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Politics and the Ideology of the Artist in the *Künstleropern* of Pfitzner, Krenek and Hindemith

by

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ABSTRACT

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POLITICS AND THE IDEOLOGY OF THE ARTIST IN THE KÜNSTLEROPERN OF PFITZNER, KRENEK AND HINDEMITH

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This thesis investigates the debate in early twentieth-century Germany about the place of the artist in modern society through examination of three Künstleropern or 'artist-operas': Pfitzner's Palestrina (1915), Krenek's Jonny spielt auf (1926) and Hindemith's Mathis der Maler (1935). In each opera, the central character is an artist who is uncomfortable with his place in the world; the artist-character may be seen as functioning as a persona for the real composer of the work, indicating his actual or desired relationship to his society. Furthermore, by presenting a view of society, and showing art's place within it, the works are also engaged with inherently political questions. This aspect is explored further, as each opera is read in the light of the political context of its time.

I first explore the cultural and social context of the early twentieth century from which these operas emerged, and how this climate affected the composer-audience dialectic. This is followed by an examination of Pfitzner's Palestrina in the light of political conservatism circa World War I, using Thomas Mann's idea of the 'political' and the 'nonpolitical', as expounded in his book of 1918 Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen, to demonstrate Pfitzner's involvement in the conservative political discourse of the era. I read Krenek's Jonny spielt auf against attitudes towards democracy during the Weimar Republic, expressed particularly through Americanism. I also consider the influence on Krenek of the music critic Paul Bekker's concept of 'community-forming' (gesellschaftbildende) art, and discuss contemporary reactions to the opera. Hindemith's Mathis der Maler is compared to the philosophies and rhetoric of National Socialism; I explore how political thinking at this time made possible a 'crossover' between left and right wings, and suggest how this alters our view of the opera and its composer. In all of these cases, I discuss how the artist figure in each work represents his creator's aesthetic and political views. Seen against the changes in society of the early twentieth century, the conflict found within these Künstleropern between the fictional artist and his world crystallises the concern with the role of art in society which preoccupied many composers of the era.

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(Both pictures used with the agreement of AKG London)

Preface

In my discussion of the music of *Palestrina, Jonny spielt auf* and *Mathis der Maler,* I have followed each composer's own practice in referring to particular scenes. Thus, scenes in *Palestrina* are referred to by act and scene numbers (e.g. Act One Scene One); scenes in *Jonny spielt auf* are numbered consecutively from one to eleven, as in the score, while the seven *Bilder* of Hindemith's opera are referred to here translated as 'tableaux'. Bar references for *Palestrina* and *Mathis der Maler* count forwards or backwards from the nearest suitable figure, for instance, fig.17+3, fig.10-5. It should be noted that '+1' in this context refers to the bar immediately after the figure: two consecutive bars either side of fig.12, for instance, would thus be 'fig.12-1' and 'fig.12+1'. As *Jonny spielt auf* is divided into two parts, the second of which begins renumbering again from 1, bar references for this opera give the part number and then bar number, e.g. I/959.

Translations of secondary material are my own unless otherwise specified; translations of the librettos are also my own, although with particular referral to those by Tim Ashley, in the case of *Palestrina* and *Mathis der Maler,*[a] and to that accompanying the Decca recording of *Jonny spielt auf.*[b]

When referring to particular groups in which, to the best of my knowledge, women did or do not appear (for example, composers of *Künstleropern),* the male pronoun is used. Elsewhere, gender neutral language is used wherever possible.

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[a] Both published by Royal Opera Texts, ed. Alison Latham, 1995 *(Mathis der Maler)* and 1997 *(Palestrina).*

[b] *Entartete Musik* series, Decca 436 631-2.

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Politics and the Ideology of the Artist in the Künstleropern of Pfitzner, Krenek and Hindemith

1. Introduction

For many people, the idea of the creative artist is almost synonymous with estrangement from society. According to this Romantic cliché, the artist is a mortal on a higher level of existence, ignored and unappreciated by the world around him, deeply feeling and suffering. The reality, though, is not, and has rarely been, so straightforward. Since the late eighteenth century, when the patronage of the arts by aristocrats became less common, many artists have indeed felt ambivalent towards their society, in which they have needed to come to terms with the realities of the marketplace in order to make a living. Other composers, in contrast, have happily adapted to the demands made upon them by a consumerist economy. The persistence of the picture of the isolated genius, then, deserves further investigation: it is not a simple description of an actual situation, but a myth arising over a period of time. Artists have positioned themselves in relationship to this myth ever since it became current.

This dissertation investigates particular conceptions of the artist-ideal which appeared in the first decades of the twentieth century, through reference to three *Künstleropern,* or 'artist-operas': Pfitzner's *Palestrina* (1915), Krenek's *Jonny spielt auf* (1926) and Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* (1935). All of these works were written at a time when the idea of the artist, and his or her place within society, was undergoing a period of transition, and therefore all three operas engage, in different ways, with the Romantic ideal. As I will explore in more detail shortly, the relationship between art and society in the early twentieth century was interrogated in many quarters as, faced with a rapidly changing world, artists sought to reevaluate their positions. Through placing an artist as the central character (composers in the case of the Pfitzner and Krenek operas, a painter in Hindemith's), these *Künstleropern* construct a particular relationship between this character and his society, and, while the operas are not necessarily or explicitly autobiographical, the manner in which the composers of these works represent the

contemporary debate about the artist and society reveals their own attitude towards it. In this way, we can see the three operas as historical documents. In the rest of this Introduction, I will explore ways in which the ideology of 'the artist' has been configured, beginning with the nineteenth century, and then studying how these ideas were perpetuated or altered during the early twentieth century. I will go on to discuss the genre of *Künstleroper,* and how its presentation of the artist within a social environment may be read as having political resonances.

The Relationship of Artist and Society: Historical Perspectives

The idea that an artist would (and perhaps should) be isolated from society appeared in the early nineteenth century, with the rise of Romanticism. Until the end of the eighteenth century, composers were, on the whole, in a secure position regarding their income and their audience, as they were in the service of a patron; Haydn's employment as the court composer at Esterháza is a typical example. With the decline of such patronage at the end of the eighteenth century, however, brought about chiefly by the evaporation of aristocratic fortunes, composers needed to look for new ways to earn a living. Composers of the Romantic era, like other artists, were now dependent upon their fellow citizens for the means to live, and had to sell their music through concerts and publishers. Many composers embraced this lifestyle, writing 'light' works for the popular market. Simultaneously, though, others deemed that to be a true artist, one must scorn this 'prostitution' of one's superior talents. The belief in the artist as a higher being, above the mundane concerns of the world, was fostered in the late eighteenth century by, for instance, Goethe and Schiller, and embraced by such individuals as Beethoven and Wagner. According to this aesthetic, artists were obliged to reject the hostile world and turn inward, expressing their inner beings and finding solace in Art.[1]

For the followers of the Romantic aesthetic, art's purpose was to lead the listener towards the transcendental, and music, in particular, could offer a glimpse of an eternal, ideal reality. Simultaneously, however, the Romantic artist realised

[1] See Edward F. Kravitt, 'Romanticism Today', *Musical Quarterly* 76/1 (Spring 1992), 93.

that few could understand the mystical vision which he was trying to communicate; this resulted in artists turning inwards towards their own subjectivity, perhaps being joined by a select band of faithful disciples. The world outside, offering only a cold, monotonous reality and unable or unwilling to understand the artist, is rejected, and the artist turns – with apparent reluctance - inward to his own world of dreams, in which he searches after Utopia.[2] This always remains tantalisingly out of reach, however, and the artist is therefore tormented by unfulfilled longing. Rather than embracing his solitude gladly, the artist sees it as an inevitable predicament, given the society in which he finds himself. This is the clichéd description of the artist which has found its way into the popular imagination: the artist pursuing his own dreams and inspiration, whilst living with little money, in poor surroundings, perhaps also plagued by an unrequited love. Romantic philosophers helped to create this ideal of artistic isolation: Hegel, for instance, argued for the necessity of autonomous art, which carried with it the requirement for a specific, separate 'artistic' way of life for the creator, while Schlegel also wrote that the artist's way of life 'should be fundamentally different from that of other people'.[3] The theme of the isolated, tormented individual became a commonplace of Romantic art, encompassing such figures as Werther, the unnamed hero of Schubert's *Winterreise,* and Wagner's Flying Dutchman. These characters, although not necessarily artists, betray a sensitivity to their position in the world which was also readily carried over into the ideal of the artist. This concept of the artist itself found expression in works such as Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique,* as well as in many *Künstleropern.*

Such a picture, however, does not tell the complete story, and its ubiquity is to a large extent dependent upon the subsequent writing of history. While the cliché certainly had some currency during the nineteenth century, most artists had more interaction with the real world than such an image gives them credit for. Many

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[2] I use the male pronoun here as, according to the Romantic aesthetic, the true artist could only ever be a man.

