioned as to withdraw from the world into inner emigration. If there is a connection to Hindemith's own experience, a better interpretation is John Bokina's description of *Mathis* as "the political statement of a composer who once attempted to commit his art to social and political causes but who has now retreated to an apolitical aestheticism."¹⁴⁴ Indeed, *Mathis* falls in line with Hindemith's return to the concert hall and serious music in works like *Das Unaufhörliche* and attempts to distance himself from his socially-involved experiments of the 1920s. Only now, there was arguably more pressure to recant and put the past behind him. As discussed earlier, Willy noted that Hindemith was likely to be declared a "culture-bolshevist" by the KdF owing to his earlier works.¹⁴⁵ And as his publishers had feared, his collaboration with Bertolt Brecht on *Lehrstück* was now a liability, as Brecht was a primary target of Nazi aggression and, fearing persecution, had left Germany in February 1933.¹⁴⁶ In fact, the *Völkischer Beobachter* had devoted an entire article to the work (primarily focusing on the clown scene), putting the word "music" in scare quotes and asking the reader to consider "how fatally a bolshevist influence has already raged in our spiritual life, since this element is to blame for our catastrophic demise [*Niedergang*]."¹⁴⁷ The author ended the

¹⁴⁴ Bokina, 140. In contrast, Claire Taylor-Jay views Mathis's choice to return to art not as an apolitical withdrawing from the world, but as a political choice to serve the people. Taylor-Jay, 166.

¹⁴⁵ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 5 April 1933.

¹⁴⁶ David Dennis calls Brecht one of the "primary targets of Nazi aggression," stating that the *Völkischer Beobachter* "reserved special criticism" for *The Threepenny Opera* (1928). Dennis, 331–332.

¹⁴⁷ D. Goguel, "Ein 'Lehrstück' oder Hindemith und Brecht als Erzieher," *Völkischer Beobachter* 11 January 1930. No. 8. "Der freundlicher Leser ist gebeten... zu überlegen, wie verheerend bolschewistischer Einfluss in unserem Geistesleben bereits gewütet hat. Denn dieses Element ist für unseren katastrophalen Niedergang verantwortlich zu machen."

article by asking whether “there exists in Germany any composers [*Tonkünstler*] who can muster enough virility to protest against this sort of shameless defilement of art...”¹⁴⁸

Regardless of the reasons for choosing Grünewald, throughout the summer and fall of 1933, Hindemith conducted extensive research on the painter, his contemporaries such as Martin Luther, Hans Holbein, and Albrecht Dürer, as well as the historical context: the Peasants’ War, the Reformation, and the local histories of Mainz and Frankfurt.¹⁴⁹ Between August 1933 and January 1934, he ran four drafts of a possible scenario past his publishers, who in turn offered considerable (and occasionally pointed) criticism and even floated their own suggestions about possible characters and scenarios, some of which he incorporated. Based on their feedback, Hindemith gradually condensed and streamlined the opera plot by cutting characters, scenes, and subplots; clarifying the motivations of the characters; and focusing on three main themes: the Peasants’ War, religious conflict between Protestants and Catholics, and Mathis’s search for purpose as an artist.¹⁵⁰ After sending the final draft of the scenario to Schott on 15 January 1934, Hindemith began to work on the libretto itself.¹⁵¹

Throughout the development of the scenario, neither Hindemith nor his publishers ever indicated in their correspondence that any of the material was subversive or potentially problematic, dispelling yet another myth about the opera. Certainly, there was none of the concern that had caused them to shelve *Etienne und Luise* earlier that year. The famous book-

¹⁴⁸ Goguel. “Gibt es in Deutschland keine prominenten Tonkünstler mehr, die noch so viel Männlichkeit aufbringen, gegen eine derartige, schamlose Beschmutzung der Kunst zu protestieren...?”

¹⁴⁹ Hindemith himself listed around forty separate sources, which are reproduced in Schubert, introduction to *Mathis*, xii–xiii.

¹⁵⁰ Breimann, 145.

¹⁵¹ For a detailed version of the process, and a comparison of the different versions, see Schubert, introduction to *Mathis*, xix–xxii; Breimann, 145–159.

burning scene, described by one writer as an “indictment of Nazi doctrine,” was added in the draft Hindemith sent to Schott on 30 November 1933.¹⁵² He described it as such: “Great commotion in the Domkapital [Frankfurt]: this evening the burning of heretical writings ordered by the Pope takes place.”¹⁵³ The second tableau shows Lutherans gathered around a table burning indulgences, while the fire of heretical material burns outdoors. Although Willy was particularly critical of this draft, he never mentioned this particular scene.¹⁵⁴ While it is difficult not to relate this scene to the book burnings that occurred in May 1933, the scene was what Taylor-Jay calls “background color” in the opera, a backdrop to Mathis’s farewell to his love interest Ursula as he joins the peasants in their struggle.¹⁵⁵ Even if Hindemith had meant to draw an explicit connection with the recent book-burnings, it seems unlikely that he would have intended it as a critique; a more likely reason would have been to show the parallels to another momentous time of change in German history. In short, after repeatedly expressing the need for caution after the change in regime, which included pulling *Etienne und Luise*, coupled with a strategy to lay low, it seems illogical that Hindemith would suddenly feel inspired to smuggle in veiled critiques of the Nazis, nor that his ever-vigilant publishers would accept this. Likewise, if Hindemith really wanted to convey hidden messages in the opera, and his publishers didn’t catch them or didn’t care, this would have been an act of unbelievable political naiveté. It seems more

¹⁵² Kemp, *Hindemith*, 30.

¹⁵³ Hindemith, draft from 30 November 1933, 2. “Das versammelte Domkapital in großer Aufregung: heute Abend findet die vom Papst angeordnete Verbrennung ketzerischer Schriften statt.

¹⁵⁴ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 1 December 1933. Willy’s chief complaints were that the scenario was not as exciting as earlier versions, the characters’ motivations and actions were unclear, and that, owing to his familiarity with the material, Hindemith was taking the audience’s knowledge of Mathis and his milieu for granted.

¹⁵⁵ Taylor-Jay, 191. Taylor-Jay describes the scene as “equivocal,” while acknowledging that it could “perhaps, be interpreted as Hindemith’s own comment on the book-burning in Berlin.”

plausible that neither Hindemith nor his publishers thought that there was anything subversive or objectionable about the plot or that it could be construed as insulting to the new regime.¹⁵⁶

The Symphony “Mathis der Maler” as Propaganda

While Hindemith developed the scenario of the opera in the fall and winter of 1933, he was busy with another project designed to boost himself and his music: a separate, instrumental “spinoff” of the opera.¹⁵⁷ Furtwängler had requested a new work from Hindemith to be premiered in the 1933/34 season, and the idea of using music from the forthcoming opera seems to have originated (or at least was discussed) at a meeting at Willy’s house on 3 August.¹⁵⁸ Naturally, the work was intended to publicize the forthcoming opera; as Willy himself noted, “Furtwängler intends to make a giant propaganda with this work and thereby at the same time use it as a big advertisement for the coming opera.”¹⁵⁹ In addition to serving a public relations function, the

¹⁵⁶ There seems to have also been “official” approval of the libretto. Karen Painter points out that “less than two weeks after the publisher sent the libretto, in early October 1934, the censor gave sanction to ‘a good Hindemith, striving for the spirit of our time’ and did not anticipate any problems with the libretto, pausing to observe, ‘The music will be decisive.’ He did, however, warn that a Catholic director should be avoided, lest an unbalanced portrayal antagonized Protestants.” The “censor” she refers to reported to the theater director at the Propaganda Ministry (Rainer Schlösser). Bundesarchiv Berlin Akte R 55/20170, document 50, dated 18 October 1934, quoted in Painter, 220.

¹⁵⁷ Hindemith completed the movement “Grabelung” by 30 November, “Engelkonzert” in December, and, with pressure mounting before the concert on 12 March 1934, completed the final movement (“Die Versuchung des heiligen Antonius”) that February.

¹⁵⁸ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 4 August 1933. “Die Idee mit dem Vorspiel an sich und das Aufführung durch Furtwängler finde ich ganz ausgezeichnet.”

¹⁵⁹ W. Strecker to L. Strecker, 4 August 1933. “Furtwängler will eine Riesenpropaganda mit diesem Werk machen und hiermit zugleich eine große Reklame für die kommende Oper.” Hindemith’s arrangement of the symphony for piano duet fulfilled a similar function, with Hindemith telling Willy, “If you want, you can also publish them at the same time as the concert. They are easy and pleasant to play” (“Wenn Sie wollen, können Sie also zum Konzert schon damit herauskommen. Sie werden sich leicht und angenehm spielen”). Hindemith to W. Strecker, 30 November 1933.

symphony was meant to demonstrate Hindemith's more accessible style, putting to rest any accusations of atonality or soulless motoricism. As Willy reported to Ludwig:

It's entirely clear to Hindemith that he must write in a more popular way and believes he can do it. For the Grönwald opera, he's writing 4 incidental pieces based on the individual pictures of the "Isenheim Altar" as a sort of atmospheric picture for each of the 4 acts. Since Furtwängler absolutely would like to have something new from Hindemith for a concert at the beginning of December and his following tour, he [Hindemith] wants to give to him this prelude as a suite and with it, directly furnish proof that one can write modern, decent, and yet popular music.¹⁶⁰

The decision to compose audience-friendly programmatic music ("atmospheric pictures") based on Grönwald's famous altar may have also been a nod to writing in what Willy called a "more popular" way.¹⁶¹

Hindemith's correspondence with Willy during the composition of the symphony also highlights his plan to use the work, according to Stephen Hinton, "to further his cause on a politico-cultural level."¹⁶² The *Mathis* symphony was to be part of what is best described as a come-back or rebranding strategy, one that involved laying low, waiting for things to settle down politically, and then premiering a major work that would introduce the new Hindemith. This strategy was coupled with the belief that by playing hard-to-get, people would eventually tire of "second-class" music and clamor for his return to the concert hall. In early October, for instance,

¹⁶⁰ W. Strecker to L. Strecker, 4 August 1933. "Hindemith ist sich im übrigen vollkommen klar, dass er populärer schreiben muss und glaubt es auch zu können. Für die Grönwald Oper schreibt er 4 Vor- und Zwischenspiele, nach einzelnen Bildern des 'Isenheimer Altars,' gewissermaßen als Stimmungsbilder eines jeden der 4 Akte. Da Furtwängler für ein Konzert Anfang Dezember und seine darauffolgende Tournee unbedingt etwas Neues von Hindemith haben möchte, will er ihm diese Vorspiele als Suite geben und damit direkt den Beweis erbringen, dass man modern, anständig und doch volkstümlich schreiben kann."

¹⁶¹ Willy's statement also reflects striving for that perfect combination of art music complexity with popular appeal discussed in the previous chapter. This programmatic aspect would be flatly denied by critics, who stressed the work's absolute musical values. Painter, 238–239.

¹⁶² Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, ix.

Hindemith noted that Furtwängler had pushed back the symphony's premiere from December to February, stating, "I prefer this over December, because I believe that it's good to still wait a little while. I have the strong impression that people everywhere are sick of the drivel of the old music guard, but I think that the people first should acquire some real yearning!"¹⁶³ He referred to this strategy a month later, writing, "From everything I've heard here, there may be a good prospect for my things in spring. Soon the time will come when the general boredom is unbearable."¹⁶⁴

At the same time Hindemith was writing the symphony, there were some promising signs of his acceptance by the regime. In early February 1934, he performed his Viola Concerto, op. 48, in Lübeck at what he described to Willy as "the first official concert of the Third Reich" (*erstes offizielles Konzert im III. Reich*), pointing out the favorable political connections:¹⁶⁵

Yesterday was a public dress rehearsal with a lot of HJ [Hitler Youth] from Plön who formed a big clique. One of the rascals even confronted a critic for making disparaging remarks. The concert is being given in conjunction with the Kampfbund, the conductor (very good, Heinz Dressel) is a party member, all the others too, the performance will be very good.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Hindemith to W. Strecker, October 1933. "Das ist mir lieber als der Dezember, weil ich glaube, dass es gut ist, noch ein Weilchen zu warten. Ich habe sehr stark den Eindruck, dass man allenthalben des Geseiches unserer alten Musikgarde satt ist, aber ich finde, die Leute sollen erst noch richtige Sehnsucht bekommen!"

¹⁶⁴ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 23 November 1933. "Nach allem, was ich hier höre, dürfte im Frühjahr eine gute Konjunktur für meine Sachen einsetzen, jetzt ist es bald so weit, dass die Langeweile allgemein unerträglich wird." See also Willy's letter to Ludwig on 4 August 1933.

¹⁶⁵ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 9 February 1934.

¹⁶⁶ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 5 February 1934. "Gestern war öffentliche Hauptprobe mit sehr viel HJ aus Plön, die große Clique machte. Eines von den Lausbuben stellte sogar einen Kritiker zur Rede, weil er sehr abfällig äußerte. Das Konzert wird in Verbindung mit dem Kampfbund veranstaltet, Kapellmeister (sehr gut, Heinz Dressel) P.G., alles andere auch, die Aufführung wird sehr gut."

It was for a school in Plön that Hindemith wrote *Plöner Musiktag* (1932), his last major work for amateur musicians, begging the question of whether some of the students who had played in the “music day” two years earlier were now those members in the Hitler Youth. Based on the apparent support—and therefore tacit approval—from these different party factions, including the Kampfbund itself, it’s no wonder Hindemith declared the performance to be “a big success” (*ein grosser Erfolg*) and “a good omen” (*ein gutes Omen*).¹⁶⁷ It was during this time in Lübeck that Hindemith also met with officials from the German Labor Front about creating a new music education curriculum, detailed in Chapter One.

Another “good omen” was his participation in the first “German Composers’ Day,” which was held in conjunction with the first workshop (*Arbeitstagung*) of the Reichsmusikkammer (in which he now held a leadership position) on 18 February 1934. He conducted his *Konzertmusik für Streichorchester und Blechbläser*, op. 50, on a program that featured Richard Strauss, Hans Pfitzner, Siegmund von Hausegger, Georg Schumann, and Paul Graener. Hindemith certainly interpreted his inclusion as a sign of official support, mentioning to Willy, “One really could not ask for more in the way of an official introduction.”¹⁶⁸ Willy, in turn, was “eager to hear about the effect” the concert had, presumably on Hindemith’s standing.¹⁶⁹ Critics also considered this concert as a signal of the regime’s acceptance of Hindemith, and of contemporary composers in general. The new music journal *Melos* certainly

¹⁶⁷ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 9 February 1934. Once again dismantling the idea of totalitarian control, the fact that Hindemith’s music is being played at a Kampfbund concert shows that the organization was not in lockstep regarding musical taste (taking their cues from Rosenberg), but its different groups had different parameters.

¹⁶⁸ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 9 February 1934. “Mehr an offizieller Einführung kann man doch eigentlich kaum verlangen.”

¹⁶⁹ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 28 February 1934. “Begierig bin ich zu hören, wie sich das Komponisten –Konzert ausgewirkt hat.”

tried to spin the performance this way, stating that by including a work by Hindemith, “the Reichsmusikkammer signaled in the most conspicuous way that it is allowing room for all productive currents of German musical creation and that it is completely aware of the significance of recent efforts, for which all creative youth recognize Paul Hindemith as their spiritual leader.”¹⁷⁰ Similarly, the reviewer for the *B.Z. am Mittag* stated, “With Hindemith’s Boston Symphony, the connection to the present; or, to utilize a word from National Socialist terminology: to the revolution of the youth was brought forth. The fact that this work was met with a demonstration of applause should be considered a hopeful omen.”¹⁷¹

Hindemith’s fiercest critics, however, remained unconvinced. Although Friedrich Herzog, the right-wing critic of *Die Musik* and Nazi party member, believed the work belonged to “the strongest inspirations of contemporary music,” he nevertheless remarked that “in order to expunge the ugly stains of the past from his image,” Hindemith would “have to first perform a visible harakiri [seppuku, the Japanese ritual of suicide] on the acrobat Hindemith who committed crimes with ‘Neues vom Tage’ and similar things.”¹⁷² Fritz Stege in the *Zeitschrift für*

¹⁷⁰ This demonstrates yet again the lack of a clear cultural policy, as people are trying divine what the new government’s stance to new music is. “Die Reichsmusikkammer tagt,” *Melos* 13, no. 3 (March 1934): 109. “Die Reichsmusikkammer gab damit an sichtbarster Stelle zu erkennen, dass sie allen produktiven Strömungen des deutschen Musikschaffens Raum gewährt und dass sie sich der Bedeutung der jüngsten Bestrebungen, als deren geistiger Führer Paul Hindemith von der gesamten schöpferischen Jugend anerkannt wird, durchaus bewusst ist.”

¹⁷¹ *B. Z. am Mittag*, 19 February 1934, quoted in Friedrich Welter, “Hindemith—Eine Kulturpolitische Betrachtung,” *Die Musik* 26, no. 6 (March 1934): 419. “Mit Hindemiths Bostoner Sinfonie war... die Verbindung zur Gegenwart, oder um ein Wort der nationalsozialistischen Terminologie anzuwenden: zur Revolution der Jugend hergestellt. Dass dieses Werk mit einer Demonstration von Beifallsbezeugungen aufgenommen wurde... soll uns als hoffnungsvolles Omen gelten.”