[3] Hegel quoted in Bernhard Schubert, *Der Künstler als Handwerker: zur Literaturgeschichte einer romantischen Utopie* (Königstein: Athenäum Verlag, 1986), 22; Schlegel, 'Ideen', no. 146, quoted in ibid. On the idea of the artist's loneliness in the nineteenth century, also see Ulrike Kienzle, *Das Trauma hinter dem Traum: Franz Schrekers Oper 'Der ferne Klang' und die Wiener Moderne* (Schliengen: Edition Argus, 1998), 272.

composers, by necessity or by choice, continued to take part in society, working as teachers, conductors or performers. The artist-myth did persist for some, though, as an ideal: even if composers participated in society out of economic necessity, they may still have felt uncomfortable, aspiring to live apart from the world. Furthermore, the concept of art, and music, as a higher, transcendent force proved pervasive within certain circles. For some composers of the nineteenth century, the belief that music was an art which expressed a higher reality was coupled with a wish to educate a broad audience to the virtues of the art. However, the pedestal on which art, and particularly music, had come to be placed meant that the wish for a wider audience on the part of these composers was on very particular terms. For example, Wagner's messianic vision of a society centred around art can hardly be compared to the populism of a composer of light opera, although both, in some way, wished to reach a large audience. Unlike his populist contemporary, however, Wagner's ideal audience was one which revered not only the artist, but also art itself, as a manifestation of a higher truth, rather than treating it as mere entertainment. In fact, he viewed anyone who intentionally wrote for the public as engaging in 'a lower form of activity'.[4] Wagner wished for a social revolution, believing that only then would a rebirth of society and of art be possible. As he wrote in such tracts as 'Art and Revolution' and 'The Artwork of the Future', art had become a privilege of the wealthy; if capitalist, industrial society were abolished, then the people would be able to listen to music in a suitably respectful way once more.[5] Henry Raynor comments that 'the revolutionary Wagner... was simply a revolutionary composer looking for the society which would make it possible for him to realise his mission.'[6] For Wagner, art after the Revolution would become a communal experience, binding the people together, and thus bringing true spiritual values back into society.[7]

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[4] Leon Botstein, *Music and its Public: Habits of Listening and the Crisis of Musical Modernism in Vienna, 1870-1914* (Ph.D. diss., University of Harvard, 1985), 32.

[5] See Martin Gregor-Dellin, *Richard Wagner: His Life, His Work, His Century,* trans. J. Maxwell Brownjohn (London: Collins, 1983), 153, 188, 192 & 217.

[6] Henry Raynor, *Music and Society since 1815* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1976), 34.

[7] Gregor-Dellin, *Richard Wagner,* 215-217, and Raynor, *Music and Society,* 33. Nineteenth-century writers, particularly of the *Junges Deutschland* school held a similar philosophy, believing in the importance of social revolution in order to bring about an improved place for art (Herbert Marcuse, 'Der deutsche Künstlerroman', in *Schriften,* Band I (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978), 182).

Other nineteenth-century composers paralleled Wagner in their wish to educate the populace while simultaneously maintaining a superior position for music itself and hinting that art could never be truly comprehended by many. Berlioz's self-organised concerts, for example, were generally staged to appeal to a wide audience, something in the manner of extravaganzas; however, he also helped to cultivate the Romantic myth, with his belief that the great composer is inevitably misunderstood and neglected, having to defend himself against philistines.[8] Berlioz was distrustful of the public, writing of 'the stultification of the majority of the public, its lack of understanding in matters of imagination and the heart, its love of brilliant platitudes, the vulgarity of all its melodic and rhythmic instincts'.[9] Liszt, in a similar way to Wagner, saw the artist as a kind of high-priest, bringing the religion of art to the people. In his manifesto 'Zur Stellung der Künstler' ('On the Position of the Artist'), he argued for establishment of music schools and libraries, for conventions of musicians and prizes for works, cheap editions of great music, 'and, in general, took his stand against the inferior quality of public criticism and the ravages of poor instruction'.[10] In contrast, though, he demonstrated his view that art, so far, is not for the whole people, but for a select few, writing in his preface to the 'Album d'un voyageur, Années de Pèlerinage' (Book 1 (1842)), 'I address myself rather to the individual than the crowd, hoping not for success but for the patience of those few who believe that art has a destiny other than that of whiling away a few empty hours, those who ask of her something more than the mindless distraction of fleeting amusement.'[11]

In the nineteenth century, art could occupy a variety of positions in its relationship to society: it could be revered for its quasi-religious significance, or

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According to Botstein, Wagner simultaneously believed in the difficulties an artist faced in finding understanding from the world around him, and saw 'a dialectic of necessary opposition between the public and art' *(Music and its Public,* 32).

[8] Raynor, *Music and Society since 1815,* 23.

[9] Quoted in William Weber, 'Wagner, Wagnerism, and Musical Idealism', in David C. Large & William Weber, eds., *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1984), 44.

[10] Alfred Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1947), 347. Also see 31.

[11] Quoted in Peter Le Huray and James Day, *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries* (Abridged Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 365.

used solely for the purposes of entertainment; it could be allowed to rest on its higher plane undisturbed, or attempts might be made to bring about a broader understanding of its wonders. At the same time as many artists cultivated a rarefied devotion to art, though, they could also appreciate the realities of the world around them: economic growth which had provided financial support for the arts, as well as the expansion of education and the benefits of modern technology.[12] Moreover, as Leon Botstein points out, composers were less often ignored than the Romantic aesthetic suggested; even if a composer met with resistance to his or her works at first, it was a relatively short amount of time, within a few decades, before this opinion changed.[13] At the same time as nineteenth-century artists felt themselves misunderstood by the public, this same public wished to venerate the geniuses both of the past and of the present.

The creation of the Romantic myth of the isolated artist, and the positions composers themselves took towards their society at this time, were rooted both in aesthetics and in a variety of sociological phenomena which took place during the century. These have been investigated by Botstein, who discusses socio-economic factors which arose during the course of the nineteenth century and which helped to foster an apparent split between composer and audience. During the nineteenth century, musical life became more institutionalised, with the establishment of civic organisations designed to hold concerts and to provide an educational opportunity for the public.[14] As a result, the concert became more significant in the relationship between public and art music than had previously been the case, and the audience for such concerts grew both in size and in the range of social classes attending; public performance also became increasingly professionalised and

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[12] Rey M. Longyear, *Nineteenth-century Romanticism in Music* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988), 11.

[13] Botstein, *Music and its Public,* 26 ff. Also see Jim Samson, 'Music and Society', in Samson, ed., *The Late Romantic Era: From the mid-19th Century to World War I* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 40 ff.

[14] Botstein, *Music and its Public,* 8 & 81-82. Although Botstein's study is specifically centred on Vienna, his work nevertheless holds good for the musical climate of Europe in this era more generally. Also on the growth of urbanisation and its effects on music, see Longyear, *Nineteenth-century Romanticism in Music,* 3 & 333-334.

commercialised.[15] Taste in music was shaped by two further factors: the ubiquity of the piano in music education and as the predominant means of music-making in the home, with a corresponding standardisation of repertoire, and the increase in writing about music by professionals, which became 'essential and crucial avenues for the acquisition and maintenance of musical taste for the music lover and concertgoer'.[16]

Rather than having a positive effect for 'progressive' composers, though, Botstein writes that the consequence of these changes during the nineteenth century was the 'museumization of classical music' - a canonisation of an established repertoire with which the public felt familiar, and through which they felt part of an educated and sophisticated class.[17] Amateurs came to have 'a special sense of competence', because they played the same repertoire as they heard in professional concerts, in arrangements and simplifications.[18] The conjunction of amateurism with expanding numbers of public concerts meant that classical music 'developed a wider-ranging public whose sense of expertise was non-trivial and hard-earned... That one "understood" music as an art revealed some special achievement'.[19] As a result, Botstein argues, any composer who wrote music which challenged these expectations was likely to find himself or herself marginalised. The public 'did not take lightly any attempt to snub it or to challenge its hard-earned and special self-image as musically knowledgeable and highly cultured.... It was sensitive to insult and took evident umbrage at a young composer's seeming unwillingness to speak a musical language with which it was familiar and which it associated with the tradition of great classical music.'[20] By the late nineteenth century, therefore, composers potentially found themselves in a position of increasing isolation, particularly if they wished to reach beyond the conventions of musical style; this position both reinforced and contributed to the image of the isolated Romantic artist.

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[15] Botstein, *Music and its Public,* 9-10.
[16] Ibid., 10.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., 84.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., 86.

Artist and Society in the Early Twentieth Century

After the formulation and widespread acceptance of an aesthetic viewpoint during the nineteenth century which gave a privileged position to 'Art', and where artists called their relationship to the world increasingly into question, the period around the *fin-de-siècle* gave rise to cultural and sociological phenomena which seemed to add new urgency to the issue of an artist's interaction with society. In the decades around and following World War I, composers took various positions regarding the Romantic ideal of the Artist, from outright rejection, in those composers happy to be popular, to an even more extreme extension of the myth amongst the modernists. The split between popular and 'art' musics, which had begun to take place during the previous century, continued, and according to many was exacerbated by many of the profound changes in musical life, and in society more generally, which took place at this time. Simultaneously, many early twentieth-century artists followed the logic of the nineteenth-century ideal, and deliberately pursued their own solitary aims. Disdain for the audience in these circles became more explicit, and composers such as Schoenberg expressed the view that it was up to the audience to follow the artist's path, rather than vice versa. In addition, there were other cultural factors which contributed to how artists saw their position in society.

The early twentieth century saw an unprecedented change in the structure of Western society. What Marshall Berman calls 'the maelstrom of modern life' was set in motion through technological advances and increased industrialisation, which led to demographic upheaval, rapid urbanisation and the destruction of old environments.[21] The structure of everyday life altered, with an increase in the tempo of existence, the generation of an increasingly capitalistic and corporate economy, and the advent of systems of mass communication. In addition to these material changes, previous intellectual paradigms were being challenged, and replaced, from the latter part of the nineteenth century, with such innovations as those of Darwin, what Nietzsche called the 'death of God', and the shift in ideas

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[21] Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982), 16.

about individual identity provoked by Freud.[22] While some of these phenomena had their roots in the nineteenth century, others were specific to the early twentieth century or an even more closely definable period such as the 1920s. Contributing to the sense of upheaval were specific political events, such as the first World War, and the 1918 revolution in Germany and subsequent founding of the Weimar Republic. Wilfried van der Will writes of the twenties that 'nowhere had the modernization process occurred with such haste as in Germany. In the space of two generations industrialization, urbanization and mass society, the anonymity of mechanized warfare, the overthrow of the monarchy, the establishment of republican democracy, the advent of ideological pluralism, and the rationalization of large parts of the economy had all followed in rapid succession.... If Germany had initially lagged behind in all the major developments which brought about modernity, it made up for lost ground through the intensity of the process of catching up.'[23]

These rapid changes in society naturally had an effect on the individuals who lived through them. Some people could accept the shifts which were taking place with excitement and enthusiasm, but for many this was a time of dangerous uncertainty and crisis, and even those who were less hostile than others to modern innovation could still feel unsettled by the pace of change around them. The early twentieth-century response to the contemporary alterations in society has been summed up by many later historians of the period as one of crisis and alienation, in which modernity was frequently seen as dangerous to the moral and spiritual well-being of the world. Detlev Peukert, for instance, points to this traumatic experience of modernity in his book, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity,* while van der Will comments that the process of modernization 'exacted a profound psychological price and inflicted on German society traumatic

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[22] Ibid., 21; Christopher Butler, *Early Modernism: Literature, Music, and Painting in Europe, 1900-1916* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 89; Jacques Le Rider, *Modernity and Crises of Identity: Culture and Society in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna,* trans. Rosemary Morris (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 31. Jim Samson says that Freud's achievement 'was magnificently expressive of the universal change in interpretative perspective which accompanied modernity' ('Music and Society', 44).

[23] van der Will, 'Culture and the Organization of National Socialist Ideology 1933 to 1945', in Rob Burns, ed., *German Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 105.

experiences in a crisis where everything that was modern appeared only to spell political and social division, alienation, and proletarianization.'[24] The sweeping changes in society had an effect on the social position of composers and musicians, which was accompanied by a shift within the language of music itself. In combination, these two factors added to a sense amongst many that composers needed to redefine their place in the world.

The perception of a crisis in musical life between composer and audience in the years around and following World War I can be seen in the frequent discussions about the problem by composers and writers. In 1922, Egon Wellesz traced the contemporary predicament back to the years preceding the war, expressing his belief that the contemporary situation had arisen as the result of earlier trends: 'What we are experiencing today, what divides our time, our feelings, our experience from that of earlier epochs is the crisis of the individual. Romanticism cultivated it, and the time at the turn of the century led it to its highest intensification; we see its fruit, the fruit of this excess, in the spiritual and material devastation which we experience everywhere.'[25] Max Hofmüller, discussing opera, attributed the problem to the emergence of numerous musical styles: 'The diversity of styles had to lead to a levelling.... the most important appearances of inner illness *(inneren Krankheitserscheinungen)* are to be found in the splintering of styles. It brings opera into danger of losing its strongest and most beautiful power: to awaken the listener's experience of their soul.'[26] Josef Dasatiel pointed out that the wish by composers to go to 'extremes', which had begun at the turn of the century, had helped to give rise to an economic crisis in the music industry as a whole. Larger and more expensive orchestras were demanded, which resulted in

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[24] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity,* trans. Richard Deveson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991); van der Will, 'Culture and the Organization of National Socialist Ideology', 105.

[25] Wellesz, 'Der Musiker und diese Zeit', *Anbruch* 4/1-2 (1922), 3. Also see Susan Cook, *Opera for a New Republic: The Zeitopern of Krenek, Weill and Hindemith* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), 3 & 9-10.

[26] Hofmüller, 'Opernkrise und Stilpflege', *Anbruch* 9/1-2 (1927), 30.

higher ticket prices that could not be afforded by the middle classes, and the costs of the event were therefore not covered.[27]

Other economic and cultural factors came into play following 1918 which further changed the cultural environment for composers. The effects of the 1918 revolution in Germany and the hyperinflationary period of the early twenties had the effect of altering the audience for art music, bringing about what was called the *Umschichtung* of society, the rearrangement of the constitution of social classes. Michael Walter comments that the middle-class public were less able to afford to go to concerts and opera during the inflationary period, and were effectively 'dispossessed'.[28] A contemporary writer, Paul A. Pisk, commented that this process of *Umschichtung* had begun in the last third of the previous century, but had become ever stronger, and was 'particularly hastened' during the war and the inflation. 'The middle class, the art-consuming majority *(Masse)* at that time, has since then disintegrated, a course of events which was brought about by the history of the economy.'[29] The 'devastation', as Wellesz termed it, was described by Kurt Weill, who said that concert life in big cities was 'useless, unworkable... [it] has had its day'; the music industry 'has become unprofitable', and virtuosos 'appear every evening before empty halls.'[30] Parallel views were expressed about the situation of opera. Hugo Leichtentritt said that the severe financial situation following the war 'endangers the prosperity of opera to a degree which must disturb all true friends of dramatic music.... German opera is now threatening to die off slowly.'[31] Similarly, Hofmüller commented that 'the economic conditions and the reorganisation of the classes *(Umschichtung)* in our society after the war brought about our critical condition in opera.'[32]

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[27] Dr. Jos. A. Dasatiel [sic], 'Die musikalischen Krisen der Gegenwart', *Anbruch* 3/17-18 (1921), 304 - 305.

[28] Walter, *Hitler in der Oper: Deutsches Musikleben 1919-1945* (Stuttgart & Weimar: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 1995), 106-107.

[29] Pisk, 'Das neue Publikum', *Anbruch* 9/1-2 (1927), 94.

[30] Weill, 'Fort vom Durchschnitt! Zur Krise der musikalischen Interpretation' *(Berliner Börsen-Courier,* 29.8.25), in *Musik und Theater: Gesammelte Schriften,* ed. Stephen Hinton & Jürgen Schebera (Berlin: Henschelverlag Kunst und Gesellschaft, 1990), 22.

[31] Leichtentritt, 'Die deutsche Opernbühne und der künstlerische Nachwuchs', *Anbruch* 8/5 (1926), 217 & 220. Also see Michael Walter, *Hitler in der Oper,* 101 ff.

[32] Hofmüller, 'Opernkrise und Stilpflege', 30.

A number of other significant developments in musical life at this time helped to reshape the landscape within which composers worked. One of the most significant of these during the years leading up to World War II was the apparently irresistible rise of popular music. This was significantly affected by the impact of new technology, which had a considerable impact on composers' perceptions of their roles. Especially in the years following the first World War, technological advances had immediate and tangible consequences. Gottfried Wagner writes that 'the thrillingly quick technical developments at this time opened up new paths; at the same time, *the* problem of this century became ever clearer with it: the confrontation of the artist with the mass in the context of industrial society. The development of mass media... forced one to confront this phenomenon.'[33] Recording was the most well-established of the new technologies: while the very first recording dated back as far as 1857, the modern recording industry was established in 1877, when Edison invented the phonograph. Commercial recordings were available from 1888, and the gramophone gradually became more and more popular, with many homes possessing one by the early 1920s.[34] Improvements in technology, especially the change from acoustic to electric recording in 1923, made the recording process easier and more lifelike, resulting in cheaper, better quality recordings.[35] Recordings redefined the musical environment and the audience for music, and therefore had an impact on the perceived position of the composer within society. They were likely to be of popular music, in order to appeal to a mass audience, precisely the people from whom the contemporary composer felt isolated; alternatively, they would be recordings of 'classics', thereby exacerbating the problem of a 'museumised' established repertoire outlined by Botstein.[36]

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[33] Wagner, *Weill und Brecht: Das musikalische Zeittheater* (Munich: Kindler Verlag, 1977), 25.

[34] 'Sound Recording', in Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* vol. 17. Also 'Gramophone' in ibid., vol. 7.

[35] Christopher Hailey, *Franz Schreker, 1878-1934: A cultural biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 229.

[36] The competition of radio, recording and film also had a significant impact on performing musicians; see Joel Sachs, 'Some Aspects of Musical Politics in pre-Nazi Germany', *Perspectives of New Music* 9/1 (Fall-Winter 1970), 94.