¹⁷² Friedrich Herzog, “Die Einheitsfront der deutschen Tonsetzer: Erster Deutscher Komponistentag in Berlin,” *Die Musik* 26, no. 6 (March 1934): 431. “Diese 1931 entstandene sogenannte ‘Boston Sinfonie’ gehört zu den stärksten Eingebungen zeitgenössischer Musik... Dieser Hindemith müsste zunächst jenen Artisten Hindemith, der ‘Neues vom Tage’ und

Musik stated that “one is, however, not entirely clear what kind of style is especially characteristic of him at the moment. One will still have to await what kind of new style this versatile pen will trot out as the “News of the Day” (*Neues vom Tage*). At any rate, his performance made a somewhat embarrassing impression.”¹⁷³ The most outraged response came from fellow composer Friedrich Welter, who wrote an entire article pointing out Hindemith’s unfitness to be a musical representative of the new Reich, citing his Expressionist operas and atonality in particular. In “Hindemith—A Cultural-Political Observation” (Hindemith—Eine Kulturpolitische Betrachtung), Welter calls Hindemith’s election to the chamber a “serious violation” (*ein schwerer Verstoß*) and although he notes that although Hindemith has talent, “he has never been a representative of *German* art.”¹⁷⁴ Most egregious to Welter were the favorable press reviews of Hindemith’s performance at the “German Composer’s Day,” especially in National Socialist newspapers, proving (in Welter’s view) that “being ‘gleichgeschaltet’ for one year is not yet sufficient in order to undergo a revision or alignment of artistic opinions in the sense of Adolf Hitler’s. One sometimes thought that one was looking at newspapers from 1927, not from 1934!”¹⁷⁵

ähnliche Dinge verbrach, zu einem sichtbaren Harakiri veranlassen, um sein Bild von den hässlichen Flecken der Vergangenheit zu säubern.”

¹⁷³ Fritz Stege, “Berliner Musik,” *Zeitschrift für Musik* 101, no. 3 (March 1934): 296. “Bei Paul Hindemith ist man sich allerdings nicht ganz klar, was für ein Stil zur Zeit für ihn besonders bezeichnend ist. Man wird noch abzuwarten haben, was für eine neue Stilart uns diese wandlungsfähige Feder als ‘Neues vom Tage’ auftischen wird. Jedenfalls machte seine Aufführung einen etwas peinlichen Eindruck.”

¹⁷⁴ Welter, “Hindemith—Eine Kulturpolitische Betrachtung,” 418. “Da wir in Hindemith eine große Begabung, einen musikalischen Kötner zu erblicken haben. Das haben wir stets anerkannt. Und doch: ein Repräsentant *deutscher* Kunst ist er nie gewesen.”

¹⁷⁵ Welter, 419. “Es hat sich gezeigt, dass ein Jahr ‘gleichgeschaltet’ sein noch nicht genügt, um künstlerische Ansichten einer Revision oder Orientierung im Sinne Adolf Hitlers zu unterziehen. Man glaubt manchmal, Zeitungen aus dem Jahre 1927, aber nicht von 1934 vor sich zu haben!”

The Premiere of the Symphony “*Mathis der Maler*”

After the Composer’s Day Concert, Hindemith hurried to finish the *Mathis* symphony before its premiere the following month.¹⁷⁶ As his first premiere under the new regime, the symphony was viewed as a litmus test for modern music under National Socialism as well as for Hindemith himself. Willy’s report to Ludwig of the dress rehearsal underscored the importance riding on the premiere in “establishing” Hindemith’s place and acceptability: “I’m really eager for the reception, which *has to* be good. Furti. [Furtwängler] is very pleased, all the others too. The recent [Composers’ Day] concert has finally established H.[indemith] (!), despite the moaning and groaning...”¹⁷⁷ The accessibility of the music appeared to be one reason Willy thought the premiere would be a success, as he described the symphony as “warm and full of melody. At the same time, Hindem. doesn’t make any banal concessions,” adding (and perhaps indicating how Ludwig might have really felt about Hindemith’s music), “even you would have to like it.”¹⁷⁸

Willy’s hopes were well-founded. The symphony premiered according to plan on 12 March 1934 in Berlin, with Wilhelm Furtwängler conducting the Berlin Philharmonic on an all-German program of C. P. E. Bach and Brahms. By all accounts, the performance was a complete success; the audience enthusiastically applauded the work and repeatedly called Hindemith to the stage. In his report to Ludwig, who couldn’t attend the premiere, Willy mentioned the “truly

¹⁷⁶ Hindemith completed the symphony on 27 February, and there was a flurry to get the score and parts printed and copied to give to Furtwängler and the Berlin Philharmonic.

¹⁷⁷ Presumably, Willy is talking about the critics who complained about Hindemith’s inclusion in the concert, such as the article by Friedrich Welter. W. Strecker to L. Strecker, March 1934. “Ich bin sehr gespannt auf die Aufnahme, die gut sein *muss*. Furti. sehr befriedigt, alle andere auch. Das Konzert neulich hat H. endgültig etabliert (!) trotz des Gemeckers über das man zu ‘lächeln’ scheint.”

¹⁷⁸ W. Strecker to L. Strecker, March 1934. “Es klingt so, dass es auch dir gefallen muss, warm und voller Melodie. Dabei macht Hindem. trotzdem keine banalen Conzessionen.”

great unanimous success” (*wirklich großer einstimmiger Erfolg*) and wrote, “Now let the critics complain. It was complete triumph and the greatest work of the last 40 years.”¹⁷⁹ Ludwig betrayed a sense of the high stakes of the premiere in his congratulatory letter to Hindemith, stating, “I had paced around my room in deep suspense these last days, like an expectant papa in front of the door of the maternity ward. It was accomplished and the midwife Furtwängler held up the healthy little boy.”¹⁸⁰ Hindemith himself called it “a wonderful performance.”¹⁸¹

Willy’s prediction that the work would “pacify” critics was also accurate, for it received almost universal critical acclaim.¹⁸² Echoing previous reviews of his *Konzertwerken* and of the oratorio, critics once again lauded Hindemith’s stylistic simplification and accessibility, as well as his depth and seriousness. Otto Steinhagen in the *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* noted that “it’s hard to make the claim that this music is incomprehensible,”¹⁸³ while Stuckenschmidt praised the “sacred seriousness with which Hindemith turns to greater and greater musical and literary materials.”¹⁸⁴ Heinz Joachim in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* believed “Hindemith’s music has

¹⁷⁹ Postcard to L. Strecker, 11 March 1934. “Jetzt lasse die Kritik beruhigt meckern. Es war im voller Sieg und das schönste Werk der letzten 40 Jahre.”

¹⁸⁰ L. Strecker to Hindemith, 14 March 1934. “Ich habe offen gestanden im Grunde nichts anderes erwartet und trotzdem in diesen Tagen in schwerer Spannung mein Zimmer abgeschritten, wie ein werdender Papa vor der Türe des Entbindungszimmers. Das wäre also geschafft und die Hebamme Furtwängler hält das gesunde Knäblein in die Höhe.”

¹⁸¹ Postcard to L. Strecker, 11 March 1934. “eine wunderbare Aufführung”

¹⁸² Paul Zschorlich seems to have been one of the few exceptions, and Zschorlich himself admitted that his opinion was an outlier and also acknowledged Hindemith’s success. Zschorlich, *Rostocker-Anzeiger*, 12 March 1934, quoted in Hinton, introduction, xiv. “Der Erfolg Hindemiths war eindeutig und, äußerlich betrachtet, auch einheitlich. Es wurde langanhaltender Beifall gespendet und Hindemith konnte wiederholt erscheinen.”

¹⁸³ Otto Steinhagen, *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, quoted in an advertisement in *Melos* 13, no. 3 (March 1934): 126. “Jedenfalls ist es schwer, diese Musik als unverständlich hinzustellen...”

¹⁸⁴ Stuckenschmidt, *B. Z. am Mittag*, quoted in Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xvi. “der sakrale Ernst, mit dem Hindemith sich immer größeren musikalischen und literarischen Stoffen zuwendet.”

aggressively shed everything rigid and brittle, without losing the lively clarity and cleanliness of its contours. His melodies have become all the more vivid and rich, and at the same time, more expressive.”¹⁸⁵ Strobel viewed the *Mathis* symphony as the culmination of Hindemith’s new stylistic direction:

In these three movements, Hindemith has achieved an entirely new simplicity and vividness of musical language. While the tendency towards simplification may have been strengthened by recent general developments, it has been discerned for years in Hindemith’s creations, just like his casting-off of certain formal elements and the breakthrough of a new emotional intensity.¹⁸⁶

Josef Rufer attributed the accessibility of the symphony to Hindemith’s own down-to-earth, masculine persona: “The vehement, even demonstrative success of this work at the dress rehearsal as in the concert—the composer was repeatedly thanked—proved that the general public is also receptive to new things, as long as a personality, a real man, is behind it. And because Hindemith is a real man, he proved it the most convincingly with his new symphony.”¹⁸⁷

Many of these reviews imbued an almost religious significance to Hindemith’s “conversion,” underscoring the seriousness of Hindemith’s duty to the legacy of German music.

¹⁸⁵ Heinz Joachim, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, quoted in an advertisement in *Melos* 13, no. 3 (March 1934): 125. “Hindemiths Musik hat alles Starre und Spröde, alles nur aggressive abgestoßen, ohne dabei die charaktervolle Klarheit und Sauberkeit ihrer Konturen zu verlieren. Umso plastischer und reicher, zugleich sprechender ist seine Melodik geworden.”

¹⁸⁶ Heinrich Strobel, “Hindemiths ‘Symphonie Mathis der Maler,’” *Melos* 13, no. 3 (March 1934): 96. “Hindemith hat in diesen drei Sätzen eine ganz neue Einfachheit und Plastik der Tonsprache erreicht. Die Tendenz zur Vereinfachung mag durch die allgemeine Entwicklung der jüngsten Zeit verstärkt worden sein, festzustellen war sie seit Jahren in Hindemiths Schaffen ebenso wie die Abwerfung gewisser formelhafter Elemente und der Durchbruch einer neuen Intensität des Gefühls.”

¹⁸⁷ Josef Rufer, *Morgenpost*, quoted in Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xvi. “Der stürmische, ja demonstrative Erfolg dieses Werkes in der Generalprobe wie im Hauptkonzert—der Komponist musste sich mehrmals bedanken—bewies, dass das breite Publikum auch für Neues empfänglich ist, wenn nur eine Persönlichkeit, ein ganzer Kerl, dahinter steht. Und dass dieser Hindemith ein ganzer Kerl ist, bewies er mit seiner neuen Sinfonie aufs überzeugendste.”

Robert Oboussier, composer and critic for the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, spoke of the symphony as an “atonement” (*Versöhnung*) for his earlier “repugnant tendencies. In this symphony, the composer has taken a decisive step in his artistic development. The breakthrough is finally achieved. It is the turn to a humanly committed confession of art that true music has always been and always will be.”¹⁸⁸ One critic even referenced the most famous Biblical conversion story, expressing hope that the applause the work received was “not for yesterday’s Saul and the tendencies he represents, but rather for the Paul of tomorrow.”¹⁸⁹ Critics also cast Hindemith in the role of the prodigal son, one who had once been on the right path with *Das Marienleben* and the string quartets but lost his way in jazz and music festival experiments, wasting his talents. However, with the *Mathis* symphony, critics were ready to welcome the repentant composer back into the fold of art music with open arms. As Fritz Ohmann, the music critic for *Germania* (the newspaper for the Catholic Center Party), related in two separate articles:

I have never denied the extraordinary artistic power of this leader of the radical modern; I was completely on his side when he created works linked to tradition, like his String Quartet op. 10 [1918] and the five sonatas of his Op. 11 [1918] Until the sudden break

¹⁸⁸ R. Oboussier, *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Berlin, quoted in an advertisement in *Melos* 13, no. 3 (March 1934): 126. “Das neueste Werk von Paul Hindemith... erscheint uns als ein bedeutsames Ereignis für die Versöhnung der widerstrebenden Tendenzen. In dieser Symphonie hat der Komponist in seiner künstlerischen Entwicklung einen entscheidenden Schritt getan. Der Durchbruch ist hierdurch endgültig vollzogen. Es ist die Wendung zum menschlich verbindlichen Kunstbekenntnis, zu dem, was wirkliche Musik immer war und stets sein wird.”

¹⁸⁹ Walter Abendroth, Berlin *Lokal-Anzeiger*, quoted in Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xv. “Von dem gewaltigen Beifall hoffen wir, dass er nicht dem gestrigen Saulus und den von ihm vertretenen Tendenzen gegolten habe, sondern dem Paulus von morgen.” Willy Strecker seemed to have referred (sarcastically) back to this review, suggesting a “Saul Hindemith” festival in his letter from 3 November 1934 and later mentions “the conversion of the unbelieving” (*der Bekehrung der Ungläubigen*) with the publication of the *Mathis* libretto (W. Strecker to Hindemith, 14 November 1934).

came and Hindemith, who could have become the builder of a great style, crossed over into the camp of the destroyers.¹⁹⁰

Now he's come forward with a work that represents a complete rejection of his recent past. He incinerates what he had idolized and idolizes what he had incinerated. He no longer serves the everyday, but rather turns towards eternal questions... It's no longer about getting rid of the soul and sensuality of sounds. Hindemith aspires for the synthesis of tradition and progress... It is red-blooded and powerful and, at the same time, personal music, in which I believe the first effects of a fundamental inner transformation can be spotted.¹⁹¹

Even Heinrich Strobel, one of Hindemith's biggest supporters, echoed this narrative, noting that the symphony wouldn't have been achieved without a necessary "ripening" of his technique and a few wrong turns:

It seems as if Hindemith, after many attempts and some digressions to the world of the circus, has today again taken up the works from ten years ago... But in-between lies not error, as one repeatedly reads these days. In-between lies a development of surprising consistency, a maturing in the human as in the technical, for which the much-maligned score to "Neues vom Tage"—it remains a great score despite the text!—is just as important as the multiple works for amateur circles. Without this development, which (even that which led him temporarily astray) was fulfilled from a high artistic disposition, Hindemith would never have found the simplicity and objectivity of the Mathis symphony.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Fritz Ohmann, "Der innerlich gewandelte Hindemith?" *Signale* 21 March 1934, quoted in Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xv. "Ich habe die außerordentliche künstlerische Potenz dieses Führers der radikalen Moderne nie geleugnet; war ganz auf seiner Seite, als er mit seinem Streichquartett op. 10 und mit den fünf Sonaten seines op. 11 traditionsverbundene Werke schuf... Bis der plötzliche Bruch kam und Hindemith, der ein Aufbauer großen Stils hätte werden können, in das Lager der Zerstörer überging."

¹⁹¹ Ohmann, *Germania*, 14 March 1934, quoted in Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xv. "Jetzt tritt er mit einem Werke hervor, das eine völlige Absage an seine letzte Vergangenheit darstellt. Er verbrennt, was er anbetete, und betet an, was er verbrannt hatte. Er dient nicht mehr dem Alltag, sondern wendet sich ewigen Fragen zu... Es geht nicht mehr um eine Entseelung und Entsinnlichung alles Klanglichen. Hindemith erstrebt die Synthese von Tradition und Fortschritt... Es ist blut- und kraftvolle und gleichzeitig persönliche Musik, in der ich die erste Auswirkung einer grundlegenden inneren Umwandlung zu erblicken glaube."

¹⁹² Strobel, "Hindemiths neue Sinfonie," *Melos* 13, no. 3 (March 1934): 128. "Es scheint überhaupt, als ob Hindemith nach vielen Versuchen und manchen Abschweifungen in die Gebiete reiner Artistik heute wieder an die Arbeiten von vor zehn Jahren anknüpft... Aber dazwischen liegt nicht Verirrung, wie man in diesen Tagen mehrfach lesen konnte, dazwischen liegt eine Entwicklung von bewundernswerte Folgerichtigkeit, ein Reifwerden im Menschlichen

Several critics also understood the success of the symphony as a sign of the regime's approval (or tolerance) of both contemporary music and of Hindemith, fulfilling the goal of Hindemith and his publishers. Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt reported:

Yesterday evening at the Philharmonic had historic significance. Through the undisputed triumph that the Hindemith premiere under Furtwängler was able to achieve against all theoretical doubts, the position of recent music, and of recent art in general, in the new Germany was immeasurably strengthened. The unanimous, jubilant success of the evening (untarnished by any cries of protest) and the public preview on Sunday refuted, at the very least, the objection that modern music alienates the people and that it has no public.¹⁹³

For Heinrich Strobel, Furtwängler's position as vice-president of the Reichsmusikkammer represented government sanctioning of Hindemith, as he believed that with the premiere, the "authorities" had "publicly" put an end to the "forces that wanted to discount the phenomenon of Paul Hindemith, out of blind opposition, with superficial arguments and lately, even with the

wie im Technischen, für das die viel geschmähte Partitur von 'Neues vom Tage'—sie bleibt eine herrliche Partitur trotz des Textes!—ebenso wichtig wurde wie die mannigfachen Arbeiten für Laienkreise. Ohne diese Entwicklung, die auch da, wo sie vorübergehend auf falsche Wege führte, von einer hohen künstlerischen Gesinnung erfüllt war, hätte Hindemith nie zur Einfachheit und Gegenständlichkeit der Mathis-Sinfonie gefunden."

¹⁹³ Stuckenschmidt, *B. Z. am Mittag*, quoted in Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xv–xvi. "Der gestrige Abend in der Philharmonie hat historische Bedeutung. Durch den unbestrittenen Sieg, den die Hindemith-Uraufführung unter Furtwängler gegen alle theoretischen Bedenken erringen konnte, ist die Position der jungen Musik und überhaupt der jungen Kunst im neuen Deutschland unendlich gestärkt worden. Der einstimmige, jubelnde, durch keinen Protestruf getrübe Erfolg des Abends und auch schon der öffentlichen Voraufführung am Sonntag hat wenigstens einen Einwand widerlegt: dass diese moderne Musik volksfremd sei, dass sie kein Publikum habe."

buzzword of a ‘system-composer...’ (*System-Komponisten*)”¹⁹⁴ “System” or “Systemzeit” was a pejorative for the Weimar Republic and its supposed artificial construction.¹⁹⁵

The symphony even managed to convince once-hostile critics that Hindemith was finally “growing up” and putting his youthful experiments behind him. Fritz Stege, who had described Hindemith’s music at the First Composers’ Day as “embarrassing,” gave a glowing review:

Now, having never been a friend of Hindemith’s, I was especially pleased this time to be able to wholeheartedly acknowledge the artistic worth of this symphony. The composer has achieved, without relinquishing the idiosyncrasies of his style, a conceptual clarity and a transparency in the handling of the orchestra, which testifies to a growing maturity... The high seriousness of this creation, its pure attitude, cannot be denied.¹⁹⁶

Friedrich Herzog, who once believed Hindemith would have to commit “harakiri” to the old Hindemith before people could take him seriously, now believed:

In his symphony *Mathis der Maler*, which is conceived from three pictures of the Isenheim Altar, Paul Hindemith clearly ditches his shadow image, which has haunted the music industry of the last few years. Moreover, he acknowledges in this symphony, which is linked to his early works, the spirit of German music that the new Germany affirms... The composer has overcome his motoric drive and has developed a manner of expression that speaks straightforwardly to the heart and even wins over the prejudiced with the soulful grandeur of his musical language.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Strobel, “Hindemiths ‘Symphonie Mathis der Maler,’” 96. “Man weiß aber auch, dass es nicht an Kräften gefehlt hat, welche die Erscheinung Paul Hindemiths aus blinder Opposition mit äußerlichen Argumenten und neuerdings sogar mit dem Schlagwort eines ‘System-Komponisten’ abtun wollten.... Es erschien notwendig, dass diesen Kräften einmal in aller Öffentlichkeit und von autoritativer Seite entgegengetreten wurde. Dies geschah mit der Uraufführung der Sinfonie ‘Mathis der Maler’ durch den Staatsrat und Operndirektor Wilhelm Furtwängler an der repräsentativsten Stelle des deutschen Musiklebens.”

¹⁹⁵ Schmitz-Berning, 597–599.

¹⁹⁶ Fritz Stege, “Berliner Musik,” 403. “Nun, es ist mir, der ich nie ein Freund Hindemiths gewesen bin, diesmal eine ganz besondere Freude, den künstlerischen Wert dieser Symphonie rückhaltlos anerkennen zu können. Der Komponist hat, ohne auf die Eigenheiten seines Stils zu verzichten, eine gedankliche Klarheit und eine Durchsichtigkeit in der Behandlung des Orchesters erreicht, die von zunehmender Reife zeugt... Der Schöpfung ist ein hoher Ernst, eine reine Gesinnung nicht abzusprechen.”

¹⁹⁷ Friedrich Herzog, review of “Symphony Mathis der Maler,” *Die Musik* 26, no. 7 (April 1934): 530–531. “In seiner Sinfonie ‘Mathis der Maler,’ die nach drei Bildern des Isenheimer Altars konzipiert ist, erteilt Paul Hindemith seinem Schattenbild, das durch den

Yet Herzog added a proviso: in order to prove his conversion was sincere, Hindemith would need to change his behavior along with his music, referring specifically to Hindemith's continued concert activities with his string trio, of which two members were Jewish:

Hindemith's transformation seems to be genuine. It's up to him, through his behavior, to eliminate every doubt of the cleanliness of his personality. If he, as just happened in recent days, concertizes abroad with non-Aryan emigrants, he will again negate the newly regained trust; at the very least he will burden [this trust] beyond what it will be able to bear.¹⁹⁸

Like Herzog, several critics tempered their praise by asking if Hindemith's about-face was genuine or simply an opportunistic attempt to please the new regime. Fritz Ohrmann believed Hindemith still had to prove the "durability" of his "inner transformation," adding that "if his conversion is not just compelled from external circumstances but is a return to what he was in his beginning, he will again see us at his side. With the same warmth that we greeted him with years ago."¹⁹⁹ Hugo Rasch, in the National Socialist *Völkischer Beobachter*, was also equivocal about Hindemith's inner transformation. Calling him a "personality to take seriously," Rasch did not

Musikbetrieb der letzten Jahre geisterte, einen deutlichen Laufpass. Darüber hinaus bekennt er sich in dieser Sinfonie, die an seine Frühwerke anknüpft, zu dem Geist deutscher Musik, die das neue Deutschland bejaht... Der Komponist hat den motorischen Spieltrieb überwunden und sich zu einer Ausdrucksweise entwickelt, die ohne Umschweife zum Herzen spricht und auch den Voreingenommenen durch die seelische Größe seiner Tonsprache für sich gewinnt."

¹⁹⁸ Herzog, review of *Mathis*, 531. "Hindemiths Wandlung scheint echt zu sein. Es liegt an ihm, durch sein Verhalten jeden Zweifel in die Sauberkeit seiner Persönlichkeit zu beseitigen. Wenn er, wie erst in diesen Tagen geschehen, im Auslande mit emigrierten Nichtariern zusammen konzertiert, so hebt er damit das gerade zurückeroberte Vertrauen wieder auf, zum mindesten setzt er es einer Belastung aus, die es nicht mehr zu tragen vermag."

¹⁹⁹ Ohrmann, *Germania*, 14 March 1934, quoted in Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xv. "Deren Dauerhaftigkeit Hindemith aber noch zu erweisen hat! Ist seine Umstellung nicht nur von äußeren Umständen erzwungen, ist sie eine Rückkehr zu dem, was er in seinen Anfängen war, so wird er uns wieder an seiner Seite sehen. Mit der gleichen Wärme, mit der wir ihn vor Jahren begrüßten."

deny Hindemith's talent and held out the possibility that he would recognize his "responsibility" to the greatness of the material in *Mathis*, believing that:

there is much in the [opera] (now made available in the concert) that suggests not only a renewed transformation of Hindemith, but also a return to nature, to a line that this versatile artist and craftsman (to his advantage and to ours) would have never left, if only the artistic inflation of the recent bygone time had not gotten in the way.²⁰⁰

Despite blaming the "artistic inflation" of the previous decade for Hindemith's sins, however, Rasch was quick to point out that the fact that he succumbed to it prompted the question from Verdi's *Don Carlos*: "Either you were lying then or are lying now."²⁰¹

The two streams of criticism prompted by the *Mathis* symphony (Hindemith's conversion and the Nazis' acceptance of contemporary music) have enticed musicologists into assigning political positions to the critics. Stephen Hinton, for example, has suggested that it was "the new regime's unabashed followers" who "cast Hindemith in the mold of the bad boy made good" and greeted Hindemith's more conservative style, presumably as a sign that he was now adhering to the ethos of the new Germany.²⁰² The belief that it was right-wing critics who applauded Hindemith's "conversion" often has the following corollary: that left-wing critics instead saw the

²⁰⁰ Hugo Rasch, "Das vorletzte Furtwängler-Konzert," *Völkischer Beobachter*, 14 March 1934. "Das Verantwortungsbewusstsein des Komponisten Hindemith dem großen Stoff gegenüber wird sich ja in der noch in Arbeit befindlichen Oper gleichen Namens, aus der diese 'Symphonie' eine Kostprobe darstellt—über welch Beginnen man zweierlei Meinung sein kann—erweisen... Es gibt in der jetzt dem Konzert zugänglich gemachten Arbeit vieles, was auf eine abermalige Wandlung Hindemiths oder aber auch auf ein Zurück zur Natur schließen lässt, auf eine Linie, die dieser bewegliche Künstler und Könner zu seinem und unserem Besten vielleicht gar nicht verlassen hätte, wäre ihm nicht die künstlerische Inflation der jüngst vergangenen Zeit in die Quere gekommen."

²⁰¹ Rasch, "Das vorletzte Furtwängler-Konzert." "Dass er aber darüber stolpern oder gar sich ihr beugen konnte, das just ist es, was ihm die Aufrechtgebliebenen zum Vorwurf machten. Und wenn sie heute diese drei Stücke, besonders das erste und dritte hören, ist es da verwunderlich, wenn ihnen ein Zitat aus 'Don Carlos' in den Sinn kommt: 'Entweder logt ihr damals oder jetzt'?"

²⁰² Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xv.

premiere as the triumph of modern music. Indeed, in his survey of the critical responses to the *Mathis* symphony, Hinton divides critics into two opposing camps:

The supporters of the year-old regime were in search of a new composer on whom to confer representative status; and in Hindemith they thought, mistakenly, that they had found one. The supporters of the officially defamed New Music, on the other hand, considered the symphony's success a triumph for their own cause, a blow against the dictates of the cultural politicians.²⁰³

Karen Painter also makes a distinction between New Music advocates and National Socialists, stating, “the reviews show some critics clambering to present themselves as favorable to the ‘National Revolution’ and others in defiance, if also hoping to secure a place for contemporary music in the new Germany.”²⁰⁴ In making this distinction, both scholars (intentionally or not) fall into the trap of equating supporters of the regime with artistic conservatism, and New Music supporters as opponents to the regime. As shown in the previous chapter, critics of all stripes welcomed Hindemith's change in style and return to the concert hall in 1930. Likewise, it was not just National Socialist critics who approved of Hindemith's more traditional style in the *Mathis* symphony, as evidenced by reviews from Oboussier, Strobel, and Heinz Joachim. Joseph Rufer, a student and scholar of Schoenberg, called the symphony “a surprising transformation and development of Hindemith's, which promises something beautiful for the new opera and for the future works of the composer.”²⁰⁵ This delight at Hindemith's “conversion” did not originate with National Socialist adherents, nor was it limited to them. Conversely, the “triumph” of New Music evidenced by the success of the symphony was not necessarily heralded solely by the

²⁰³ Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xv.

²⁰⁴ Painter, 223.

²⁰⁵ Joseph Rufer, *Morgenpost* (Berlin), quoted in Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xvi. “Das ganze eine überraschende Wandlung und Entwicklung Hindemiths, die für die neue Oper wie für das weitere Schaffen des Komponisten Schönstes verspricht.”

political left, but could have been seen by supporters of the regime as a laudable example of New Music in the New Germany. In other words, it was possible for people to have *both* supported (or accommodated) the regime and also to hope that contemporary music would have a place in it; it was also possible to have disliked or defied the regime and still have been artistically conservative. Finally, the very features that the “unabashed followers” of the new regime praised (seriousness, clarity, depth, feeling, expressiveness, simplicity, melody, folksong) were, by 1930, also the features of much contemporary music. Thus, proponents of modern music liked the symphony for the same reasons, or pinpointed the same characteristics, as Nazi critics. This points to the larger fact that, rather than an isolated, artistic wasteland, Nazi Germany followed global trends in the arts, and in doing so, those in power “tolerated modernist aesthetics in spite of their vitriol against degeneracy.”²⁰⁶

Hindemith and his publishers themselves may have tacitly espoused the “bad boy made good” narrative. As discussed earlier, the plot of the opera depicts an artist turning away from political involvement and back to the realm of art. Further, Hindemith’s program notes for the symphony easily lent themselves to this kind of reading, introducing a very different, even repentant, composer who was no longer the irresponsible modernist squandering his talents on new-fangled experiments. If *Neues vom Tage* was a trendy commentary on contemporary culture, *Mathis* “addresses (in the person of Mathias Grünewald) questions that, for humankind (as far as it comes into contact with artistic things) are as old and important as the practice of art itself.”²⁰⁷ Hindemith also pointed out the symphony’s connection to two German artistic

²⁰⁶ Potter, *Suppression*, 179. For her discussion on music and modernism during the Third Reich, see 207–214.

²⁰⁷ Hindemith, program notes for the *Mathis der Maler* Symphony, in Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xix. “Die Oper ‘Mathis der Maler’ behandelt in der

artifacts: the movements' correspondence to paintings from the Isenheim Altar, and his use of the "old song," "Es sungen drei Engel ein süßen Gesang," in the first movement.²⁰⁸ Hindemith then placed himself directly in the trajectory of German musical progress by gently reminding the audience, "The listener should not immediately be opposed to everything that may appear new and unfamiliar in this piece. The course of music history shows that one has always gotten used to tone colors, melodies, harmonies, and formal procedures if they are based on musical strength and logic."²⁰⁹ The final sentence of his program notes assured the listener that Hindemith composed the work with his German musical heritage in mind: "All music that has been written on the foundation (*Boden*) of our great heritage and with the most responsible seriousness may also expect the listener's good will and active cooperation."²¹⁰ Hindemith's tactics certainly worked on the critic Walter Abendroth, who wrote:

If Hindemith was once the leader of every artistic inclination whose goal was "épater le bourgeois," in the program notes he now asks the listener most politely for patience and understanding... To this we happily say: yes! And that's precisely why we mustered, to

Person des Mathias Grünewald Fragen, die für die Menschheit, soweit sie mit Kunstdingen in Berührung kommt, so alt und wichtig sind wie die Kunstausübung selbst."

²⁰⁸ Hindemith, program notes for the *Mathis der Maler* Symphony, xix. "Die drei Sätze beziehen sich auf die entsprechenden Tafeln des Isenheimer Altars... An melodischen Bauteilen werden verwendet: im 'Engelkonzert' ein altes Lied ('Es sungen drei Engel ein süßen Gesang'), das einer ruhigen Einleitung zur Unterlage dient."

²⁰⁹ Hindemith, program notes for the *Mathis der Maler* Symphony, xx. "Der Hörer sei gegen alles, was ihm in diesem Stück neu und ungewohnt erscheinen mag, nicht sofort ablehnend eingestellt. Der Verlauf der Musikgeschichte zeigt, dass man sich noch immer an Klangfarben, Melodien, Zusammenklänge und Formabläufe gewöhnt hat, wenn ihnen musikalische Kraft und Logik zugrunde lagen."

²¹⁰ Hindemith, program notes for the *Mathis der Maler* Symphony, xx. "Jede Musik, die auf dem Boden unserer großen Überlieferung und mit verantwortungsvollem Ernste geschrieben wurde, darf auch vom Hörer guten Willen und tätige Mitarbeit fordern." Claire Taylor-Jay has observed how Hindemith's language in the opera (such as the importance of the *Volk*, or "organic" language like "soil," or "roots") "resonates with the language used by the National Socialists in this era." Taylor-Jay, 172.

date, little goodwill for the irresponsible Hindemith who misused his eminent talent for low, doubtful, or foolish purposes.²¹¹

The advertising of the symphony by Schott also reinforced this conversion narrative as well as the regime's acceptance of the newly reformed Hindemith. In a three-page advertisement following the premiere, the first page described the event as a "unanimously great success" (fig. 6.2).²¹² The next two pages demonstrated this unanimity by featuring excerpts of reviews from what Karen Painter calls a "full panoply of political views," ranging from the National Socialist newspaper *Der Angriff*, to the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, to a regional Berlin newspaper, the *Steglitzer Anzeiger*.²¹³ The inclusion of favorable critiques from party members (Herzog, Stege) and a party newspaper naturally served to document the regime's acceptance of Hindemith. Furthermore, his publishers arguably shaped the narrative by deliberately including the parts of the reviews that refer to Hindemith's conversion, or at least to his "breakthrough" as a composer, along with the usual positive remarks about the music itself.²¹⁴

²¹¹ Walter Abendroth, *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 13 March 1934, quoted in Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xv. "War Hindemith einst der Führer jener Kunstgesinnung, der das 'épater le bourgeois' Selbstzweck war, so bittet er jetzt im Programmheft den Hörer höflichst um Geduld und Verständnis... Dazu sagen wir fröhlich: ja! Und eben deshalb brachten wir bis dato wenig guten Willen auf für den verantwortungslosen Hindemith, der sein eminentes Talent missbrauchte für niedere, zweifelhafte oder läppische Zwecke."

²¹² The ad ran in *Melos* and *Anbruch*. "Einmütiger großer Erfolg bei der Uraufführung am 12. März d.J. in der 'Berliner Philharmonie' unter Wilhelm Furtwängler." *Melos* 13, no. 3 (March 1934): 124.

²¹³ Painter, 225.

²¹⁴ This includes the reviews by Oboussier, Abendroth, and Herzog.

PAUL HINDEMITH

Symphonie

Mathis der Maler

nach der gleichnamigen Oper »Mathis der Maler«

*
*Einmütiger großer Erfolg
bei der Uraufführung am 12. März d. J.
in der „Berliner Philharmonie“ unter
Wilhelm Furtwängler*
*

3 Sätze (für Orchester (26 St.) / Einzelkonzert — Grablegung — Versuchung des hl. Antonius / Dauer: 25 Min.

VERLAG B. SCHOTT'S SÖHNE, MAINZ

Die Presse berichtet:

oute ist Furtwängler für eine Tat zu danken, mit der er die stützende Stelle für den Zukunftswillen des neuen kulturellen Gebietes und für seine Achtung vor der schöpferischen Persönlichkeit lebendiges und nachdrückliches Zeugnis abgelegt wurde. Denn darum handelte es sich bei der Uraufführung des neuesten Werkes von Paul Hindemith, die Furtwängler an die Spitze seines kühnen Philharmonischen Konzerts gestellt hat. Das Orchester aber, das zweimal den großen Saal füllte, hat erstanden, daß es hier vor eine Entscheidung von großer Tragweite gestellt war. Und, was noch mehr bedeutet, hat es sich mit seltener Einmütigkeit und Eindeutigkeit für die Sache der jungen Kunst entschieden.