Recording also changed the psychological relationship to music, which now became an 'object' to be possessed, rather than an event.[37]

Other technologies contributed to this changing landscape. Radio was a more recent phenomenon than recording, dating from Marconi's experiments in 1896. The first public broadcasting stations were not established until several decades later: the BBC was the first station in Europe, in 1922, with Germany following in 1923 (the first Berlin station) and 1924 (in other German cities).[38] Christopher Hailey writes that radio was 'the most far-reaching post-war development' in technology, and that its 'enormous potential - as well as significant limitations - had a profound impact upon the relationship between musicians and audiences'.[39] Another important technological development was film. Both silent film and the later arrival of sound film (in 1927) impacted on the professional musician: both kinds of film required music in some form, thereby potentially offering employment. However, at the same time, the cut-rate ticket prices available to cinema-goers meant that this new form of entertainment was in direct competition with older traditions, such as the opera and the concert, and had the added attraction of its novelty.[40] The new technology meant that the future for musicians was less certain: a piece of music need only be recorded once, and then existed independently of the performer. This threatened the livelihood of musicians, who feared that they might now be expendable, at the same time as it offered practical opportunities.

The new technology was seen to exacerbate the problems brought about by the difficult economic situation. Weill, for instance, points not only to changes in material conditions, the impoverishment of people interested in music and a surplus of artistic performances, but also to the radio, 'which lures the masses through its

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[37] See Michael Chanan, *Repeated Takes: A Short History of Recording and its Effects on Music* (London: Verso, 1995).

[38] 'Broadcasting', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* vol. 3. For statistics about radio in Germany, see Peukert, *The Weimar Republic,* 171 and Hailey, *Franz Schreker,* 230.

[39] Hailey, 'Rethinking Sound: Music and Radio in Weimar Germany', in Bryan Gilliam, ed., *Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic* (Cambridge Studies in Performance Practice 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 13.

[40] Bryan Gilliam, 'Stage and Screen: Kurt Weill and Operatic Reform in the 1920s', in Gilliam, ed., *Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic,* 1.

convenience, cheapness, and through the appeal of the new.'[41] Leichtentritt made a parallel observation: 'German theatres suffer not only because of the economic depression; the *Umschichtung* of the public, the impoverishment of the educated middle class, the taste of the broader circle of the people which has become raw, [and] the concurrence of cinema and radio, help to pull the ground away from under the operatic stage.'[42] Contemporary critics were eager to discuss the implications of the new technology, and many saw it as a threat to the existing musical order. Alfred Baresel said that the danger of technology and broadcasting for 'real' art was not grounded in the specific characteristics of the technology itself, but in a 'striving for comfort' on the part of the public.[43] One of the most well-known detractors from technology was the philosopher T.W. Adorno, who had a similar view to Baresel, and reviled what he would later call the 'culture industry', which 'has educated its victims to avoid straining themselves during the free time allotted to them for intellectual consumption'.[44] Schoenberg too expressed many reservations about the new technological advances: in 1930, he declared 'Quite certainly the radio is a foe! - and so are the gramophone and soundfilm.... opposition is a hopeless prospect.' Schoenberg objected to the radio because it 'accustoms the ear to an unspeakable coarse tone', and resulted in a 'boundless surfeit of music', which 'will lead to a state where all music has been consumed, worn out.'[45]

Others, though, were more positive, for example Leichtentritt, who saw new technology as playing an important role in the dissemination of music: 'What the individual can no longer play himself at home will be played by professional artists to the hundreds of thousands, who can absorb it comfortably at their leisure at home.' Artists were therefore presented with an opportunity: it must be 'a concern of interested circles to ensure that an intelligent choice of works' is presented, so

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[41] Weill, 'Fort vom Durchschnitt!', 22. However, Weill also believed that radio offered interesting new opportunities to composers.

[42] Leichtentritt, 'Die deutsche Opernbühne', 220. Also see Walter, *Hitler in der Oper,* 108.

[43] Baresel, 'Kunst, Technik und Publikum', *Anbruch* 8/2 (1926), 61.

[44] Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1973), 10.

[45] Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg,* ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), 147.

that 'repeated hearing of important works at appropriate intervals' is made possible. This would in time produce 'repercussions for our desolate concert life. In the long run, radio and gramophone are only a substitute for a real performance', so as a result, the 'now well-prepared amateurs', who have become familiar with a work through frequent hearings at home, will 'gladly go to hear it in the concert hall.'[46] Many composers saw technology as an opportunity; even Schoenberg, despite his frequent misgivings, could see its uses. In 1930, he wrote to the *Intendant* of Berlin Radio that it would be 'a very good idea' to have a series of broadcasts 'with the title *Propaganda* for New Music', with 'elucidatory talks' as well as performances, which would 'help to create a basis of understanding'.[47] In the same year, he wrote his *Begleitungsmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene,* a short accompaniment to an imaginary film.

Other composers also wrote specifically for new technology, for instance Schreker, Weill and Hindemith, while it was also given a place in many operas of the era, for instance the radio in Krenek's *Jonny spielt auf* and the gramophone in Weill's *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren.* Schreker's experiments are discussed by Hailey in his essay 'Rethinking Sound: Music and Radio in Weimar Germany'. Hailey demonstrates how the limitations of the radio medium - its weak projection of bass lines and the way in which some instruments became indistinguishable in timbre from others - affected the musical style of the works Schreker wrote as radio commissions.[48] In 1927, Hindemith helped to institute a department to work with radio at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin, where he was a professor, and also wrote film music and music for mechanical instruments.[49] Weill was particularly interested in new technology, and wrote for the magazine *Der deutsche Rundfunk* between January 1925 and May 1929.[50] He frequently expressed a positive opinion about technology: an interview with Weill in 1927 reported that the composer was

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[46] Leichtentritt, 'Konzertierende Künstler und zeitgenössische Musik', *Anbruch* 8/6 (1926), 279.

[47] Schoenberg, *Letters,* ed. Erwin Stein, trans. Eithne Wilkins & Ernst Kaiser (London: Faber & Faber, 1964), 137 (Feb./March 1930). Schoenberg's emphasis.

[48] Hailey, 'Rethinking Sound', passim.

[49] Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 21.

[50] Stephen Hinton & Jürgen Schebera, 'Editorische Vorbemerkung', in Weill, *Musik und Theater,* 163-165.

of the opinion that 'today, all young creative musicians must engage with the question of how film music is created', while in 1926 he commented that the radio has become 'one of the most important factors of modern public life.'[51] Weill goes on to say that he can understand why both creative and performing musicians could see radio as a threat, but counters that radio has an important place in the reorganisation of musical life, taking music out of the exclusive world of the well-off, and bringing it to the majority of people who are 'musically dispossessed.'[52]

Whether the reaction to it was one of enthusiastic embrace or categorical rejection, technology had a considerable impact on composers' standing towards society during the 1920s, and helped to redefine their relationship to their audiences. Another important cultural development which took place at this time, and through which some composers similarly reoriented themselves towards particular audiences, was the attempt made by political movements during the early decades of the century to bring music to the 'people'. Of primary importance here are the Music Movements of the Socialist and Communist parties, in both Germany and Austria, which had been founded during the 1890s. These movements boasted a large membership; for instance, the Socialist party's *Deutscher Arbeiter-Sängerbund* (German Workers' Singers League), founded in 1908, became one of biggest organisations of its kind in world in the 1920s, reaching a membership of 440,000 in 1928.[53] The *Arbeiter-Theater-Bund* (Workers' Theatre League) was even larger, boasting 600,000 members. Similar cultural activities included *Buchgemeinschaften* ('book communities'), and an *Arbeiter-Radio-Klub* (Workers' Radio Club), as well as numerous sporting societies.[54]

The aims of the Social Democratic Party *(Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands,* or SPD) and the Communists in instituting these organisations diverged. Somewhat in a spirit of paternal benevolence, the SPD organised musical

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[51] Weill, 'Musikalische Illustration oder Filmmusik?' *(Film-Kurier,* 13.10.27), *Musik und Theater,* 297; 'Der Rundfunk und die Umschichtung des Musiklebens' *(Der deutsche Rundfunk,* 13.6.26), *Musik und Theater,* 221.

[52] Ibid., 223. In an earlier article about the radio, he writes that it has brought about a revitalisation of musical life ('Die Stellung des Rundfunks innerhalb des Musiklebens' *(Der deutsche Rundfunk,* 21.6.25), *Musik und Theater,* 191).

[53] Pamela M. Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998), 5; Jost Hermand & Frank Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik* (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1978), 124 & 342.

[54] Ibid., 124.

activities, such as orchestras and especially choirs, in working-class districts in an effort to educate the ordinary people about classical music. Their repertoire consisted chiefly of art-music of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.[55] R. John Specht writes that 'the fundamental principle underlying efforts to organize the proletariat was one of "highmindedness mingled with social puritanism". There was a belief that, if the worker was sober, well read, and "cultured", he would come to understand the undesirable position of his own class within the empire and would certainly then join the struggle for a socialist society.'[56] Many of these SPD-affiliated groups had a large membership, and their conductors were sometimes renowned musicians: both Schoenberg and Webern, for instance, conducted workers' choruses for a time.[57] (Webern's choruses even took part in some Schoenberg premieres, such as for the *Gurrelieder.*[58]) With their belief in the value of educating the populace to the virtues of art, these socialist movements may be seen as an attempt to put into practice the philosophies of Wagner and Liszt regarding the artist's function to serve as an art-priest, who administers to the public.