Hindemiths Musik hat alles Starre und Spröde, alles nur Aggressives abgestoßen, ohne dabei die charaktervolle Klarheit und Sauberkeit ihrer Konturen zu verlieren. Umso gelassener und reicher, zugleich sprechender ist seine Melodik geworden. Sie verbindet sich im „Engelkonzert“ organisch mit dem von prächtigen Bläserakkorden getragenen cantus firmus des alten Liedes „Es sangen drei Engel ein süßes Gesang“ zu einem Bild von großer Lebendigkeit und Transparenz, schwingt gelöst und verständig in immer höherer Harmonik über der fahlen, stockenden Leblosigkeit der „Grablegung“; aber aller Reichtum der Erfindung und gestaltenden Formkraft ist dem großartig erschaute letzten Bild, der „Versuchung“ vorbehalten, die nicht nur die Schrecken, sondern auch die Süße des Bösen in dümmlicher Gewalt ausspricht. Eine Vision von zwingender Kraft und dramatischer Eingänglichkeit. Der Erfolg übertrifft alle Erwartungen.

Helmuth Jochims (Frankfurter Zeitung).

Eine Schöpfung des Meisters junger deutscher Musik von großer Gewalt der harmonischen Phantasie und der Formung, Eingebundenheit von bedeutender Prägnanz, bisweilen mit erregender Wirkung im Einklang geführt, archaische Strenge und neues Klangbild ordnet sich in würdiger Gesetzmäßigkeit und erzeugt eine zwingende Wirkung, der sich niemand entziehen kann.

Prof. Dr. Hermann Springer (Deutsche Tages-Zeitung, Berlin).

Hindemiths Tonsprache zeigt in ihrer gedungenen Kraft und echten Ursprünglichkeit von neuem von der starken schöpferischen Potenz des Komponisten. Ein starker Erfolg, für den auch der Komponist mehrmals danken konnte.

— (Kreuz-Zeitung, Berlin).

Es ist mir persönlich, der ich nie ein Freund Hindemithscher Musik gewesen bin, eine ganz besondere Freude, den künstlerischen Wert dieser Symphonie rückhaltlos anzuerkennen.

Dieses Werk wird bei einem nicht ausbleibenden Siegeszug durch Deutschland überall starke Beachtung finden.

Dr. Fritz Stege (Der Westen, Berlin).

Wer sich den Weg vor Augen stellt, den Hindemith in seinem bisherigen Schaffen zurückgelegt hat und dann dieses neue Werk unbefangen auf sich wirken läßt, der hat das Empfinden, daß hier so manches erfüllt worden ist, was früher bestenfalls im Keime vorhanden war. Da ist jetzt eine Söderheit und Selbstverständlichkeit der Form erreicht worden, ein Ausgleich zwischen Persönlich-Gefühlsdramatischen und Objektiv-Gestaltigen, wie man es bei Hindemith nicht so leicht für möglich gehalten hätte. Was aber das Werk vor allem wertvoll macht, ist die Fülle von Einfällen, die sich in ihm finden und die handwerkliche Meisterschaft, mit der diese Einfälle verarbeitet und zu einem Ganzen gerundet wurden. Die Hörerschaft sparte nicht mit ihrem Beifall und sollte allen Mitwirkenden, einschließlich dem anwesenden Komponisten reichen Dank.

Th. E. (Der Angriff, Berlin).

Der stürmische, ja demonstrative Erfolg dieses Werkes in der Generalprobe wie in Hauptkonzert bewies, daß das breite Publikum auch für Neues empfänglich ist, wenn nur eine Persönlichkeit, ein ganzer Kerl, dahinter steht. Daß dieser Hindemith ein ganzer Kerl ist, bewies er mit seiner neuen Sinfonie aufs Überzeugende.

J. B. (Der Reichner Monatspost).

Der einstimmige, jubelnde, durch keinen Protestruf getrübbte Erfolg hat den Einwand widerlegt, daß diese moderne Musik volkstümlich sei, daß sie kein Publikum habe. Das Entscheidende aber ist der sakrale Ernst, mit dem Hindemith sich immer größeren musikalischen und literarischen Stoffen zuwendet. Seit Pfitzeners ciarull-Sinfonie ist „Mathis“ das weitaus bedeutendste deutsche Orchesterwerk.

H. H. Stockenrath (B.Z. am Mittag, Berlin).

Das Ethos, das hinter dieser Symphonie steht, packte die Seele der Hörer. Es ist blut- und kraftvolle und gleichzeitig persönlichste Musik. Das Werk hatte stärksten Erfolg.

Fritz Ohmann (Germania, Berlin).

Fortsetzung der Berichte auf der nächsten Seite

Figure 6.2. Advertisement for the Symphony “Mathis der Maler.” *Melos* 13, no. 3 (March 1934): 124–125.

Trouble on the Horizon

With the premiere of the *Mathis* symphony behind him, Hindemith could finally return to the opera itself, working on the libretto and music throughout the remainder of the year.²¹⁵ More importantly, Hindemith's reputation was at a high point since the success of the symphony. There were multiple performances and radio broadcasts across Germany (Duisberg, Hamburg, Cologne, Munich, Leipzig), and requests for permission to perform it were pouring in from

²¹⁵ For a detailed description of the compositional timeline, see Breimann, 64–65, 145–159.

around the world.²¹⁶ The Telefunken Company made a commercial recording of the work in early April, with Hindemith himself conducting the Berlin Philharmonic. Theaters were also beginning to vie for the premiere of the opera itself; Hindemith reported getting “harassed” about the opera from theaters, while Willy also wrote about being “bombarded with all kinds of inquiries.”²¹⁷ The biggest question now was not if the opera would be performed, but rather where it should be performed. Eventually, the choice came down to Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Berlin. While a premiere in Berlin under Furtwängler would have the greatest cultural caché, Willy remained hesitant about the capital, favoring a lower-profile premiere in Frankfurt, to be followed by Hamburg, believing that “the mood in certain circles [in Berlin] is still idiosyncratic, and you don’t need to take any kind of risks.”²¹⁸ While Willy did not specify the reason for his misgivings, he obviously did not want Hindemith squandering his newfound favor. In spite of Willy’s hesitation, negotiations began at the end of June 1934 with Heinz Tietjen (Intendant of the Berlin Theaters) and Wilhelm Furtwängler (the music director of the Staatsoper) to premiere *Mathis* at the Staatsoper.²¹⁹ Yet a question mark still hung over a Berlin premiere—and arguably,

²¹⁶ Levi, 110. In a letter to Hindemith from 27 April 1934, Willy mentioned that the interest in *Mathis* is “generally high. Klemperer wants to do the New York premiere in October; in Germany, inquiries about the score are coming from all sides” (“Das Interesse ist allgemein groß. Klemperer will im Oktober die New Yorker Uraufführung haben; aus Deutschland kommen von allen Ecken Nachfragen nach der Partitur”).

²¹⁷ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 5 June 1934. “Die Theater belästigen mich immer und ich verweise sie an Sie.” W. Strecker to Hindemith, 12 June 1934. “Auch wir werden mit allerlei Anfragen von Theatern bombardiert...”

²¹⁸ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 12 June 1934. “Wir sind nach reiflicher Überlegung dafür, Frankfurt die Uraufführung zu geben und etwa 1-2 Wochen darauf Hamburg folgen zu lassen... Auf eine gleichzeitige Uraufführung wollen wir auf alle Fälle verzichten, ebenso wie auf ein Berliner Experiment. Die Stimmung in gewissen Kreisen ist immer noch eigenartig und Sie haben es nicht nötig, sich irgendwelchem Risiko auszusetzen.”

²¹⁹ Fred K. Prieberg, *Trial of Strength: Wilhelm Furtwängler in the Third Reich*, trans. Christopher Dolan (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 133. Hindemith seemed to have some doubts about Frankfurt after he met with the Intendant of the Municipal Theaters in

Hindemith himself—as Willy noted to Hindemith on 25 June, “As I hear, Furtwängler still wants to contact the proper authorities concerning the performance before the decision about the premiere is made. For this reason, I quickly got a copy made of the first three acts and will send a carbon copy of it to you in case you want to make it available for Furtwängler.”²²⁰

In the midst of these negotiations, signs of trouble started to appear only a few days later.

On 28 June, Willy sent the following letter to Hindemith:

I wanted to tell you something that [Hans] Rosbaud²²¹ [the conductor of the radio symphony in Frankfurt] told me last week: He was in Berlin and wanted to play the “Mathis Symphony” on the radio in Frankfurt. He was told that the planned performance of the symphony in Berlin had just been cancelled, since the radio had received a message about some derogatory remarks that you had made about Hitler while in Switzerland. These remarks have been officially confirmed by the Swiss embassy as correct. The case is supposedly still under investigation and that’s why one is in negotiation with the Swiss authorities. Until then, none of your works are permitted to be performed on the radio. The matter should be decided in the next four or five days.²²²

After this report of a ban, Willy continued the letter with an update on the situation:

Just now, Rosbaud called and informed me that, in view of the significance of the composer, in spite of an earlier certain misgivings about his person, there are no

Frankfurt, Hans Meissner, who got the job of Intendant after the previous Jewish director, Josef Turnau, was forced out on 13 March 1933. Hindemith to W. Strecker, 15 April 1934.

²²⁰ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 25 June 1934. “Wie ich höre will Furtwängler wegen der Berliner Aufführung noch mit maßgebenden Stellen Fühlung nehmen, ehe die Entscheidung über die Uraufführung getroffen wird. Ich habe aus diesem Grund in aller Eile eine Abschrift der ersten drei Bilder machen lassen und schicke Ihnen einen Durchschlag, für den Fall Sie ihn Furtwängler zur Verfügung stellen wollen.”

²²¹ Hans Rosbaud (1895–1962) was an Austrian conductor who, like Hindemith, attended the Frankfurt conservatory and also studied composition with Bernhard Sekles.

²²² W. Strecker to Hindemith, 28 June 1934. “Ergänzend aber vertraulich möchte ich Ihnen berichten, was mir letzte Woche Rosbaud erzählte: Er war in Berlin und wollte in Frankfurt die ‘Mathis Symphonie’ im Rundfunk bringen. Es wurde ihm von der Meinung berichtet, man habe die geplante Aufführung der Symphonie vor kurzem in Berlin abgesetzt, da dem Rundfunk eine Mitteilung zugekommen ist über abfällige Äußerungen, die Sie in der Schweiz über Hitler gemacht hätten. Diese Äußerungen seien von der Schweizer Gesand[t]schaft als korrekt offiziell bestätigt worden. Der Fall wäre noch in Untersuchung und man stünde mit den Schweizer Stellen deswegen in Verhandlung. Bis dahin dürfte kein Werk von Ihnen im Rundfunk aufgeführt werden. Die Sache soll sich in den nächsten vier oder fünf Tagen entscheiden.”

objections to an occasional individual works being broadcast, but the works have to be specially selected and Berlin has to be notified of it before the performance.—I thought it would at least interest you to hear this, although you may not make direct use of this - *strictly confidential* communication, unless you can verify it in another way. At any rate, this is the official instruction from Berlin to the Frankfurt station. At the very least, I congratulate you on this favorable treatment.²²³

The “update” Willy mentions in the second half of the letter was likely based a memorandum from Joseph Goebbels to the Reich broadcast office on 25 June 1934 that read: “Although the intellectual attitude expressed in most of Paul Hindemith’s previous works cannot be condemned strongly enough, Hindemith should nevertheless be recognized as unquestionably one of the most important talents in the younger generation of German composers.”²²⁴ Willy ended the letter with an unprecedented “Heil Hitler,” perhaps reminding Hindemith to toe the line and be more careful.²²⁵

With this negative publicity, the staging of *Mathis* now appeared in jeopardy. In July, Furtwängler had asked Hermann Göring (who, as Minister of the Interior of Prussia, was in charge of all Prussian State Theaters) for permission to stage the opera. Göring, knowing the

²²³ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 28 June 1934. “Soeben ruft mich Rosbaud an und teilt mir mit, dass man in Anbetracht der Bedeutung des Komponisten trotz eines früheren gewissen Bedenkens gegen seine Person nichts dagegen einzuwenden habe, gelegentlich einzelne Werke im Rundfunk zur Aufführung kämen, die Werke müssten aber besonders ausgewählt und vor jeder Aufführung Berlin von dieser Tatsache benachrichtigt werden.—Ich dachte, es wird Sie mindestens interessieren, dies zu hören, obwohl Sie von der *streng vertraulichen* Mitteilung keinen direkten Gebrauch machen dürfen, es sei denn, Sie könnten die Bestätigung noch auf andere Weise erhalten. Jedenfalls ist dies die offizielle Instruktion von Berlin an den Frankfurter Sender. Ich gratuliere Ihnen zum mindesten zu dieser wohlwollenden Behandlung.”

²²⁴ Quoted in Helmut Heiber, *Joseph Goebbels* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1962), 199. “Wenn auch die geistige Grundhaltung, wie sie im größten Teil der bisherigen Werke Paul Hindemiths zum Ausdruck kommt, nicht scharf genug abgelehnt werden kann, so ist Hindemith andererseits zweifellos als eine der stärksten Begabungen der jüngeren deutschen Komponisten-Generation anzuerkennen.”

²²⁵ There is no record of Hindemith confirming or denying the report. Willy refers to the rumor as “slander” (*Verleumdung*) in his letter to Hindemith from 12 July 1934.

controversy surrounding Hindemith, managed to skirt the issue by claiming he was unable to give his permission without Hitler's approval.²²⁶ Furtwängler then asked Göring to arrange a meeting with Hitler to discuss the issue; Göring said he would do his best.

At the same time, Willy traveled to Berlin to track down the origins of the rumor and the details of the "ban" but encountered only more hearsay, observing to Hindemith that "unfortunately, an actual source cannot be determined."²²⁷ Willy's letter also reflected an atmosphere of paranoia and rumor,²²⁸ as he reiterated his earlier misgivings about a Berlin premiere:

Enemies can be found again and again in the Reichsmusikkammer and they are just as obstinate as they are intangible... The great Richard [Strauss], who is recently crusading against everything "atonal," may be responsible for the mood in the Reichsmusikkammer. Anyway, it shows that our misgivings about Berlin were not entirely unfounded, and we should only venture a premiere there with officially expressed sanction. Furti [Furtwängler] is handling himself superbly and one has to support him in every way.²²⁹

²²⁶ Potter, "Musical Life in Berlin from Weimar to Hitler," in Kater and Riethmüller, *Music and Nazism*, 96; Prieberg, *Trial of Strength*, 134.

²²⁷ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 12 July 1934. "Eine wirkliche Quelle lässt sich leider nicht feststellen."

²²⁸ In her memoir *The Baton and the Jackboot*, Furtwängler's secretary Berta Geissmar also recalls "The confusion and egotism which reigned in the *Reichsmusikkammer*... craving of power, rank ignorance, rivalry, envy, all were interwoven." Geissmar, 139. Willy may have also been referring to the general atmosphere after the Röhm Putsch from 20 June–2 July 1934 (see page 26, footnote 33 of this dissertation).

²²⁹ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 12 July 1934. "Die Widersacher sind immer wieder in der Reichsmusikkammer zu finden und ebenso unbelehrbar, wie nicht greifbar... Der große Richard, der neuerdings gegen alles 'Atonale' zu Felde gezogen ist dürfte für die Stimmung in der Reichsmusikkammer verantwortlich sein. Es zeigt immerhin, dass unsere Bedenken gegen Berlin nicht ganz unbegründet waren und man eine dortige Uraufführung nur mit offizieller ausdrücklicher Billigung wagen sollte. Ausgezeichnet scheint sich Furti zu bewähren und man muss ihn in jeder Weise unterstützen."

Although Strauss was no great fan of Hindemith,²³⁰ Gertrud Hindemith later indicated that the culprit behind the radio ban was Otto Frickhöffer, director of the Reich Radio Society (Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft) from 1934 to 1936.²³¹ Frickhöffer was also a member of Alfred Rosenberg's Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur, which had recently reformed as the National Socialist Cultural Community (Nationalsozialistische Kulurgemeinde, or NSKG) in June 1934.

As mentioned above, Rosenberg had previously targeted Hindemith in the *Völkischer Beobachter* as a way to polemicize against modernism several years before the National Socialist takeover. The continued targeting of Hindemith after the success of the *Mathis* symphony premiere, however, may have been the result of a power struggle between Goebbels and Rosenberg over arts administration in Germany.²³² As a leading figure in the Nazi Party who had displayed an early interest in cultural matters, Rosenberg had seemed poised to assume a leadership role in German cultural life when the Nazis took control in 1933.²³³ Likewise, Rosenberg's Kampfbund was ascendant in the first few months of the Third Reich; member Gustav Havemann seized control of Germany's largest musicians' union with other members receiving positions in various cultural administrations. Musicians therefore began flocking to the

²³⁰ Kater notes that Strauss "was enraged that Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt had dared to call the younger man 'the German master who is basing himself on Bach and Handel.'" Kater, *Composers*, 36. Strauss also sent a telegram in support of Goebbels's speech against Hindemith in November 1934, as Goebbels's diary entry from 11 December 1934 mentions a "friendly telegram from Richard Strauss against Hindemith" (*freundliches Telegramm von Richard Strauß gegen Hindemith*). Goebbels, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels: sämtliche Fragmente. Teil I: Aufzeichnungen, 1924–1941*, edited by Elke Fröhlich, vol. 3:I (München: K. G. Saur, 1987), 152.

²³¹ G. Hindemith to the Streckers, 5 October 1934. "Es scheint nur die Privataktion von Frickhöffer im Rundfunk gewirkt zu haben."

²³² See Zenck, 70, 75; Levi, 111–114; Potter, *Suppression*, 13; Prieberg, *Musik*, 64–66.

²³³ Potter, *Suppression*, 11. Rosenberg had run the Kampfbund since 1938. He was also the author of the best-selling book *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts: eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit*, (The Myth of the 20th Century, 1930), which argued for the supremacy of the "Aryan" race.

organization, believing that it would be advantageous to join, which caused membership to jump from 6,000 to 38,000 between January and October 1933.²³⁴ Rosenberg's hopes for a leadership position were dashed, however, when Hitler, apparently distrusting Rosenberg's organizational skills, appointed Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels to head the creation and management of the Reich Culture Chambers (RKK). Compulsory membership in the RKK meant that belonging to the Kampfbund was unnecessary, and the organization suffered a loss of status and influence. In order to appease Rosenberg, Hitler authorized him on 31 January 1934 to supervise the ideological education of the party. Rosenberg took this order and ran with it, fashioning his own position of "Deputy to the Führer for the Total Intellectual and Ideological Education and Training of the NSDAP" and unofficially creating an entire office around it, known as the "Rosenberg Bureau" (Amt Rosenberg).²³⁵ While Rosenberg had very little actual power to effect official policies, he used his position to keep watch on his rival Goebbels and the RKK, and, according to Alan Steinweis, the NSKG [the successor to the Kampfbund] "quickly emerged as a hardline critic of Goebbels's Chamber of Culture, accusing him of coddling modernists and of moving too slowly on the purge of Jews from German artistic life."²³⁶ The journal *Die Musik*, which became the official organ of the NSKG on 1 September 1934 (under Friedrich Herzog, leader of the music branch of the NSKG), provided a platform with which to publicize Rosenberg's ideological stand and challenge Goebbels's policies.

²³⁴ Steinweis, "Weimar Culture," 420.

²³⁵ Potter, *Suppression*, 13.

²³⁶ Steinweis, "Weimar Culture," 420; Levi, 23; Bahr, 13–14. The artistic inclinations of Rosenberg and Goebbels were also at odds, with Goebbels more open to modern art.

Given this intraparty rivalry, targeting Hindemith may have been an additional way for Rosenberg to harass Goebbels.²³⁷ Because Goebbels headed the entire RKK, Hindemith's leadership position in the RMK meant that he was under Goebbels's jurisdiction. The Berlin Philharmonic, which had successfully premiered Hindemith's *Mathis* symphony in a high-profile concert, also fell under the Propaganda Ministry's control, as its members were considered civil servants. Added to this was the fact that Goebbels took a personal interest in the Philharmonic, regarding it as "his" orchestra and viewing himself as its guardian.²³⁸ And now Furtwängler, conductor of "Goebbels's" orchestra and the vice-president of the RMK, wanted to premiere *Mathis der Maler*. Adding fuel to the fire, Goebbels and Furtwängler had high-handedly refused a request by Rosenberg asking that the Berlin Philharmonic play at the party congress in Nuremberg that September, creating yet another reason to strike at Goebbels.²³⁹ Finally, Claudia Maurer Zenck has suggested that Rosenberg may have spitefully wished to prevent Hindemith's opera at the Staatsoper because of his [Rosenberg's] own failed attempt at organizing a rival theater season. Rosenberg and his "bureau" had organized concerts of classical German music, a series of lectures by Nazi poets, and book exhibitions. According to Zenck, in conjunction with these activities, Rosenberg "had developed a planned season schedule for the Theater am Nollendorfplatz (hired for this purpose); this was decidedly intended as a direct contrast to the

²³⁷ As Potter notes, "Rosenberg proved to be mostly a thorn in the side of Goebbels of others, but sometimes this was enough to destroy individual careers." Potter, *Suppression*, 13. Other artists who felt the results of this in-fighting included Strauss, Furtwängler, and theater director Max Reinhardt.

²³⁸ Potter, "Berlin Philharmonic," 51.

²³⁹ Prieberg, *Trial of Strength*, 135-136.

schedules of Goebbels and Göring, but the undertaking had to be given up after a season because of a lack of good National Socialist pieces.”²⁴⁰

Regardless of the exact reason, the NSKG increased its attacks on Hindemith during the fall of 1934, spearheaded by editor of *Die Musik* Friedrich Herzog.²⁴¹ As critic Eberhard Preussner wrote to Carl Orff in October, “Again, people are talking about a new wave against Hindemith.”²⁴² In the October 1934 issue of *Die Musik*, Hans Jenker singled out Hindemith’s music as demonstrating a style that was “rootless” (*wurzellos*) and lacking “spirit,” adding:

Skill and artistry are not the same thing. Hindemith’s capabilities are undoubtedly vast, but the imitator (*Anempfnder*) must be denied this holy possession. When the Volk reject his ability, they’re not rejecting it because this New One uses new materials, but because that sense of absolute authenticity (*Echtheit*) plays no part in his ability. The craftsman Hindemith is even skilled at simplicity. But without authenticity, even the most austere style becomes nothing.²⁴³

Herzog followed up this critique by denouncing Hindemith in a speech at the opening of the Leipzig Culture Week in early October, an event put on by the NSKG in conjunction with the Saxon NS-Lehrerbund (Teachers’ Union). By the end of the month, threats of an NSKG boycott

²⁴⁰ Zenck, 76. “Zudem entwickelte Rosenberg einen Modellspielplan für das zu diesem Zweck gemietete Theater am Nollendorfplatz; dies war dezidiert gegen die Spielplangestaltung von Goebbels und Göring gerichtet, das Unternehmen musste aber wegen mangelnder guter nationalsozialistischer Stücke nach einer Spielzeit aufgeben werden. Möglich, dass Rosenberg im Zusammenhang mit diesem Projekt die Uraufführung von Hindemiths *Mathis*-Oper an der Staatsoper verhindern wollte...”

²⁴¹ Zenck suggests that Rosenberg might have felt emboldened to attack Hindemith after the Röhm Putsch in July 1934. Zenck, 75.

²⁴² Preussner to Orff, 4 October 1934, quoted in Kater, *Composers*, 37.

²⁴³ Hans Jenker, “Wo steht das deutsche Lied?” *Die Musik* 27, vol. 1 (October 1934): 11. “Könnerschaft und Künstlertum ist nicht dasselbe. Hindemiths Können ist unzweifelhaft groß, aber dem Anempfnder muss die heilige Besessenheit versagt bleiben. Wenn das Volk sein Können ablehnt, so lehnt es das nicht ab, weil dieser Neue sich neuer Mittel bedient, sondern weil an seinem Können jene bedingungslose Echtheit keinen teil hat. Der Handwerker Hindemith versteht sich sogar auf das Schlichte. Aber ohne Echtheit wird selbst der strengste Stil ein Nichts.”

led the Leipzig Radio and Gewandhaus Orchestra to cancel performances of the *Mathis* symphony, demonstrating that, rather than top-down bans, members of the National Socialist elite created what Steinweis describes as “an environment of anxiety in which self-censorship by artists became the norm.”²⁴⁴ Even more disturbing, Willy reported to Hindemith that, at a meeting of the RMK in Essen on 5 November, Herzog distributed “to all the conductors who were there a mimeographed, rabble-rousing circular that originated from the cultural-political archive of the N.S. Kulturgemeinde... The content corresponded with the usual newspaper articles, if possibly in an intensified form.”²⁴⁵ Following the cancellation of the *Mathis* symphony in Leipzig, Willy was concerned that pressure from this group would force other directors to follow suit, believing that:

these publications, which are also published in all foreign newspapers, ensure that the poor conductors don't know what they should do, and they cancel planned performances. It's time that the Reichsmusikkammer take a stand in an official capacity and publish an announcement in the same manner as the opposition. Whether Richard the Great [Strauss] will permit something of the sort seems doubtful to me.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 132. See also Prieberg, *Musik*, 69. Ludwig referred to this in 1935 as well, noting that despite the fact there was no ban against Hindemith's music, no one wanted to risk staging his opera (*daraufhin riskiert es niemand*). L. Strecker, to Hindemith, 20 August 1935.

²⁴⁵ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 14 November 1934. “Dort verteilte Herzog an alle anwesenden Dirigenten ein vervielfältigtes Hetzerisches Zirkular, das vom Kulturpolitischen Archiv der N. S. Kulturgemeinde, Reichsamtsleitung Berlin NW 7 Dorotheenstrasse 29 stammte und Kraemer gezeichnet war. Der Inhalt soll den üblichen Zeitungsartikeln, wenn möglich in verschärfter Form entsprechen.”

²⁴⁶ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 14 November 1934. “Immerhin bewirken diese Veröffentlichungen, die auch in allen ausländischen Zeitungen abgedruckt werden, dass die armen Dirigenten nicht wissen, was sie tun sollen und die geplanten Aufführungen absetzen. Es wäre Zeit, dass die Reichsmusikkammer in offizieller Form Stellung dazu nimmt und eine Bekanntmachung in der gleichen Weise veröffentlichen würde, wie die Gegenseite. Ob Richard der Große allerdings etwas derartiges genehmigte, scheint mir zweifelhaft.”

Along with the distribution of the circular at the RMK meeting, the November 1934 issue of *Die Musik* ran its strongest attack yet: the article “Paul Hindemith: Cultural-Politically Unacceptable” (Kulturpolitisch nicht tragbar). In the preface to the article, the NSKG announced a boycott of any concerts that featured Hindemith’s works:

The reason for this statement is based on Hindemith’s activities of the previous decade. If today Hindemith appears in a more positive light with his *Mathis der Maler*, this doesn’t prove that he (who is related to Jews according to the legislation of National Socialist Germany) has changed internally. The fact that he recorded his concerts abroad with two emigrant Jews after the National Socialist revolution is clear evidence of his vacillating character, which has already been documented that, through his likeminded camaraderie with one Bertolt Brecht, he was a “Standard-bearer of Decay.”²⁴⁷

This preface not only denounced Hindemith’s associations with Brecht and Jewish musicians, but the author (presumably Herzog) now also attacked Hindemith’s marriage to Gertrud, whose father Ludwig Rottenberg, conductor of the Frankfurt Opera Orchestra, was Jewish.²⁴⁸ (Despite

²⁴⁷ “Paul Hindemith—Kulturpolitisch nicht tragbar,” *Die Musik* 27, no. 2 (November 1934): 138. “Die Begründung dieser Stellungnahme stützt sich auf das Wirken Hindemiths in dem letzten Jahrzehnt. Wenn Hindemith heute in seinem ‘Mathis der Maler’ positiver erscheint, so ist damit noch nicht bewiesen, dass er, der im Sinne der Gesetzgebung des nationalsozialistischen Deutschlands nichtarisch versippt ist, sich innerlich gewandelt hat. Die Tatsache, dass er sich im Auslande noch nach der nationalsozialistischen Revolution mit zwei emigrierten Juden konzertierenderweise auf Schallplatten aufnehmen ließ, ist der klare Beweis für seinen schwankenden Charakter, der schon durch seine Gesinnungskameradschaft mit einem Bert Brecht dokumentiert hat, dass er ein ‘Bannerträger des Verfalls’ war.”

²⁴⁸ This is the first time that I have seen a reference to Gertrud. In the “Entartete Musik” exhibition of 1938, Gertrud is described as “a daughter of the Jewish Frankfurt Opera Director Ludwig Rottenberg.” (*einer Tochter des jüdischen Frankfurter Opernkapellmeisters Ludwig Rottenberg*). Albrecht Dümling, ed., *Das verdächtige Saxophon: “Entartete Musik” im NS-Staat—Dokumentation und Kommentar* (Regensburg: ConBrio, 2015): 178. In an interview, Phyllis Bauer, who worked for Associated Music in America, states, “There was a meeting between some of the hierarchy in the Nazi camp and Hindemith, and he was told that they would honor him as a German composer, and he would have a home with him [*sic*] forever, but he would have to divorce Mrs. Hindemith and they were going to expel her from the country. And Hindemith as much as told them to go to hell and left. And that’s when he came over here.” Phyllis Bauer, interview from 7 May 1975, transcript, interview no. 30/28 a-c, p. 6, Oral History of American Music, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

Gertrud's status, Hindemith's position in the RMK was safe, as musicians who were married to half or quarter Jews were still accepted as members.²⁴⁹) The rest of the article detailed the usual objections against Hindemith: his Expressionist one-act operas, his leadership of Donaueschingen and Baden-Baden festivals "in which the whole obsession with experimentation... ran riot," and the "foolish, demoralizing" (*läppischen, demoralisierenden*) text of *Neues vom Tage*.²⁵⁰ Moreover, the author accused him of opportunistically changing his style to fit in with the new regime, since "Hindemith is certainly enough of an artist to take into account a new cultural situation as it now exists and create works today or tomorrow that are perhaps different from the earlier ones on which his reputation is based."²⁵¹ Finally, once again challenging the notion of Hindemith's "inner emigration," the author also explicitly stated that the article is a response to the "attempt to position Hindemith as the modern music leader in the Third Reich," presumably by his allies.²⁵²

Hindemith took his own countermeasures in response to these difficulties over the summer and fall. After taking a vacation in the Black Forest in September 1934 to compose the music for the opera, he announced to his publishers that he was "going to grab the bull by the horns" when he came back to Berlin, presumably meaning he would address the attacks against him in the press and the difficulties in getting the opera staged.²⁵³ One of these countermeasures

²⁴⁹ Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 116.

²⁵⁰ "Kulturpolitisch," 139. "...in denen sich die gesamte Experimentiersucht der damals komponierenden oder komponieren wollenden Neutöner austobte."

²⁵¹ "Kulturpolitisch," 138. "Nun ist Hindemith gewiss Künstler genug, um einer neuen kulturellen Situation, wie sie jetzt gegeben ist, Rechnung zu tragen und heute oder morgen Werke zu schaffen, die vielleicht anders geartet sind als die früheren, auf denen sich sein Ruf gründet."

²⁵² "Kulturpolitisch," 138. "Angesichts der Tatsache, dass es versucht wird, Hindemith auch im Dritten Reich als zeitgemäße musikalische Führerpersönlichkeit hinzustellen..."

²⁵³ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 27 September 1934. "Ab morgen werde ich den Stier (oder die Stiere) bei den Hörnern zu packen versuchen."

involved threatening emigration.²⁵⁴ As Germany's leading composer of the younger generation, in addition to his growing international fame, Hindemith seemed to feel that his position was important enough that the new regime would want to hold on to him. He was somewhat justified in this belief; as Ehrhard Bahr has noted, "[Goebbels's] main concern in 1933/34 had been international public relations and opportunism. Goebbels wanted the Nazi state to 'appear creative, rather than restrictive,' and its cultural policies to be perceived as progressive abroad."²⁵⁵ As Hindemith recounted to Willy, "After my arrival [in Berlin,] I threatened to emigrate because of the current difficulties, with which a big, agitated debate broke out on all sides. Since then, nothing has happened. It seems that everything has again calmed down; moreover, wellwishers are really in the majority."²⁵⁶ Of course, this threat of emigration does not preclude the possibility that, at some level, Hindemith was considering this action. In a letter to a friend from 11 November, around the time the Herzog article appeared, he expressed this as a possibility:

If I continue to experience the kind of difficulties I have had until now, and if the efforts to wring my neck by slow degrees are successful, I shall probably be forced to look for some occupation abroad. It is certainly the last thing I want to do, but the state of musical life is already such that an honorable musician can no longer take part in it. Well, perhaps there will be some changes.²⁵⁷

Even if emigration was on his mind, however, it was clearly a last resort.

²⁵⁴ As Kater observes, "The *threat* of emigration at least became a tool with which to impress not so much his enemies, who would surely have welcomed such a move, but his influential friends who might be impelled to toil on behalf of an official acceptance of his oeuvre in the Third Reich..." Kater, *Composers*, 37.

²⁵⁵ Bahr, 15. See also Zenck, 95.

²⁵⁶ Hindemith to L. Strecker, 22 October 1934. "Nach meiner Ankunft drohte ich auf die im Anzuge befindlichen Schwierigkeiten, hin auszuwandern, worauf sich ein großes aufgeregtes Debattieren allenthalben erhob. Seitdem hat sich nichts ereignet. Es scheint, dass man sich wieder beruhigt hat, außerdem sind die Wohlgesinnten wirklich in der Überzahl."

²⁵⁷ Hindemith to Dr. Carl Schmidt, 11 November 1934, quoted and translated in Skelton, *Letters*, 83.

During the month of renewed attacks by the NSKG in October and November 1934, Hindemith also went on the offensive against Friedrich Herzog, whom he described as his “main enemy.” On 31 October, he met with RMK president Richard Strauss about the cancelled Leipzig concert and broadcast, reporting to Willy:

I secretly found out that my stock is high: The guy in Leipzig got a roasting or will get one in the next few days. Eventually the [radio] bans have to be withdrawn. I just now found out from a very informed source that today an important meeting took place, in which our main enemy F. W. H.[erzog] was put on the blacklist [Totenliste]. I say again: let's bide our time.²⁵⁸

A week later, he gleefully reported that, “Our dear enemy H[erzog] is, moreover, written off for the time being, and the Kulturgemeinde is also supposed be reduced to a mere subscription organization without any influence on programming.”²⁵⁹ On 14 November, he repeated his threat of emigration to Gustav Havemann (now the leader of the musicians' branch of the RMK), which seemed to yield promising results, reporting to Willy:

Yesterday I was with Havemann. I incited him with my evidence, told him everything, cursed Herzog and praised my deeds beyond belief. The result was that, faced with the total disaster of a passionate patriot forced into to emigration, he sank down in despair and promised to do everything he could.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 31 October 1934. “Dabei erfuhr ich insgeheim, dass meine Aktien hoch stehen: der Junge in Leipzig hat schon eins auf Dach bekommen oder bekommt in den nächsten Tagen eins. Etwaige Verbote müssten zurückgezogen werden. Und vorhin erfuhr ich von anderer sehr informierter Stelle, dass heute noch eine wichtige Sitzung war, in der unser Hauptfeind F. W. H. auf die Totenliste gesetzt worden ist. Ich sage ja: abwarten.”