The activities organised under the aegis of the Communist party, in contrast to those of the SPD, took a more obviously political line from the early years of the Weimar Republic, for instance with their agit-prop theatre productions.[59] The Communists were often critical of SPD organisations such as the *Arbeiter-Sängerbund,* seeing them as pandering to the taste of the bourgeoisie instead of agitating for real political reform. Writing in 1931, Hanns Eisler described the repertoire of the Social Democratic movement and dismissed its ideological implications: 'The reformist musical activity of the Social Democrats is only the cheap noise-making *(Abklatsch)* of the bourgeois middle class. They are for concert

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[55] Hermand and Trommler say, for instance, that an extensive part of the repertoire of the *Arbeiter-Sängerbund* was 'bourgeois men's chorus music *(bürgerliche Männergesangsvereinmusik)* of the nineteenth century' (ibid., 342). Also see Potter, *Most German of the Arts,* 6.

[56] Specht, 'Schoenberg Among the Workers: Choral Conducting in pre-1900 Vienna', *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 10/1 (1987), 29.

[57] Schoenberg conducted men's choruses in the towns of Stockerau, Meidling and Mödling, and wrote at least one song for them, 'Aus den "Flüchtlingssonetten vom Jahr 1849" von Ludwig Pfau', in 1897; see Albrecht Dümling, '"Im Zeichen der Erkenntnis der socialen Verhältnisse": Der junge Schönberg und die Arbeitersängerbewegung in Österreich', *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 36/2 (Feb. 1981), 71. Webern conducted the Schubertbund (1921-2), the Vienna Workers' Symphony Concerts (1922-34), the Mödling Male Chorus (1921-6) and the Vienna Workers' Chorus (1923-34) (Paul Griffiths, 'Webern', in *The New Grove: Second Viennese School* (London: Macmillan, 1980), 90). For Schoenberg's later attitude to his time conducting these choirs, see *Style and Idea,* 505-506.

[58] Alban Berg & Arnold Schoenberg, *The Berg-Schoenberg Correspondence: Selected Letters,* ed. Juliane Brand, Christopher Hailey & Donald Harris (London: Macmillan, 1987), 381.

[59] Hermand & Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik,* 125.

music and for [Fritz] Jöde and for Stravinsky and for Richard Strauss. They are, generally, for everything.'[60] Of the *Arbeiter-Sängerbund,* he said that the organisation 'stands under the leadership of reformism and the petty-bourgeoisie... Their political art *(Tendenzkunst)* is petty-bourgeois, red-tinted music-material. Their position is more reactionary than progressive.'[61] Other amateur organisations also flourished at this time which had no direct involvement with political parties, but which nevertheless betrayed clear political standpoints. The *Deutscher Sängerbund,* for example, unlike its counterpart the *Deutscher-Arbeiter-Sängerbund,* was nominally independent of political organisations, but nevertheless saw itself as fostering a German identity through music. Its charter of 1927 stated its goal as 'the proliferation and refinement of German male choral singing and the promotion of German feeling.... Through the unifying power of German song [the organization] hopes to preserve and enhance the German national consciousness and a feeling of solidarity among German tribes.'[62] The *Deutscher Sängerbund* had a membership far exceeding that of its socialist rival; in 1929 it possessed at least 1.3 million members, spread throughout 13,000 choirs.

If the socialist music movement followed the lead of nineteenth-century composers by seeking to educate the people through art, another important aspect of the nineteenth-century attitude to art was to have its implications carried further into the now-stereotyped image of the artist. The Romantic cult of Art as Religion became of prime importance to the generation of modernists, and it is here where the belief in the necessity of the artist's separation from society became well and truly confirmed. These composers - whose views have, arguably, dominated the musical landscape ever since - had a highly ambivalent, and often hostile, relationship to their potential audiences, and, following the nineteenth-century lead, saw popularity as antithetical to true artistry. In his discussion of nineteenth-century 'Wagnerism', William Weber suggests that the roots of this characteristically modernist position lay in the Wagnerians' assertion of the controversial and progressive nature of modern music, which to them was a positive indication of quality. 'By associating forward-looking styles with the highest musical principles, they established the primary justification for

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[60] Quoted in ibid., 342.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Quoted in Potter, *Most German of the Arts,* 5.

contemporary avant-garde music.'[63] In the Wagnerian movement itself, especially in Vienna, a split emerged which reflected a wider debate and which would continue into the twentieth century. This was the rift between those who, following Wagner's own philosophy, wished to expand the audience for concerts, and those who were devoted to supporting the newest music, unconcerned with whether or not an audience existed for it. Weber writes that this latter trend became stronger as the century came to a close: 'During the 1890s there began a powerful tendency for avant-garde musicians to radically reject public taste and to define a separate role for themselves both socially and musically.... in this way one strand of musical idealism diverged into a radical form of modernism.'[64] The perception of the relationship between artist and society as specifically problematic thus became firmly established in the early decades of the twentieth century; this tendency has arguably influenced younger composers, and has dominated the writing of music history, ever since.

Many of the modernist composers of the *fin-de-siècle* decades were suspicious of any wish for wide public acceptance. Jim Samson says that modernism 'took the form of an inward-looking crisis of expression, alienated from the public, jealous of the integrity of art and protective of its "truthfulness".'[65] This self-conscious estrangement became manifest in the works of the leading modernist composers in Germany and Austria, the prime example being Schoenberg, and arose as a reaction to the cultural circumstances of the time, as well as following the aesthetics inherited from the nineteenth century. Reinhold Brinkmann has argued that Schoenberg's atonal music is not only part of a music-historical process, but was the 'reflection of a very specific and problematic historical, social, cultural and psychical situation' of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. Schoenberg's music is 'at once a subject of this state of mind and its complex symbolic representation'.[66]

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[63] Weber, 'Wagner, Wagnerism', 63.

[64] Ibid., 68. Also see 29.

[65] Samson, 'Music and Society', 43. Samson is here discussing the situation in Vienna specifically, but as German-speaking countries were in many ways unified in cultural terms at this time, his comments can be taken as indicative of the situation throughout Germany and Austria.

[66] Brinkmann, 'Schoenberg the Contemporary: A View from Behind', in Juliane Brand & Christopher Hailey, eds., *Constructive Dissonance: Arnold Schoenberg and the Transformations of*

Many of Schoenberg's Expressionist works, for instance *Erwartung* or *Die glückliche Hand,* feature characters in a traumatic situation, and display a turning-inward that seems to leave little room for consideration of the outside world; Brinkmann notes that *Erwartung* is a *mono*-drama.[67] Schoenberg's pupil Berg engaged with the same theme of isolation in his opera *Wozzeck.*

According to Brinkmann, Schoenberg's introspection 'could be demonstrated in compositional terms'; he cites Schoenberg's 'antimonumental, antisymphonic poetics of the "critical years" around 1910.' Schoenberg withdrew from large genres and the complicated formal constructions of the Viennese and German tradition, instead writing 'lyrical genres such as lied and character piece'.[68] Brinkmann calls these works, along with the comparable short pieces by Berg and especially Webern, 'intense moments of inwardness'. Jonathan Dunsby writes on the same theme, commenting of *Pierrot Lunaire* that the *commedia dell'arte* figures were employed by writers of the era because 'their disembodiment, usually as marionettes or puppets; and their lack of rootedness... symbolized the cruel alienation of the times.'[69] Not only Schoenberg's compositions but also his paintings point to his estrangement; Brinkmann says that his series of paintings of eyes are 'pictorial realizations' of the '"cry of despair" of the isolated individual', while his 'Self-Portrait from Behind' similarly stresses the subject's rejection of his surrounding environment, with his back turned to the viewer.[70] Perhaps the quintessential example from Schoenberg's oeuvre of a work dealing with individual isolation is his *Moses und Aron,* although unlike some of his other works, this opera deliberately explores the place of such an individual within society through the contrast of the prophet Moses, who is in contact with

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Twentieth-Century Culture (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1997), 197.

[67] Ibid., 200. Adorno called *Erwartung* a '"case study" in anxiety and loneliness' (quoted in Robert W. Witkin, *Adorno on Music* (London & New York: Routledge, 1998), 131).

[68] Brinkmann, 'Schoenberg the Contemporary', 200.

[69] Dunsby, *Schoenberg: Pierrot Lunaire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 7.

[70] Brinkmann, 'Schoenberg the Contemporary', 199 & 202. This is even more apparent in an early sketch for the painting which Brinkmann discusses, in which Schoenberg is surrounded by, yet isolated from, a city landscape.

God yet cannot express his vision, with Aron, who can communicate with the people but distorts the message in doing so.[71]

Schoenberg's belief that isolation was necessary for true art is a theme accentuated in his writings throughout his life, for instance in his well-known comment from 1946 that 'if it is art, it is not for all, and if it is for all, it is not art';[72] it found practical expression in his Society for Private Musical Performances. A similar sentiment was expressed by Schoenberg's contemporary, Busoni, who wrote that 'it is absolutely necessary for one to have the highest ideals to be able to appreciate the highest things. The artist should therefore receive money to be able to avoid popularity, since it is only in relative isolation that he can continue to aim at higher things.'[73] In his revealingly titled essay of 1937, 'How One Becomes Lonely', Schoenberg expresses his belief that his adoption of serialism, which led to his increased isolation, was a matter of necessity, compelled, it seems, by higher forces. 'While composing for me had been a pleasure, now it became a duty. I knew I had to fulfil a task; I had to express what was necessary to be expressed and I knew I had the duty of developing my ideas for the sake of progress in music, whether I liked it or not; but I also had to realize that the great majority of the public did not like it.'[74] At the same time, Schoenberg gives indications that he is ambivalent towards his audiences and their reactions to his music. In 'My Public' of 1930, he contends that it is only a 'small but active "expert" minority' which objects to his music during concerts.[75] On the contrary, he says, the public 'as a whole... [is] always rather inclined to enjoy something they have devoted time and money to', and goes on to report the positive reactions he has received towards his music from an army sergeant, a night porter, a taxi driver, a hired man and a lift man.[76]

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[71] This contrast between individual and society has even led some writers, for instance John Bokina, to hold that *Moses und Aron* is a *Künstleroper,* despite the fact that Moses is not an artist. Bokina makes no attempt to justify this inclusion, and instead misleadingly implies, for anyone who does not know the opera, that Moses really is an artist: he says that the opera poses 'the problem of the estrangement of the artist from society in the sharpest possible terms... [and] suggests that the reconciliation of the artist and society cannot be resolved in art' ('Resignation, Retreat and Impotence: The Aesthetics and Politics of the Modern German Artist-Opera', *Cultural Critique* 9 (Spring 1988), 183).