²⁵⁹ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 11 November 1934: “Unser lieber Feind H. ist zudem totgesagt für die nächste Zeit und die Kulturgemeinde soll auch auf eine reine Besucherorganisation ohne Programmbeeinflussung rückgebildet werden.” Interestingly, Hindemith also notes in this letter that the RMK is trying to ingratiate itself with the party. This shows that Hindemith saw the chamber as a separate entity or union and not a Nazi organization meant to achieve *Gleichschaltung*.

²⁶⁰ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 15 November 1934. “Gestern war ich mit Havemann zusammen. Ich putschte ihn mit meinen Belegen auf, erzählte ihm alles, verfluchte Herzogen und lobte meine Taten über Bohnenlied. Der Erfolg war, dass er ob dieses vollkommenen Desasters einer zur Emigration gezwungenen leidenschaftlichen Patrioten vollkommen verzweifelt zusammensank und alles zu tun versprach.”

Once again, this threat seems more calculated than sincere—this time with Hindemith portraying himself as a “passionate patriot,” presumably doing his musical duty for Germany. The threat appears to have worked, as Hindemith continued:

Today it happened. Earlier there was a Music Chamber session in the Herrenhaus. Havemann spoke first and suddenly I heard my name mentioned in his remarks as the only notable composer and export article besides Strauss and Pfitzner. At the end of it, I was taken to State Secretary [Walther] Funk, who is the top guy for us in the Propaganda Ministry, and I could hardly get a word in, since Havemann and [Fritz] Stein launched such a stream of panegyrics to him [about me] that I was embarrassed.²⁶¹

According the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Havemann did, indeed, mention “the considerable achievements of outstanding creative personalities like Richard Strauss, Hans Pfitzner and Paul Hindemith for the prestige of German music abroad. With praiseworthy insistence, the leader of the Reich’s musician section advocated for the protection of true geniuses from mean-spirited quarrels and discord...”²⁶² Despite this triumph, Hindemith still asked Willy to take his “Volk-poisoning pieces” (*Volksvergiftenden Stücke*), the operas *Nusch-Nuschi* and *Sancta Susanna*, off the market for a while.²⁶³ Willy replied that he had already put both “in the poison cabinet” two

²⁶¹ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 15 November 1934. “Heute geschah es. Vorhin war Musikkammertagung im Herrenhaus. Havemann redete als erster und plötzlich entdeckte ich mich neben Strauss und Pfitzner als einzigen bemerkenswerten Komponisten und Exportartikel in seinen Ausführungen. Nach Schluss der Sache wurde ich zum Staatssekretär Funk, was der Oberschelte für uns im Propagandaministerium ist, geführt und dort kam ich kaum zu Reden, da Havemann und Stein einen Schwall von Lobreden auf ihm losließen, dass ich mich schämte.”

²⁶² “Landestagung der Reichsmusikkammer,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 16 November 1934, Hindemith-Institut, 6376. “Gleichzeitig erinnerte Havemann an die bedeutsame Leistung überragender schöpferischer Persönlichkeiten wie Richard Strauß, Hans Pfitzner und Paul Hindemith für die Geltung der deutschen Musik im Ausland. Mit dankenswertem Nachdruck trat der Führer der Reichsmusikerschaft für den Schutz des wirklichen Genies gegen kleinlichen Streit und Hader ein...”

²⁶³ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 15 November 1934. “Hielten Sie es nicht für gut, wenn Nusch-Nuschi und Sancta Susanna für eine Zeit lang aus den Handel verschwänden?”

weeks ago.²⁶⁴ This action was a direct response to Herzog's "Culturally Not Acceptable" article, in which he noted that Hindemith's earlier works "may no longer be performed, yet they are still available, can be bought by anyone, and their existence—there was not been any withdrawal—demonstrates that author and publisher still stand by them."²⁶⁵

Lastly, Hindemith, assisted by Furtwängler, took steps to assure the premiere of *Mathis* in the face of the NSKG smear campaign. After Göring had passed the buck to Hitler in July regarding the opera's premiere, Furtwängler had attempted to secure an audience with Hitler throughout the fall. On 5 October, Gertrud reported to the Strecker brothers that at a dinner with Furtwängler:

Fu[rtwängler] spoke only of the performance as a sure thing; he will do everything he can. Everything. He said the discussion with the Führer will take place next week. I think, just between you and me, it could also be the week after next; there's so much at the moment that should be arranged and discussed—it's really a wonder that the men concerned can get anything done at all.²⁶⁶

Gertrud's prediction that the meeting would be postponed proved to be correct, as on 22 October, Hindemith reported that, "Furtwängler's big discussion [with Hitler] hasn't happened yet. I don't know when it is, and I also don't want to ask about it. The last time I saw him, he was at any rate

²⁶⁴ W. Strecker to Hindemith, 16 November 1934. "'Nusch-Nuschi' und 'Sancta Susanna' Klavierauszüge und Texte, sowie kleine Partitur wanderten bereits vor zwei Wochen in den Giftschränk..."

²⁶⁵ "Kulturpolitisch," 140. "Mögen sie auch nicht mehr aufgeführt werden, so sind sie doch immerhin vorhanden, können von jedermann gekauft werden und beweisen durch ihre Existenz—ein Widerruf oder Abrücken ist bis heute nicht erfolgt—, dass Autoren und Verleger sich zu ihnen bekennen."

²⁶⁶ G. Hindemith to Schott, 5 October 1934. "Fu spricht nur von der Aufführung bei ihm als Selbstverständlichkeit, er wird alles daran setzen. Alles. Die Unterredung mit dem Führer findet nächste Woche statt, sagte er. Ich glaube, unter uns, es kann auch übernächste Woche werden, es gibt ja so viel augenblicklich, was geregelt und besprochen werden soll—es ist wirklich ein Wunder, dass die zuständigen Männer überhaupt so viel fertig kriegen."

outspoken, still convinced and without the faintest doubt about the outcome of the thing.”²⁶⁷

Only six days later (perhaps underscoring his anxiousness), Hindemith repeated this news, “Fu[rtwängler] hasn’t met with HIM yet. Sometimes I hear that it will happen soon, but I don’t ask... At any rate, he has no doubts about a good end result and I don’t either.”²⁶⁸ After multiple delays, Furtwängler finally secured a meeting for 30 November that would decide the fate of the opera.

Der Fall Hindemith

Now that a meeting was fixed, Furtwängler and Hindemith came up with an elaborate plan in order to secure Hitler’s permission to stage *Mathis der Maler*, which Hindemith detailed in a letter to Willy on 18 November:²⁶⁹

Yesterday evening I was with the great Wilhelm [Furtwängler] and we talked through everything. He’s completely on a roll and identifies with the thing [*Mathis*] so much that he will inevitably drop everything if it doesn’t come through. However, he doesn’t fear that happening since he just regained the upper hand concerning foreign policy things. His plan is now the following: He’ll write an essay against the whole racket (he was already busy with it this morning and I just gave him the Herzog-related things you sent me for processing), which should appear in the next few days in the DAZ [*Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*] or somewhere else. He’ll then give the essay to the Führer, so he is

²⁶⁷ Hindemith to L. Strecker, 22 October 1934. “Der großen F.[urtwängler] Unterredung war noch nicht. Ich weiß nicht, wann sie ist, will auch nicht danach fragen. Als ich ihn letztthin sah, war er jedenfalls forsch, nach wie vor überzeugt und ohne den leisesten Zweifel über den Ausgang der Sache.”

²⁶⁸ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 28 October 1934. “Fu. war noch nicht bei IHM. Manchmal höre ich, dass es nächstens stattfinden solle, aber ich frage nicht nach... Er zweifelt jedenfalls nicht am guten Endresultat und ich auch nicht.”

²⁶⁹ For discussions of this plan, see Skelton, *Paul Hindemith*, 120; Prieberg, *Trial of Strength*, 138; Taylor-Jay, 186; and Levi, 112–113;

prepared for it. His meeting has been fixed by Göring and Hess for next week. “Neues vom Tage”²⁷⁰ apparently really shocked the Führer.²⁷¹

In order to change Hitler’s mind about his music, Hindemith planned to “write him a letter (Furtwängler was really taken by this idea), in which I ask him to convince himself of the opposite and maybe to visit us at the school, where I would play for him the cantata from *Plöner Musiktag*—no one can resist that piece. And Furtwängler would hand over the letter to him, along with the text [of *Mathis*].”²⁷² Hindemith seemed reasonably confident that the strategy would pay off, believing that “the worst that could happen (he [Furtwängler] thinks) is that he would be advised to produce the opera elsewhere. But then he would ensure that it would come out in the provinces and nonetheless would take his leave from the Staatsoper, since he can’t put up with

²⁷⁰ Hitler’s alleged rage over the bathtub scene in *Neues vom Tage* has been handed down as fact in Hindemith scholarship. However, this report seems to be hearsay at best and Karen Painter has noted that there is no evidence that Hitler attended the opera. Painter, 221. This rumor also shows up in a letter from 15 November 1934 from Hindemith to Willy, when Hindemith states that Hitler “had once, ages ago, walked out of a concert in Munich in horror where something of mine was played...” (“Dieser sei zwar einmal vor langen Zeit in München entsetzt aus einen Konzert ausgerückt, wo man etwas von mir spielte”).

²⁷¹ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 18 November 1934. “Gestern Abend war ich beim großen Wilhelm, wir haben alles durchgesprochen. Er ist in ganz großer Fahrt und hat sich so mit der Sache identifiziert, dass er unweigerlich alles hinwerfen will, wenn er nicht durchkommt. Das befürchtet er allerdings gar nicht, da er gerade eben wieder Oberwasser hat ganz droben, außenpolitischer Sachen wegen. Sein Plan ist nun folgender: er schreibt einen Aufsatz gegen den ganzen Schwindel (heute früh war er schon damit beschäftigt und ich habe ihm gleich Ihre herzogliche Sendung für Verarbeitung dazugegeben), der in den nächsten Tagen in der DAZ oder sonstwo erscheinen soll. Denn lässt er dann dem Führer geben, damit er schon vorbereitet ist. Sein Besuch ist über Göring und Hess für nächste Woche festgesetzt. Dem Führer hat offenbar ‘Neues vom Tage’ einen starken Stoß versetzt.”

²⁷² Hindemith to W. Strecker, 18 November 1934. “Ich schreibe einen Brief an ihm (von dieser Idee war F. sehr eingenommen), in dem ich ihn bitte, sich vom Gegenteil zu überzeugen und vielleicht mal zu uns in die Schule zu kommen, wo ich ihm die Plöner Musiktag-Kantate vorführen würde—der hat noch niemand widerstanden. Und dieser Brief soll F. ihm überreichen, auch den Text.”

people meddling in his plans.”²⁷³ Echoing her husband’s hopefulness, Gertrud sent a postcard to the Streckers announcing that Furtwängler’s essay would appear in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* that coming Sunday, and it “should set the stage for a productive audience”—presumably with Hitler.²⁷⁴

Re-examining Hindemith’s letter to Willy dispels several myths regarding Hindemith’s status as a figure of resistance. First, despite one scholar’s assertion that Hindemith had no hand in the essay and “did not know what it contained until he read it in the *DAZ*,” the fact that Hindemith and Furtwängler “talked through everything” and Hindemith supplied him with material for it makes it unlikely that the essay was a complete surprise. Second, Hindemith himself seemed to want to convince Hitler of his “conversion,” using *Plöner Musiktag* to undo the damage supposedly done by *Neues vom Tage*. Third, Hindemith believed that showing the libretto to Hitler would prove the opera’s acceptability, once again challenging the idea that he had smuggled subversive messages of emigration or protest in it. Fourth, the letter demonstrates Hindemith’s pattern of relying on powerful figures (Havemann, Strauss, Furtwängler) to help him safeguard his position in Germany. It also shows Furtwängler’s own overestimation of his star power and status, willing to use empty threats about leaving his position at the Berlin Philharmonic if he doesn’t get his way.

According to plan, Furtwängler’s essay, titled “Der Fall Hindemith” (The Hindemith Case), appeared on the front page of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* on 25 November 1934.

²⁷³ Hindemith to W. Strecker, 18 November 1934. “Das allerschlimmste, was eintreten könnte, (meint er) ist, dass ihm nicht geraten würde, die Oper gerade hier herauszubringen. Dann will er aber durchsetzen, dass sie in der Provinz kommt und gleichwohl seinen Abschied von der Staatsoper nehmen, da er nicht dulden kann, dass man ihm in seine Pläne hineinredet.”

²⁷⁴ G. Hindemith to Schott, 22 November 1934. “Dieser Artikel soll dann den Anlass guten berühmten Audienz werden.”

Scholars have traditionally framed the essay as Furtwängler's brave defense of artistic freedom against totalitarian control and of his support for a "degenerate" musician—even though the Degenerate Music exhibition would not happen for another four years.²⁷⁵ The article, however, is a direct rebuttal to Friedrich Herzog's article "Paul Hindemith—Kulturpolitisch Nicht Tragbar," and not to the Nazi cultural politics in general.²⁷⁶ Furtwängler's very first sentence makes this clear, as he observes that "in certain circles, a campaign has been launched against Paul Hindemith, with the rationale that he is 'not acceptable' (*nicht tragbar*) in the New Germany."²⁷⁷ Furtwängler then devotes the rest of his essay to addressing the specific accusations raised in the article, ultimately arguing for Hindemith's suitability as an artist in the Third Reich. In response to Hindemith's continued association with emigrant Jews, for example, he notes that the members of the Feuermann Trio had not yet emigrated when Hindemith performed with them, and that Hindemith's recording with them in London "was the fulfillment of an old contract."²⁷⁸ Likewise, when addressing with the main targets of the NSKG, Hindemith's works of the previous decade, Furtwängler admits mistakes on the part of Hindemith. He calls the texts of the three Expressionist one-act operas "quite questionable" (*recht fragwürdig*), as well as those of the *Lehrstück* and the "Zeit-Revue" *Neues vom Tage*," and dismisses the one-acters as "youthful

²⁷⁵ Kemp, *Hindemith*, 28; Hinton, introduction to *Orchesterwerke 1932–34*, xii.

²⁷⁶ As Prieberg observes, Furtwängler "was not taking up an anti-state position, but was making a clear distinction between state and party institutions. He considered Rosenberg and the NSKG as troublemakers who were acting against the best interests of the state." Prieberg, *Trial of Strength*, 138.

²⁷⁷ Furtwängler, "Der Fall Hindemith," in *Ton und Wort*, 91. "In gewissen Kreisen ist ein Kampf gegen Paul Hindemith eröffnet worden, mit der Begründung, dass er für das neue Deutschland 'nicht tragbar' sei."

²⁷⁸ Furtwängler, "Der Fall Hindemith," 91. "Zudem waren diese Aufnahmen die Ableistung eines alten Vertrages." Furtwängler also notes that before 1933, both Goldberg and Feuermann were considered world-class musicians and had been regularly playing with Hindemith as a trio.

works” (*Jugendwerk*). Yet, Furtwängler argues, the plot of the “mature Meister” Strauss’s *Salome* is just as perverse, but no one wants to see that pulled from the stage.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, for Hindemith as for Strauss, “the times in which these works were created, which called for this type of sensation, are responsible for such choice of text. And the attempt to remain as contemporary as possible was, with Hindemith, understandable in a time when the relationship between artist and public was becoming more and more questionable.”²⁸⁰ In response to accusations against Hindemith’s music, Furtwängler notes that his setting for these problematic texts was still “full of life and talent” (*voller Leben und Talent*) and “technical mastery” (*technischen Meisterschaft*). Similarly, he excuses the motoric quality and anti-romantic style of Hindemith’s music (inaugurated by Stravinsky, he points out) as “the theory of those days,” adding that many of those works were simply quickly composed “Gelegenheitswerke” (commissions).

After excusing Hindemith’s mistakes from the Weimar period, Furtwängler then follows the “conversion” or “prodigal son” narrative—Hindemith has overcome the sins of his past to write music that is now suitable for the new Germany. More importantly, Furtwängler refutes the NSKG’s accusation that the transformation is strictly opportunistic by emphasizing that such a change happened well before the “national revolution” and is thus sincere. In contrast to the “perverse” texts of the 1920s,

²⁷⁹ Furtwängler, “Der Fall Hindemith,” 92. “Und übertrifft einer dieser Einakter—ohne sonst zu vergleichen—an Perversität des Vorwurfs etwa die ‘Salome’ des reifen Meisters Strauß? Wer aber wollte um des ‘Salome’-Textes willen Richard Strauß ablehnen?”

²⁸⁰ Furtwängler, “Der Fall Hindemith,” 92. “Verantwortlich zu machen für solche Textwahl—bei Hindemith wie bei Strauß—ist vor allem die Zeit-Epoche ihrer Entstehung, die nach Sensationen dieser Art verlangte. Und das Bestreben, möglichst zeitnahe zu bleiben, war bei Hindemith verständlich in einer Zeit, wo die Beziehung zwischen Künstler und Publikum immer fragwürdiger wurde.”