[72] Schoenberg, *Style and Idea,* 124.

[73] Busoni, *Selected Letters,* trans., ed. and intro. Antony Beaumont (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 211 (18.8.15).

[74] Schoenberg, *Style and Idea,* 53.

[75] Ibid., 97.

[76] Ibid., 98.

Schoenberg's pronouncements are typical of a tendency which was to become more significant as the twentieth century progressed, and of which he was one of the earliest representatives. This is the inclination to see art as necessarily separate from society if it is to be 'true', and, concomitantly, the requirement that the artist himself or herself remain apart from the world. Peter Franklin writes that Schoenberg's attitude towards the image of the nineteenth-century artist 'took on an increasingly repressive role, casting doubt upon the continuing value and even the possibility of the art he had inherited'.[77] Modernist composers followed the implications of the idea of a transcendent Art, inherited from the previous century, and in doing so, disregarded the potential, and actual, effects this would have upon their public. 'By rejecting the bourgeois audience that had created the social possibility of nineteenth-century music, [the radical artist] condemned himself to the role of the uncomprehended outsider, with only ironic counterfeits, mystic invocations and penitential silences with which to beg his keep from those same consumers of art that he had previously rejected.'[78] One of the principal exponents of this aesthetic doctrine was Adorno, who made the imperative isolation of modern art a cornerstone of his theory. According to Adorno, the crisis of modernity was characterised by the disjunction between the individual and society, with society holding a dominant position over the powerless subject. The measure of the truth-value of an artwork lay in how far it was able to reproduce this disparity within itself.[79] Modern artworks must, therefore, be autonomous from society if they are to be 'true', as only then can they reflect society as it is, and avoid becoming a 'commodity'; autonomy must be achieved through the use of a complex, 'difficult' musical surface.[80] Robert W. Witkin writes that 'the utter bleakness and remoteness of so many works of modernist art were integral to their truth-value, as Adorno saw it.... the very autonomy of serious music, its potential for critical opposition to modern society and to the ideological underpinning of that society depended crucially upon its inaccessibility.'[81] Adorno viewed Schoenberg's music in particular as fulfilling his criteria for 'true' art, even if, simultaneously, he was sceptical about the twelve-tone technique.[82]

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[77] Franklin, *The Idea of Music: Schoenberg and Others* (London: Macmillan, 1985), 161.
[78] Ibid., 164.
[79] Witkin, *Adorno on Music,* 4.
[80] Martin Jay, *Adorno* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 159.
[81] Witkin, *Adorno on Music,* 11. Also see 17.
[82] See ibid., 132.

The dominance of modernism in the history of twentieth century music, and concomitantly the perpetuation of an aesthetic which demands the spiritual, and even practical, isolation of the artist, has often disguised the fact that this aesthetic has never been a given, but has been hotly contested, especially in the early years of the twentieth century.[83] While the Schoenbergian and Adornian army may have won the battle, it was not the only participant. Other composers engaged with the theme of the place of the artist in society during these years and, as we will see, produced widely varying critiques. In the years following the first World War, we may discern a population of composers which took disparate stances towards the problem of art and society. Broadly speaking, these groups ranged from the most conservative, in both style and outlook, including Pfitzner and Richard Strauss (at least discounting the latter's brief foray into the avant-garde with *Salome* and *Elektra),* through the Second Viennese School, to the youngest composers, who only became active after the war, such as Hindemith, Weill and Krenek. In their various ways, all of these composers took up distinctive positions towards the question of art and society, whether by actively engaging with it, or by trying to ignore it. By turning to three of these composers, Pfitzner, Krenek and Hindemith, we may trace an alternative story to modernism, one which at the same time engages with many of the themes - art, the artist, and society - which were prevalent concerns at this time. While Pfitzner's opera was written at a time when many of the effects of industrialisation, and particularly of new technology, were yet to be fully felt, the composer was nevertheless aware of the changing nature of society, as well as being affected by the alterations in the aesthetic landscape brought about by modernism. Pfitzner also experienced the social upheaval of the era of the first World War, as I will show in the following chapter. In contrast, Krenek's opera was written when the embracing of modern life was at its height, while Hindemith came at the period of backlash against this phenomenon. The three operas therefore accompany the various aspects of the changing environment for composers in the early decades of the century, and in different ways attempt to renegotiate a position for the artist in the modern world.

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[83] See Franklin, *The Idea of Music,* xiii.

Künstleropern *as Self-(re)presentation*

The *Künstleroper* is a particularly apposite genre with which to investigate changing ideologies of artistry in the early twentieth century: the composers of such works construct a relationship between individual and society in their operas which simultaneously reflects and conveys something of their own beliefs about art. The fact that a central character of a *Künstleroper,* often the hero, is an artist invites us to equate him (or more rarely, her) with the creator of the artwork, thus bringing the relation of the real composer of the work to his or her society into sharp focus. A correspondence between a fictional character and his or her creator is possible, in theory, in any type of opera; however, in the case of the *Künstleroper* the representation is immediately more apparent precisely because of the artist-character's occupation. During the course of this dissertation, I will investigate the ways in which the fictional artist in each opera may be deemed to act as a persona of the real artist, and will compare the presentation of the fictional artist with what we know of his creator's philosophies, as presented in prose writings, letters, and so on.

A word which readily springs to mind in such a context is 'autobiography'. However, 'autobiography' implies that the fictional version of the artist somehow traces the facts of his creator's life, in a quasi-objective manner. In a *Künstleroper,* I will argue, this is not the case: the composer does not so much reflect his life within such a work as construct it, through the persona of the fictional artist. In his discussion of the sister genre to *Künstleroper,* the *Künstlerroman* or artist-novel, Maurice Beebe observes that 'the careful critic will not make a one-to-one equation between a work of art and an autobiography. Nonetheless, the very fact that the artist novel is a product of the imagination... makes it often more revealing than primary documents, for writers frequently tell more about their true selves and convictions under the guise of fiction than they will confess publicly.'[84] Whether the composer of such a work is conscious that it may be compared to his own life is open to speculation; however, he nevertheless presents a view of artistry which is

[84] Beebe, *Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts: The Artist as Hero in Fiction from Goethe to Joyce* (New York: New York University Press, 1964), 4-5.

based on his own aesthetic premises. (In this respect, it is significant that the composers of all three operas studied here wrote their own libretti.) Through the artist-character, the composer presents not his life, but his ideas, and particularly his ideas about art. In the three works to be considered here, the central issue is the place of art within society.

We may see the *Künstleroper* in psychoanalytical terms: the central artist-character acts as a projection of the composer himself and embodies an attempt at self-definition. Such ideas surface occasionally in writing on *Künstleropern;* for instance, Bokina says that 'Pfitzner projects a modern psychology, a psychology of resignation, onto the figure of Palestrina', while Peter Franklin, discussing the same opera, comments that it is a 'psychoanalytic "case-study"'.[85] The concept of the hero of the opera acting as a projection of the composer may be likened to the 'mirror-stage' idea of child development psychology, as formulated by Jacques Lacan. In this theory, a child in the first few months of its life does not experience itself as unified but as a collection of parts; when it sees itself in a mirror, though, it perceives a totality, an integrated and autonomous whole.[86] It need not be a literal mirror which functions in this way: the ego is formed through the interactions of the individual with his or her environment. Thus other objects in the environment can act as a 'mirror', through which the individual becomes aware of his or her own identity as a separate being; Lacan defines the ego as 'that which is reflected of one's form... in one's objects.'[87]

Stephen Frosh, in his book *Identity Crisis: Modernity, Psychoanalysis and the Self,* takes a similar approach to the formulation of individual identity. The

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[85] Bokina, 'Resignation, Retreat and Impotence', 166; Franklin, *'Palestrina* and the Dangerous Futurists', in *The Idea of Music,* 135. (The same essay may also be found in *Music Quarterly* 70/4 (1984), 499-514.) Also see Kienzle's *Das Trauma hinter dem Traum* for a psychoanalytical interpretation of Schreker's opera.

[86] Lacan goes on to argue that this perception of oneself as a unified whole in the mirror is in fact an illusion, as the mirror-image is outside oneself, and does not correspond with the inner experience which is still perceived as fragmentary ('The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I' (1949), in *Écrits: A Selection,* trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977), 1-7). Also see Bice Benvenuto & Roger Kennedy, *The Works of Jacques Lacan: An Introduction* (London: Free Association Books, 1986) and Ellie Ragland-Sullivan, *Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis* (London & Canberra: Croom Helm, 1986).

[87] Ibid., 2.

modern state of mind, he says, is 'forged in the context of instability', and marked with its own internal instabilities, which the individual must seek to resolve.[88] Frosh quotes Daniel Miller, who describes this process of resolution as "objectification". According to Miller, 'the full cycle of development... is one in which internal elements are projected outwards in material form, where they appear to sustain a life of their own... but are then reabsorbed to enrich the inner being, increasing its complexity and also making sense of its experience.'[89] To try and understand the world, the subject continually 'externalises' and then sublates, or reabsorbs, creating 'a dynamic of externalising and internalising'. The self 'develops in response to the economic and political contexts that surround it, through a process of internalising or appropriating the materials of culture and social relations in which the individual is embedded.'[90] Frosh argues that artistic creation can help in the search for self-identity. He says that an inner experience of identity crisis is 'circumvented' through the creation of an external object which 'embodies the inner disturbance and so makes it possible to take up a stance towards it, to have a relationship with it out of which some emotional and perhaps intellectual sense can be made.' He continues that 'something internal and partially unknown is externalised and worked on until it has recognisable shape, then it is taken back inside and appropriated as a representation or embellishment of "identity", a path to the construction of a more integrated and elaborated self.'[91]

The composer of a *Künstleroper* may be seen as attempting to create his own internal unity through creating a form of unified autonomous self which is objectified in the fictional artist. He formulates a mirror-image of himself where the fictional character's problems are solved: although the plot of a *Künstleroper* often depicts an artist for whom the relationship with society is problematic, and whose thoughts and actions are therefore disunified, these problems are always resolved in some way. A *Künstleroper* is thus an exploration and a statement of

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[88] Frosh, *Identity Crisis* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 7.
[89] Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), quoted in ibid., 18.
[90] Ibid., 17.
[91] Ibid., 191-192.

self-identity, directed both internally, to the composer himself, and externally, to the world around him. I will assess this process of self-formation in the chapters to follow through a consideration of the texts of the three operas (musical as well as literary), and through comparison of secondary sources, that is, the composer's own aesthetic writings, letters, and other details of his biography. Readings of the music of each work are based upon this context: given that the possible meaning of such music is not immanent in the score, but potentially open to a variety of interpretations, I hope to support the readings I make with a critique of non-musical sources. Any sources originating from the composer himself, whether musical or non-musical, are part of his formation of self-identity, and may therefore be considered in relation to each other in order to examine the facets of this self-construction.

Given the *Künstleroper*'s more or less explicit presentation of the composer-society dialectic, it is remarkable that consideration of the genre in the early twentieth century in scholarly writing is to date almost non-existent (although individual operas which could be labelled as such have been studied from a number of contrasting viewpoints). There are only three studies of early twentieth-century *Künstleropern* from a generic perspective, containing comparisons between works, and all are essay-length: John Bokina's 'Resignation, Retreat and Impotence: The Aesthetics and Politics of the Modern German Artist-Opera', Bernhard Kytzler's 'Moses und Mathis, Aaron und Palestrina. Zur Krise des kreativen Künstler [sic] im mythischen Spiegel der Moderne' and Ulrich Weisstein's 'Die letzte Häutung. Two German *Künstleropern* of the Twentieth Century: Hans Pfitzner's *Palestrina* and Paul Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*'.[92] Weisstein and Kytzler both assume that the operas they study are autobiographical almost without comment. The focus of their work is elsewhere - on the dramaturgical presentation of the act of creation in Weisstein, on the concept of myth in Kytzler - and they do not consider the relationship between the real composer and the fictional artist to any significant

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[92] Bokina. 'Resignation, Retreat and Impotence'; Kytzler in Peter Csobádi et al, eds., *Antike Mythen im Musiktheater des 20. Jahrhunderts: Gesammelte Vorträge des Salzburger Symposions 1989* (Anif/Salzburg: Verlag Ursula Müller-Speiser, 1990), 195-207; Weisstein in Claus Reschke & Howard Pollack, eds., *German Literature and Music: An Aesthetic Fusion, 1890-1989* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1992), 193-236.

degree. Weisstein says that 'many *Künstlerdramen* and *-opern* are distinctly, though perhaps discretely [sic], autobiographical', but does not pursue this idea further.[93] Kytzler makes little specific reference to the autobiography issue, although it is clear that he implicitly equates the composer of each work with his fictional creation, for instance when he comments of *Moses und Aron* that the 'comparability of the discovery of rules, the placement of standards, the pronouncement of a canon, through Moses as through Schoenberg, is unmistakable.'[94] In his discussion of Pfitzner's work, Kytzler's equation of Pfitzner with Palestrina seems to grant dubious paranormal powers to the composer: 'That the composer Pfitzner took into account his own position in the conflict between old and new in his own time in the formation of a legend around Palestrina is obvious... that Pfitzner the author, in the biographical and autobiographical sphere, anticipated by fifteen years his own experience of the death of his wife and the declining of his creative powers, is extraordinary.'[95] Bokina's essay is the most considered in its stance towards the question of the composer's self-representation. He compares the position of each composer to the presentation of the fictional artist, and shows how the latter represents the former's views in what he calls a 'manifestation of romantic self-consciousness'.[96]

A further limitation of existing literature on the *Künstleroper* is the lack of speculation as to the significance of a work within its historical context. For example, Weisstein's discussion focuses only on the work itself, as he examines the dramaturgical significance of writing an opera which presents the creation of a fictional art-work, and how conflict may arise from this act of creation. He makes little reference to what an opera could tell us about the environment of its creator; he justifies this by saying that writers on the genre of *Künstlerdrama* 'have, by and large, agreed that attention should be focused on the aesthetic rather than the psychological dimension of this genre', that is, on the specific works of art which

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[93] Weisstein, 'Die letzte Häutung', 197.
[94] Kytzler, 'Moses und Mathis', 197.
[95] Ibid., 201.
[96] Bokina, 'Resignation, Retreat and Impotence', 158.

are created in the course of the drama.[97] Weisstein notes that the four works he discusses *(Palestrina, Mathis der Maler, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and Goethe's play *Torquato Tasso)* are set in the sixteenth century, which 'for social, political, and religious reasons might well be regarded as one of permanent crisis', and points out that only *Palestrina* and *Mathis* thematise this problem; however, he does not offer any speculation as to why this might be.[98] His lack of concern for cultural context makes his article largely tangential to the discussion that follows, although I will occasionally refer to specific points he makes about each opera. Kytzler's article is even less helpful for my purposes: his thesis is specifically about the idea of myth, which by definition resists any comparison to contemporary society. Indeed, Kytzler explicitly distances himself from such an endeavour, saying that 'it would be tempting to examine the references of the three stage works to the circumstances of the time, both in history in general and in the life of their creators, but this will remain to one side here.'[99]

An exception to these acontextual approaches is provided by Bokina, who discusses how Pfitzner, Hindemith and Schoenberg depicted the crises of their age through their operas; these crises, he says, were to be found in both the political and aesthetic arenas.[100] He explores the ways in which the estrangement between artist and society appears 'within a distinctly modern cluster of problems: the tension between aesthetic traditionalism and progressivism, the role of art in social change, and the transformation of art from a means of communication and enlightenment to a means of manipulation and social control.'[101] Bokina's study is therefore an important starting point for the present discussion, because of the way in which he reads the three operas against the aesthetic 'crisis' of modernism, and in the light of contemporary politics, although unfortunately, his investigation is too brief for all but the most obvious conclusions to be drawn.

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97 Weisstein, 'Die letzte Häutung', 208. He gives no reference for these writers.
98 Ibid., 200.
99 Kytzler, 'Moses und Mathis', 199.
100 Bokina, 'Resignation, Retreat and Impotence', 159.
101 Ibid., 160.

Precursors of the Twentieth-Century Künstleroper

The theme of art or the artist has always been a common one in opera. The many instances of the Orpheus myth may be mentioned, for example, as well as others: Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor,* or Salieri's *Prima la musica, poi le parole.* It is only during the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, though, that a specifically problematic relationship of the artist to his art, or to society, began to be thematised. In earlier operas, the plot of the work may centre on something other than art (such as a love story), or art may be an important aspect but not a specifically problematic one; operas in this vein continued to be written during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the early decades of the twentieth century, a large number of operas were written which feature a prominent artist-character, with eighteen such works by what are now considered major composers being written in the years between 1912 and 1935. (See Appendix 2 for a list of these works.) Only some of these deal with an artist's relationship to society, however. For instance, in Strauss's *Intermezzo,* the fact that the principal character is an artist is unimportant to the plot, while in Weill's *Der Protagonist,* the main character's artistry is relevant to the plot yet this character does not explicitly reflect on his position towards society.