The text that corresponds to Hindemith's true nature is the only text that he has written himself: the text to his latest, recently completed opera *Mathis der Maler*. No one who reads it... will fail to recognize the deep ethos that inspired its creator. Those who are hostile to him talk about an about-face, opportunism, etc. Apart from the fact that Hindemith is the last person capable of such a thing, it's impossible with this work because Hindemith began it long before the national revolution.²⁸¹

Furtwängler then notes Hindemith's turn to amateur music in the 1920s foreshadowed, and now elides with, National Socialist goals:

Through him, the cultivation of school music has experienced particular stimulation; he's endeavored tirelessly (in his way) to productively overcome the fatal gulf between folk and art music. His volition in this area converges with tendencies that distinguish the current times, the new National Socialist Germany. With *Plöner Musiktag*, he wrote a work for youth that was pathbreaking for new trends in school music.²⁸²

Finally, Furtwängler describes Hindemith and his music as spiritually, stylistically, and racially German:

If one tried to sketch a portrait based on these early works... one would have to describe him (whose blood is also purely Germanic) as a downright "German" type. German in the soundness of his sober craftsmanship and his straight-to-the-point style, as well as in the chasteness and self-restraint of his relatively seldom emotional outbursts. His latest

²⁸¹ This is stretching the truth. Hindemith had considered the topic of *Mathis* in 1932 before rejecting it. He only began working on the opera in the summer of 1933, after his plans for *Etienne und Luise* fell through. Moreover, it seems that Furtwängler would have only known this from Hindemith himself, which again implies that Hindemith must have known at least some of the content of Furtwängler's essay. Furtwängler, "Der Fall Hindemith," 92–93. "Wie aber ein Text aussieht, der seiner, Hindemiths, wirklicher Natur entspricht, zeigt der einzige Opern-Text, den er sich selbst schrieb, der Text zu seiner letzten, erst vor kurzem beendeten Oper 'Mathis der Maler.' Niemand, der ihn liest, wird—neben allem andern—gerade das tiefe Ethos verkennen können, das seinen Schöpfer beseelt. Die ihn anfeinden, reden von Umstellung, Wahrnehmung, der Konjunktur usw. Ganz abgesehen davon, dass Hindemith der letzte wäre, der dazu fähig ist, ist das bei diesem Werk schon deshalb nicht möglich, weil dessen Anfänge lange vor der nationalen Revolution liegen."

²⁸² Furtwängler, "Der Fall Hindemith," 94. "Besondere Anregungen erfuhr durch ihn die Schulmusikpflege; unermüdlich ist er hier bestrebt, auf seine Weise die verhängnisvolle Kluft zwischen Volks- und Kunstmusik produktiv zu überwinden. Sein Wollen berührt sich auf diesem Gebiet mit Tendenzen, die gerade die jüngste Gegenwart, das neue nationalsozialistische Deutschland, kennzeichnet. So hat er seinerzeit mit dem 'Plöner Musiktage' eine Jugendmusik geschrieben, die für das neuzeitliche schulische Musizieren richtunggebend wurde."

work, the symphony from the opera *Mathis der Maler*, has once more confirmed this impression... It does not signify, as already said, an opportunistic “conversion” of Hindemith, but rather—if you will—a return to his beginnings, a return to himself.²⁸³

Whether or not Furtwängler’s argument for the sincerity of Hindemith’s “return to himself” and his importance in Nazi Germany would have eventually proved successful is unknown. What is certain, however, is that Furtwängler completely undermined his efforts to help Hindemith with one sentence toward the end of the essay, in which observed, “Hindemith has never been politically active; where will we be if political denunciation can be indiscriminately used on art?”²⁸⁴ Furtwängler’s question only succeeded in uniting the Nazi cultural brass against him and, by extension, Hindemith.²⁸⁵ *Die Musik* and *Der Angriff* (a newspaper founded by Goebbels in 1927) denounced both artists, while Minister of Education Bernhard Rust issued a statement defending the NSKG. The crowds that came to the Berlin Philharmonic’s rehearsals in support of Furtwängler after the article’s publication and the repeated standing ovations at a performance of *Tristan und Isolde*—in front of Goebbels and

²⁸³ Furtwängler, “Der Fall Hindemith,” 95. “Wenn man nach diesen ersten Werken... ein Bild des Komponisten Hindemith zu umreißen versuchte, müsste man ihn, der ja auch blutsmäßig rein germanisch ist, als einen ausgesprochen ‘deutschen’ Typus bezeichnen. Deutsch in seiner schlicht-handwerklichen Gediegenheit und gerade-kernhaften Art ebenso wie in der Keuschheit und Zurückhaltung seiner relativ seltenen Gefühlsausbrüche. Das letzte bisher von ihm erschienene Werk, die Symphonie aus der Oper ‘Mathis der Maler,’ hat diesen Eindruck von neuem bestätigt... Es bedeutet, wie schon gesagt, keine konjunkturtüchtige ‘Umstellung’ Hindemiths, sondern viel eher—wenn man so will—eine Rückkehr zu seinen Anfängen, eine Rückkehr zu sich selbst.”

²⁸⁴ Furtwängler, “Der Fall Hindemith,” 96. “Hindemith hat sich niemals politisch betätigt; wo kämen wir überhaupt hin, wenn politisches Denunziantentum in weitestem Maße auf die Kunst angewendet werden sollte?”

²⁸⁵ As Levi has observed, “This unwary reference to political denunciation was interpreted, however, as an attack on Nazi cultural policy. As a result, the Nazi cultural hierarchy closed ranks and the dispute between Goebbels and Rosenberg was temporarily resolved.” Levi, 113. See also Skelton, *Letters*, 86; Taylor-Jay, 186; Kater, *Composers*, 38.

Göring—only fanned the flames.²⁸⁶ Furtwängler tried to calm the storm, meeting with Göring later that week, attempting to meet with Goebbels, and offering to resign from his political position as vice-president of the RMK. Yet Goebbels was determined to put the conductor in his place; his diary entry from November 30 reads: “Furtwängler-Hindemith case. Furtwängler draws the short straw. Must be humiliated.”²⁸⁷ Goebbels achieved this humiliation when, on 4 December, Furtwängler was informed that his resignation would be accepted—for all his positions, including that of conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic and at the Staatsoper.²⁸⁸ As Goebbels recorded in his diary, “The Furtwängler case is over. In the evening he submitted a petition for release to Göring and me. Approved! There must be order. Today I will have a showdown with him in the Sportpalast... Evening at home. Dictated the RKK speech. Huge quarrel with Furtwängler. He will be destroyed and Hindemith with him.”²⁸⁹

While it was Furtwängler who caused the controversy (albeit with Hindemith’s full knowledge), it was ultimately the composer who bore the brunt of the fallout, as Furtwängler enjoyed a higher status and was much more valuable as a cultural export. Following his resignation, audiences in Berlin and Hamburg (where Furtwängler regularly conducted) began to return their season tickets and demanded their money back, to the tune of 16,044.40 RM in

²⁸⁶ Prieberg, *Trial of Strength*, 138, 141; Geissmar, 141.

²⁸⁷ Goebbels, 146. Entry from 30 November 1934. “Fall Furtwängler-Hindemith. Furtwängler zieht den Kürzeren. Muss geduckt werden.”

²⁸⁸ For a detailed account of Furtwängler’s actions before, during, and after “Der Fall Hindemith,” see Prieberg, *Trial of Strength*, 138–145.

²⁸⁹ Goebbels, 149. Entry from 6 December 1934. “Fall Furtwängler ausgestanden. Abends reicht er bei Göring und mir Entlassungsgesuche ein. Genehmigt! Ordnung muss sein. Heute werde ich mich im Sportpalast mit ihm auseinandersetzen... Abends zu Hause. Rede R.K.K. diktiert. Große Auseinandersetzung mit Furtwängler. Wird ihn vernichten und Hindemith mit.”

Berlin and 13,387.05 in Hamburg.²⁹⁰ Job offers and letters of support for Furtwängler came pouring in from around the world as well, which was no doubt embarrassing for the regime. By late February 1935, Furtwängler had made peace with Goebbels, publishing a letter of reconciliation and resuming his direction of the Berlin Philharmonic the following April.²⁹¹

For Hindemith, reconciliation would be harder to achieve. True to his word, Goebbels, who had been relatively neutral about Hindemith, indirectly denounced him in a speech on 6 December 1934 at the Sportpalast at an event celebrating the creation of the RKK. In it, he specifically referenced Furtwängler's lines of defense:

Technical mastery is not an excuse, but rather an obligation. Misusing it for pure motoric, empty movement-music means scoffing at the genius that prevails over true art. It is convenient and cheap to assert that [this type of music] was quickly written for a commission. It is that, that not only thieves but also atonal musicians take the opportunity to let naked women appear on the stage in salacious and kitschy, degrading scenes in the bathtub, in order to bring about a scandal and to stay close to the *Zeitgeist*, and thereby to the mockery of a timid gender who is too weak to rebel against it, surrounded by the cacophonous dissonance of musical incompetency.²⁹²

Referring to Hindemith's "pure German blood," Goebbels pointed out how his music only proved "how deep the Jewish-intellectualism infection has already consumed our own Volk-

²⁹⁰ Prieberg, *Trial of Strength*, 150. Geissmar claims that subscription tickets were returned in the amount of around 180,000 RM. Geissmar, 143.

²⁹¹ Kater, *Composers*, 37, 39.

²⁹² Goebbels's speech as reported in the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 7 December 1934, reprinted in Wulf, 340. "Technische Meisterschaft entschuldigt nicht etwa, sondern verpflichtet. Sie zu rein motorischer, inhaltsloser Bewegungsmusik missbrauchen, heißt des über jeder wahren Kunst waltenden Genius spotten. Es ist dann bequem und billig, zu behaupten, es handele sich dabei um schnell hingeschriebene Gelegenheitswerke. Das ist es ja, dass Gelegenheit nicht nur Diebe, sondern auch atonale Musiker macht, die, um der Sensation zu dienen und dem *Zeitgeist* nahezu bleiben, nackte Frauen auf der Bühne in obszönsten und kitschig-gemeinsten Szenen im Bade auftreten lassen und sie dabei zur Verspottung eines feigen Geschlechts, das zu schwach ist, sich dagegen aufzulehnen, mit den misstönenden Dissonanzen einer musikalischen Nichtskönnerei umgeben."

body.”²⁹³ Worst of all, Furtwängler’s personal appointment with Hitler regarding the opera had been promptly cancelled in the furor over the *DAZ* article. The possibility of staging *Mathis* was once again jeopardized. In order to let things blow over, Hindemith requested, and was granted, temporary leave from his teaching duties at the Berlin Hochschule. He went back to the Black Forest to continue writing the orchestration for the opera.

Conclusion

Exploring the creative process behind *Mathis der Maler* leads to a re-evaluation of the opera as a manifesto of resistance. First, looking at Hindemith’s three-year struggle to find an opera topic has several implications for *Mathis der Maler*, as well as Hindemith scholarship in general. Instead of an attempt to somehow “save” German art from Nazi appropriation, the opera’s historical German topic, accessible music, serious subject matter, and folkloric elements display continuities with his discarded St. Gall project. Similarly, Hindemith’s decision to write his own libretto likely stems from his difficult experience with Gottfried Benn, rather than from a desire to depict his own situation under the Nazi regime. His willingness to collaborate with Benn, despite his knowledge of Benn’s philosophical and political views, also challenges the traditional antifascist ethos of the opera in music scholarship. Finally, given Hindemith’s self-censorship of *Etienne und Luise*, it seems illogical that he would risk upsetting those in power by suddenly smuggling messages of protest into *Mathis*.

Although Hindemith never specified why he chose Grünewald as a subject, his correspondence with his publishers also contradicts received wisdom. The Streckers’ emphasis on the work’s Germanness suggests that they believed it would be non-controversial in the

²⁹³ Goebbels’s speech, 341. “[Wir] buchen die Tatsache seines blutsmäßig reingermanischen Ursprungs nur als drastischen Beweis dafür, wie tief sich die jüdisch-intellektualistische Infizierung bereits in unserem eigenen Volkskörper festgefressen hatte.”

current political climate. Willy did see parallels between the upheavals of the Peasants' War and the current times, as well as between Grünewald and Hindemith. Yet this connection between the two artists was not their experience of persecution or struggles under dictatorship, but that of the misunderstood genius who learns he must serve the Volk through his art rather than through political action.²⁹⁴ Insofar as the subject matter was autobiographical, the figure of Mathis provided Hindemith an opportunity to make a statement about the creation of art and the position of the artist in society while distancing himself from his works of the previous decade.

Hindemith's actions during this time also contradict the idea that he was retreating from the world or conveying coded messages in the opera. Given the attacks from Alfred Rosenberg and the Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur, Hindemith and his publishers were eager to safeguard his position and prove his fitness as a composer in the Third Reich. This involved maintaining a low profile in order not to attract negative attention in the first year of the regime. A year later, he finally took some cautious steps by participating in two "official" concerts: the KdfK-affiliated concert in Lübeck and the higher-profile Composer's Day concert. The premiere of *Mathis* symphony was meant to be the "grand opening" of the new-and-improved Hindemith, proving his stylistic acceptability as a composer.

The success of that premiere also disputes the common perception that the music and plot of *Mathis* was "anathema to Nazi ideology," eventually preventing the premiere of the opera in Germany.²⁹⁵ Rather, critics across the political spectrum praised the symphony and Hindemith's return to art music, even if some questioned the sincerity of his conversion. Hindemith's troubles

²⁹⁴ At the start of the opera, Mathis is in the service of the government, the Cardinal Archbishop of Mainz, who remains a sympathetic character throughout the opera.

²⁹⁵ "*Mathis der Maler* (opera)," Wikipedia, accessed 29 April 2019, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathis_der_Maler_\(opera\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathis_der_Maler_(opera)).

after the *Mathis* symphony's premiere instead appear to stem from his being caught in the crossfire in the struggle for artistic control between Rosenberg and Goebbels. The NSKG's targeting of Hindemith was a convenient way for Rosenberg to harass his rival. Ironically, it was his ally Furtwängler's ill-conceived article "Der Fall Hindemith" that ultimately was the nail in the coffin for the opera's premiere in Germany.

Epilogue

After the fallout from the Furtwängler article, the Turkish government's invitation to Hindemith to act as an adviser for the organization of a music school in Ankara provided him an opportunity to lay low. At the same time, Hindemith was able to use his trips to Turkey in 1935, 1936, and 1937 as evidence for his rehabilitation, portraying his work as spreading German *Kultur*.²⁹⁶ Hindemith's letters to Willy Strecker and to Hochschule director Fritz Stein, in addition to his official reports to the German government, demonstrate that Hindemith was well aware of the political implications of his work as an ambassador for German musical ideals as Germany attempted to broaden its sphere of influence in Turkey.²⁹⁷ Hindemith's tours abroad in England (1936) and America (1937, 1938) also may be construed as politically motivated.²⁹⁸ Although scholarship has framed these trips as "endeavors to orientate himself in the New World and to look for employment," the Hindemith-Strecker correspondence reveals that the tours also

²⁹⁶ Hindemith calls his work a "guarantee for the future" (*Garantie für die Zukunft*). Hindemith to W. Strecker, 3 August 1935.

²⁹⁷ These trips to Turkey are generally framed as an interesting sideline to his compositional activities (totally unrelated to what was happening in Germany) or "[Hindemith] represented his work to the German authorities as being on behalf of German culture... in order to preserve his freedom to travel." Schubert, "Paul Hindemith."

²⁹⁸ Hindemith had already toured England and had connections and friends there. Moreover, Schott had an office in London and a connection with American Music Publishers in America, so as in the 1920s, these tours offered a way to widen the market for Hindemith's works and increase sales.

functioned as a rehabilitation strategy, as favorable reviews in the foreign press were meant to put pressure on the German government to welcome Hindemith back.²⁹⁹ I suggest that the foreign press's indignation at the Nazis' treatment of Hindemith after "The Hindemith Case" may have also been used to put pressure on the German government, given the Nazis' desire to present a cultured, international, and progressive face abroad, especially at the time of the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin.³⁰⁰ At the same time, Hindemith and his publishers continued to petition for a German premiere of *Mathis der Maler*.³⁰¹ While they actually came close several times, with even Herzog promising to send a copy of the libretto to Rosenberg, a German premiere never materialized.³⁰² Tiring of the constant intrigue, he eventually resigned from his position at the Hochschule in 1937, moving to Switzerland in 1938 and finally to the United States in 1940.³⁰³

²⁹⁹ Ludwig calls the tours abroad a successful "means of pressure" (*Druckmittel*). L. Strecker to Hindemith, 9 May 1935; Hindemith to W. Strecker, 23 January 1936. See also Zenck, 98.

³⁰⁰ Joan Evans states that "Germany was acutely conscious of the importance of favorable international opinion as the date for the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympics approached," Evans, 102. Potter also notes that, "Nazi leaders exploited Germany's international reputation as the 'people of music' toward building an image of global strength. They pumped resources into struggling musical institutions of world fame in an effort to mitigate irate foreign accusations of Nazi atrocities and to downplay their image as barbarians." Potter, *Most German*, xii.

³⁰¹ G. Hindemith to Schott, 12 July 1935. Hans Hinkel promised to try and arrange a performance of *Mathis* in Frankfurt and to talk about it with Goebbels. Stein also sent a copy of the libretto (through Hinkel) to Goebbels, Stein to Hinkel, 22 July 1935 in HdK Hi (Bl.98). For further attempts to get the opera staged, see Zenck, 95–101; Kater, *Composers*, 39–43.

³⁰² L. Strecker to Hindemith 1 July 1936.

³⁰³ In response to the loud applause violinist Georg Kulenkampff received at his performance of a sonata by Hindemith in 1936, Goebbels declared a performance ban of Hindemith's works. See Zenck, 102–103; Kater, *Composers*, 42.

Conclusion

This dissertation illustrates the challenges facing German composers during a time of economic, social, and political turbulence. Clearly, financial and political factors strongly influenced Hindemith's compositional and musical activities, illustrating Kim Kowalke's observation that, "the process of composing music (the good, bad, and ugly alike) and getting it performed was usually conditioned as much by practical and financial considerations as by artistic impulse."¹ Reevaluating Hindemith's musical works and activities from these decades as survival strategies provides a more nuanced reading of Hindemith's works and activities of the 1920s and early 1930s, while challenging many of the myths surrounding him. First, it complicates the image of him as the emblem of musical modernism in the 1920s, picking up every new trend in music. Instead, like most Germans, Hindemith's attitude towards modern life is best characterized as ambivalence. In works such as *Kammermusik Nr. 1*, *Suite "1922"*, and *Neues vom Tage*, he used jazz and its extramusical associations to satirize aspects of modern life. Moreover, his collaboration with Gottfried Benn on *Das Unaufhörliche* might also speak to a shared distrust of modernity. In addition, his experimentation of the 1920s with amateur music and new technologies, his so-called *Gebrauchsmusik*, was prompted by the fear that German concert life and musical progress was under threat—or even dying—from societal shifts. While Hindemith was genuinely concerned about reconnecting with audiences, writing this music was always done in the hope of leading people to appreciate modern music, keeping German music alive and musicians employed.

¹ Kim Kowalke, "Music Publishing," in *Music and Nazism*, 171.

Yet when we carefully examine his program notes and letters promoting these new areas of musical composition, we can sense his resignation, reluctance, and even reticence. He emphasized the experimental nature of his works for technology and amateurs, while his language indicated that he viewed them more as manufactured products made for mass consumption rather than works of art. Further, throughout this period of experimentation, Hindemith continued to write and perform art music, leading one scholar to detect a “contradiction”: “on the one hand, he wanted to write accessible music for the daily use of amateur musicians, but on the other hand, he was drawn to the state theaters and the bourgeois concert halls which in his youth he had so rudely snubbed.”²

Examining Hindemith’s activities and compositions around 1930 also challenges the myth of Hindemith as regressive, forced into a simplified, accessible style by a presumed campaign of Nazi antimodernism, his despondency over the regime, or the result of writing *Gebrauchsmusik*. His falling-out with the *Jugendmusikbewegung* and Bertolt Brecht likely contributed to his return to the concert hall, along with calls from critics to drop the festival experiments. This return to the concert hall may have also fulfilled his earlier romantic ideals while taking into account economic realities: to write art music, one still had to appeal to general audiences. Hindemith’s change of style also fell in line with an international shift in the arts of backtracking from the isms of the previous decades and reaching out to “the people” through accessible styles, large-scale, familiar genres, and nationalistic themes. For governments across the world, catering to the masses often served larger political and artistic goals, whether keeping people away from, or moving them towards, class consciousness; improving musical taste, and uplifting them during an economic crisis. Finally, primary sources demonstrate that critics across

² Feuchtnner, 12.

the political spectrum, including Adorno himself, enthusiastically welcomed Hindemith's re-orientation to art music and tonality and away from the experiments.

Finally, exploring the creation of *Mathis der Maler* reveals that during the years of the Third Reich, Hindemith was not a passive victim, nor did he retreat into inner emigration. While he was never a Nazi supporter and was often the target of attacks by party ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, he took an active role in trying to remain and work in Germany, as well as maintain his position as a leading German composer. Looking at the creation of *Mathis der Maler* suggests that, rather than a manifesto of resistance, he picked the topic because of its explicitly German content. Likewise, any autobiographical parallels had less to do with inner emigration than with portraying a misunderstood genius who tried to serve the German Volk through his art. Hindemith's correspondence with his publishers during this time also shows that the *Mathis* symphony was meant to further his cause on a political and artistic level, showcasing him as a composer who had shed his previous modernist, bad boy reputation. Furthermore, examining his struggles to premiere *Mathis* demonstrate that it was not the opera's content nor Hindemith's musical style that was the problem; rather, the composer was caught in a power struggle between political rivals over influence on cultural affairs.

Re-evaluating the standard Hindemith historiography demonstrates that the traditional pairing of progressive music with progressive political causes and of aesthetic regression with repressive regimes continue to inform the narrative of early twentieth-century German music.³

³ The lack of consideration for the economic and political influences on Hindemith's career may also stem from the Cold War, when "the admission of a social, political, or economic purview into the historiography of culture was tainted by its totalitarian perversions. Admit such questions, it then seemed, and you were part of the totalitarian (or 'Marxist') threat to the integrity and the freedom of the creative individual." Taruskin, "Is there a Baby in the Bathwater? (Part II)," 319.

Related to this is the continued influence of the Adornian notion of musical progress as defining modernism. Using this yardstick, Hindemith's experiments of the 1920s would make him a "modernist," while his turn toward a simplified musical language would appear regressive, as it did especially after the Second World War.⁴ Yet David Harvey's definition of modernism as "a troubled and fluctuating aesthetic response to conditions of modernity produced by a particular process of modernization" might be a more apt application of the term to Hindemith.⁵ All the works explored in this dissertation could be interpreted as "fluctuating aesthetic response[s] to the conditions of modernity" or commentaries on modern life, whether critical or ambivalent (*Suite "1922," Neues vom Tage*, or *Das Unaufhörliche*), resigned (amateur music, music for radio), or reactionary (the *Konzertmusik* series, *Mathis der Maler*). Taking a new look at these works can contribute to what Jeremy Zima describes as "the ongoing reappraisal of musical modernism in the early twentieth century, moving beyond the notion that tonality (or a lack thereof) is a defining marker of modernity."⁶

Interrogating Hindemith historiography also reveals an underlying agenda to categorize German composers from this time period as "good" or bad." Because of his eventual emigration to the United States, Hindemith is put in the "good" category. The motivations for keeping him in this category can range from keeping him in the canon (and therefore worthy of study and publication), to being able to play and listen to his music without guilt. This desire to categorize also reflects the belief in the artist-as-hero narrative, or of artists having a better or superior

⁴ Taruskin notes how pressure to write serial music was so strong after WWII that even Hindemith, who called the twelve-tone method "unnatural," sketched some twelve-tone themes and tone rows. Taruskin, *Music in the Late Twentieth Century*, vol. 5 of *The Oxford History of Western Music*, 103.

⁵ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 99.

⁶ Zima, 279.

moral compass. However, as Alan Steinweis notes, “If passivity in the face of censorship and systematic ostracism was typical for German society as a whole between 1933 and 1945, then we can only conclude that German artists possessed no greater civil courage than did farmers, or carpenters, or department store clerks.”⁷ Moreover, the consequences of maintaining these black-and-white categories means missing out on a fuller picture of musical activity in Germany during this time, as well as missing out on any parallels it may hold for our own time.⁸

Further Research

Regarding Hindemith himself, there are still areas of his life and works that deserve a fresh, critical look. The political implications of his work in Turkey, his further attempts at rehabilitation while in Germany, and the reasons prompting his move to Switzerland and the United States all come to mind, as well as his work at Yale.

While this study has focused on Hindemith as a case study for the challenges facing German composers after the First World War, it also has shown the importance of outside forces on the compositional process. It is these forces that, rather than the traditional composer-centric approach, are ripe for further research. The first force is the powerful influence of Hindemith’s publishers, Ludwig and Willy Strecker. The brothers worked tirelessly on behalf of their star composer: advising, chastening, flattering, and criticizing him while advertising and promoting his music. Like Hindemith, the Streckers believed in the mission of art music, but had to deal with the realities of the market and economic situation to an even greater extent. Exploring the impact of publishers such as Schott or Universal Edition on musical works and performances,

⁷ Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics*, 176.

⁸ Pamela Potter has noted the similarities between National Socialist Germany and the United States today in “the increasingly advanced techniques of harnessing media and monitoring public opinion,” as well as use of mass spectacle in sporting events, megachurches, and rock concerts. Potter, *Suppression*, 250.

their international network of branches, or how they marketed contemporary music during this time, would be a worthwhile endeavor.⁹

A second force worthy of research is the power of professional music critics during the postwar period. I have suggested that Hindemith's return to the concert hall may have, in part, been prompted by influential voices in the press. Despite Hindemith's claim that "no composer reads the critics" (*kein schaffender Künstler liest Kritiken*), he and his publishers did read (and save) these reviews.¹⁰ In 1929, Hindemith published the essay "About Music Criticism," which lambasted music critics and their damaging effect on new music.¹¹ Phyllis Bauer, who worked for his American publishers, would recall in a 1975 interview how Hindemith "caught everything that was in the newspaper [about his music], everything that was written or said about it."¹² Moreover, Pamela Potter has recently suggested that artists might have welcomed Goebbels's banning of arts criticism (*Kritikverbot*) in newspapers in November 1936, as many believed "that critics wielded too much power in making or breaking careers without necessarily possessing the qualifications to make such judgments."¹³ Conversely, the power of critics in new music journals sponsored by publishing houses to promote "their" composers (such as usually favorable reviews of Hindemith in the Schott-owned *Melos*) is another area that deserves attention.

⁹ Kim Kowalke's article on Schott and Universal Edition during the Third Reich is an example of this type of scholarship, as well as the recent collection of essays in *Consuming Music: Individuals, Institutions, Communities, 1730–1830*, ed. Emily H. Green and Catherine Mayes, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2017.

¹⁰ Lore Seitz to Hedwig Hähne, 27 June 1930, quoted in Schader, introduction to *Sing- und Spielmusik II* xlii. Lore Seitz was the wife of Robert Seitz, who wrote the libretti for *Sabinchen* and *Wir bauen eine Stadt*.

¹¹ Hindemith, "Über Musikkritik," 106–108.

¹² Phyllis Bauer, interview from 7 May 1975, transcript, interview no. 30/28 a-c, p. 15, Oral History of American Music, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

¹³ Potter, *Suppression*, 19. Jeremy Zima also notes how arts criticism was "often problematic" for composers, with critics competing for readers through inflammatory language. Zima, 275.

Finally, there are profound lessons to be learned from the historical upheavals in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s. One hundred years later, the year 2020 began with a slew of 1920s-themed parties and “Gatsby” has become shorthand for anything vaguely referring to that decade, used to describe clothing, themed parties, jewelry, and shoes.¹⁴ In entertainment, the “Golden Twenties” crops up in Netflix’s series *Babylon Berlin* (2017–present), *Peaky Blinders* (2013–present), and *Cable Girls* (2017–present); Masterpiece’s juggernaut *Downton Abbey* (the later seasons and the 2019 film); the 2013 version of *The Great Gatsby* starring Leonardo diCaprio, and HBO’s *Boardwalk Empire* (2010–2015).

While the jazz, fashion, technology, and cultural icons of the era are exciting and alluring, it is perhaps the less-glamorous parts that resonate with us today. Like the stock market crash in 1929, the effects of the 2008 recession rippled throughout the world, causing unemployment and homelessness, and wiping out the savings of the middle class. These effects can still be felt over a decade later through the widening gap between rich and poor, the increase of stress-related health problems, the loss of “middle-skilled” jobs (manufacturing, telemarketing),¹⁵ and the growing need for affordable housing in cities that have led to sprawling tent cities.¹⁶ At the same time, the advancements in production (Fordism) that threatened to turn humans into machines in the 1920s are now threatening to replace humans with actual machines.

Politically, the growing polarization between left- and right-wing parties echoes that of the Weimar Republic, as does the surge of populism across the world, evidenced by Brexit, the

¹⁴ One common inquiry on Google, “What is a Gatsby attire?”

¹⁵ Annie Lowry, “The Great Recession is Still With Us,” *The Atlantic* (1 December 2017). <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/12/great-recession-still-with-us/547268/>.

¹⁶ “Sprawling Homeless Camps—Modern Hooverilles—Vex California.” NPR, “Morning Edition,” 13 January 2020. <https://www.npr.org/2020/01/13/795439405/sprawling-homeless-camps-modern-hooverilles-vex-california>.

election of Donald Trump, and the success of political parties across the political spectrum in Europe, such as Law and Justice (Poland), Podemos (Spain), Syriza (Greece), the Five Star Movement (Italy), and the Danish People's Party (Denmark).¹⁷ Moreover, the recession, coupled with the 2015 influx of refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries into Europe, and of refugees from Central America into the United States around the same time,¹⁸ has led to a resurgence of xenophobia and the rise of the far right.¹⁹ Anti-Semitism is also on the rise worldwide, with attacks on synagogues, such as Tree of Life shooting in Pittsburgh on 27 October 2018, and slogans such as "Jews will not replace us" heard at the white supremacist rally "Unite the Right" in Charlottesville, VA from 11-12 August 2017.²⁰

For musicians and music scholars in particular, the upheavals 1920s and 1930s might leave one with a sense of déjà vu. Like the inflation of the early 1920s and 1929 stock market crash, the 2008 recession negatively impacted cultural institutions, contributing to the closures of orchestras in Honolulu, Syracuse, and Albuquerque, the New York City Opera, along with the bankruptcy of the Philadelphia Orchestra.²¹ At the same time, new technologies continue to be seen as a threat to traditional concert life, or live music in general (streaming, platforms such as

¹⁷ Matthijs Rooduijn, "Why is Populism Suddenly All the Rage?" *The Guardian* 20 November 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/political-science/2018/nov/20/why-is-populism-suddenly-so-sexy-the-reasons-are-many>.

¹⁸ "Fleeing for Our Lives: Central American Migrant Crisis, accessed 18 February 2020, <https://www.amnestyusa.org/fleeing-for-our-lives-central-american-migrant-crisis/>.

¹⁹ Examples include the rise of the Alternative for Germany party (AfD), Hungary's Fidesz, or Austria's Freedom Party. "Europe and Right-Wing Nationalism: A Country-By-Country Guide," BBC News, 13 November 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36130006>.

²⁰ "Two Years Ago, They Marched in Charlottesville. Now Where are They," *ADL*, 8 August 2019. <https://www.adl.org/blog/two-years-ago-they-marched-in-charlottesville-where-are-they-now>.

²¹ Phillip Kennicott, "America's Orchestras are in Crisis," *The New Republic*, 25 August 2013, <https://newrepublic.com/article/114221/orchestras-crisis-outreach-ruining-them>.

YouTube, Spotify, Pandora). Recalling Stuckenschmidt's predictions about an all-mechanical orchestra, artificial intelligence and algorithms that compose music now threaten to replace even the composer.²² The complaints also sound familiar: audiences for classical music are growing older and are shrinking; concerts are too expensive; people don't want to hear new music; young people prefer popular music and other activities. The headlines from the past decade ("Classical Music: Dead or Alive" or "Requiem: Classical Music in America is Dead," "Classical Music is Not Dead") reflect the same debates over the future of art music.

Today's solutions to the perceived crisis in concert life also resemble those suggested by Hindemith and his contemporaries. Making classical music "accessible" for modern audiences through programming (movie soundtracks, cartoons, video game music), incorporating film into stage productions, utilizing technology to bring "high art" to the masses, hoping eventually to draw them to a live event (the Met's Live in HD series or streaming), trying to program works that features contemporary, everyday people and problems in order to be relatable (the opera *Anna Nicole* from 2013, Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* (2000), or explaining modern music through pre-concert talks. As the trautionium promised to revive amateur music making, amateurs can use programs such as GarageBand to compose music. In order to "ensure and audience for the future,"²³ youth orchestras and ensembles abound, we fight to keep music education in schools (arguing that it helps skills in STEM fields), music appreciation classes are still offered

²² See Tirhakah Love, "Do Androids Dream of Electric Beats? How AI is Changing Music for Good," *The Guardian*, 22 October 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2018/oct/22/ai-artificial-intelligence-composing>. Examples include AIVA "the Artificial Intelligence composing emotional soundtrack music" <https://www.aiva.ai/> or Orb Composer, which promises to "create better music, faster." <https://www.orb-composer.com/>

²³ A character in the Amazon series *Mozart in the Jungle* (about a struggling orchestra in the twenty-first century) refers to youth orchestras in this way. *Mozart in the Jungle*, Season 3, episode 9. "Creative Solutions for Creative Lives."

in universities, and arts programs increasingly focus on outreach. And like Hindemith's and Brecht's *Lehrstück*, we still experiment with new forms of concert presentation to break down barriers and involve the audience: tweeting during concerts, performing at informal venues, getting rid of music stands, or seating audience members among the orchestra.²⁴ Finally, like the Berlin Hochschule, conservatories and music programs in universities offer classes in music technology and entrepreneurship to ready students for a twenty-first-century career. As in the interwar period, musicians continue to find creative ways to respond to the challenges posed by the social, political, and technological changes of the twenty-first century, illustrating Hindemith's own observation that "music can never cease as long as one is genuinely willing to make music."²⁵

²⁴ Jack Meyer, "Really? We're Sitting with the Orchestra?! Beethoven's Fifth: From the Inside Out," *Huffpost*, 1 February 2016. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/really-were-sitting-with-b_9128214.

²⁵ Hindemith, "Zur mechanischen Musik," 21. "... dass der wahren Musik nie und nirgends Abbruch geschehen kann, so lange man überhaupt ernsthaft willens ist zu musizieren..."

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