For most writers on the *Künstleroper* it is the antagonism between artist and society which is the defining aspect of the genre. Weisstein writes that the *Künstlerdrama* focuses on discord, saying that 'even though the major conflict may be internal, some sort of externalization is needed to compensate for the lyrical *Innerlichkeit* [introspection]... The agon most suitable for a *Künstlerdrama* or -*oper*... is that between artist and society.'[102] Kytzler also mentions an 'artistic crisis', although he does not clarify what this crisis is about beyond 'development, alienation [and] degeneration'.[103] Bokina similarly defines the *Künstleroper* as being about 'the theme of the estrangement of the artist'. He is dismissive of *Künstleropern* by Puccini and Strauss which he says are 'trivializations' of the artist-opera, and accuses these composers of 'purchas[ing] their commercial

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[102] Weisstein, 'Die letzte Häutung', 198.
[103] Kytzler, 'Moses und Mathis', 196 & 204.

success' with these works instead of using them 'as a vehicle for posing the real and unique problems of art and the artist'.[104] Bokina's conception that a work is only a 'true' *Künstleroper* if it deals with this 'conflict' theme, and that all other plots are 'trivialisations', itself buys into the Romantic myth; there are many examples of operas with central artist-characters which do not fit his categorisation but which may nevertheless be considered *Künstleropern.*

The explicit thematicisation of the relationship between artist and society within opera, and particularly within German opera, was to some extent influenced by the sister genre of *Künstlerroman.* The first examples of the *Künstlerroman* were written during the era of German literary Romanticism, spanning from the end of the eighteenth century to the early decades of the nineteenth. Numerous examples were written at this time; some of the most well-known include Tieck's *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen* (1798), Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1800), E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr* (1821), and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* (1777-1829).[105] According to scholars of German literature, the explosion in the *Künstlerroman* genre at the turn of the nineteenth century was due to the contemporaneous decline of court patronage, which led to a new artistic sensibility and which was itself fictionalised in *Künstlerromane.* Other factors, such as the advent of industrialisation, also played a role.[106] The heroes of these early nineteenth-century novels show their ambivalence to the society around them, be that the world of the nineteenth century itself or an earlier era; such artists are often characterised as outsiders, for instance Hoffmann's Johannes Kreisler or Goethe's Wilhelm Meister.[107] Christina Brantner writes that the problem of 'the isolation of the artist and his search for a justification of an independent existence'

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[104] He names Puccini's *La Bohème, La Fanciulla del West,* and *Tosca,* and Strauss's *Capriccio, Ariadne auf Naxos,* and *Intermezzo* ('Resignation, Retreat and Impotence', 158).

[105] Other works by Goethe deal with similar themes, for instance the *Künstlerdrama, Torquato Tasso* (1789), or the isolated individual (although not explicitly an artist) in *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774). See Beebe, *Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts,* 27 ff.

[106] Sabrina Hausdörfer, *Rebellion im Kunstschein: Die Funktion des fiktiven Künstlers in Roman und Kunsttheorie der deutschen Romantik* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1987), 62 ff. Also see Schubert, *Der Künstler als Handwerker,* 214.

[107] Christina Branter, *Robert Schumann und das Tonkünstler-Bild der Romantiker* (New York: P. Lang, 1991), 43; Hausdörfer, *Rebellion im Kunstschein,* 18.

remained a theme of the *Künstlerroman* until Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus.*[108] Herbert Marcuse, like Bokina, suggests that a conflict between artist and society is an inherent requirement of a true *Künstlerroman:* such a work 'strictly speaking, presents the attempt of the artist to somehow solve the conflict' between himself and the world.[109]

The *Künstlerromane* of literary Romanticism were central to the formation of the myth of the isolated artist, which first appeared at this time. Such novels dealt with now-familiar Romantic themes - ideas, for instance, of genius, or of the necessity for the artist to sacrifice himself to his work - and set a pattern which would be followed by subsequent generations of both writers and composers.[110] Sabrina Hausdörfer comments that 'the early Romantic period is in many ways what the genre of *Künstlerroman* later constituted, and has remained present in that which is no longer specifically tied to the genre, but which thematises the problem of creativity and the relationship of the artist to the world.'[111] The early Romantic writers were thus among the first to exhibit a concern with the nature of artistry, and with the position of the artist in modern society, even if the reality of the writer's own experience may not have matched up to the mythical artistic ideal of his works.

The idea that an artist's life may be represented in his or her work also developed within music criticism in the early nineteenth century. The Romantic aesthetic's lauding of the personality of the artist, particularly the genius, and the

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[108] Branter, *Robert Schumann,* 40.

[109] Marcuse, 'Der deutsche Künstlerroman', 16. Also see 332, as well as Beebe, *Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts,* 6, Hausdörfer, *Rebellion im Kunstschein,* 16-17, Schubert, *Der Künstler als Handwerker,* 25, and Reinhard Seebohm, 'Triumph und Tragik des Künstlertums: die Stellung von Pfitzners "Palestrina" in der Geschichte des deutschen Künstlerdramas', *Pfitzner* 32 (April 1974), 15.

[110] Hausdörfer, *Rebellion im Kunstschein,* 18-19.

[111] Ibid., 24. Other studies of *Künstlerromane* include Helene Goldschmidt, *Das deutsche Künstlerdrama von Goethe bis R. Wagner* (Weimar: Alexander Duncker Verlag, 1925), C.D. Malmgren, '"From Work to Text". The Modernist and Postmodernist Künstlerroman', *Novel - A Forum on Fiction* 21/1 (1987), 5-28, and Jörg Theilacker, *Der erzählende Musiker: Untersuchung von Musikererzählungen des 19. Jahrhunderts und ihrer Bezüge zur Entstehung der deutschen Nationalmusik* (Frankfurt a.M.: Verlag Peter Lang, 1988). Seebohm's essay, 'Triumph und Tragik des Künstlertums' takes Pfitzner's *Palestrina* as a literary rather than as a musical text, and compares it to works by Goethe and Grillparzer. Literary investigations such as these are of limited

value placed on self-expression, led to a situation in which the work of art was often seen not only as an emanation from the artist, but also as a representation of an aspect of his or her life or feelings. An early example of such writing is the interpretation by Franz Joseph Fröhlich of Beethoven's music, particularly his Ninth Symphony, as autobiographical, an idea which, as Robin Wallace explains, has since become commonplace.[112] According to Fröhlich, whose article was published in 1827, the Ninth Symphony's progression from D minor to D major portrays the composer's struggle to come to terms with his deafness, and his eventual joy in succeeding. On a more small-scale level, Fröhlich saw the progression of the music as reflecting varying moods which portray the composer's personality.[113] The primacy of emotional self-expression in the nineteenth century meant both that existing musical works were retrospectively interpreted as autobiographical, as in Fröhlich's view of Beethoven, and that new works were written by Romantic composers in accordance with this aesthetic, an obvious example being Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique.* In this way, a context was created in which the reflection of the composer's feelings and experiences within his art was expected.

Out of this context came the most significant German *Künstleropern* of the nineteenth century, Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg.* The heroes of both operas are typical representations of the Romantic artist, with their desire to express their feelings in song. The relationship between artist and society is also presented in both, but the idea of artistic estrangement is shown only metaphorically, hidden behind an alternative story. In *Tannhäuser,* the hero's conflict between two women, Venus and Elizabeth, is the focus; this could be seen as presenting a struggle between different types of society and the artist's relationship to each, but only on an allegorical level. Tannhäuser's songs are not the source of his problems, but merely an expression of them. In *Die Meistersinger,* Walther is an outsider who wishes to become part of the bourgeois society of

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usefulness to an examination of *Künstleropern,* as their writers focus on the intricacies of the written text in a way which is impossible to apply to music, at least not without some degree of force.

[112] Wallace, *Beethoven's Critics: Aesthetic dilemmas and resolutions during the composer's lifetime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 78.

[113] Ibid., 83.

Nuremberg. His motivation is his love for Eva; he achieves his aims through art, but art functions only as a means to his end. In *Die Meistersinger,* unlike later *Künstleropern,* the central artist-character and the character who is aware of society are two different people, Walther and Hans Sachs. Walther is the artist, as it is he who sings in the Guild contests; although Sachs does sing (his cobbling song of Act Two), it is Walther who encapsulates the Romantic aesthetic by using art to express his emotions. In contrast, Sachs is more inwardly concerned than Walther with the folly of the world, as shown in his *Wahn* monologue. Whereas later *Künstleropern* frequently bring these two elements into one person, to produce the artist who is concerned with the role of his art within society, in *Die Meistersinger* there is a separation between the artist Walther and the more reflective and socially-aware Sachs.[114]

In *Die Meistersinger,* the focus is on the community, rather than on any conflict between the individual and society: several characters form a nexus at the centre of the drama, so that the work is not specifically *about* Walther or Sachs. (The title itself shows this, with its use of the plural.)[115] *Die Meistersinger* may be seen as representative of the kind of society Wagner would have liked to exist: art has a central place in the community, and Walther is presented as an inspired and progressive artist (because he does not follow the Meistersingers' rules) who is recognised by the ordinary people. Bernhard Schubert comments that 'the stage action [in *Die Meistersinger*] symbolises the Utopia of a cultural unity, which should have become reality with Wagner's activities in Bayreuth.' [116] With its

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[114] Some writers suggest that Sachs is an artist, for instance, Bernhard Schubert ('Wagners "Sachs" und die Tradition des romantischen Künstlerselbstverständnisses', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 40/3 (1983), 212-253), and Michael Tanner, who states that this is the case because Sachs pulls the strings and brings Walther's talent to fruition *(Wagner* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), 164). However, on the surface level of plot, Sachs' artistry is secondary to Walther's. Schubert also takes Sachs, Walther and Beckmesser as representing different facets of Wagner's own self-understanding as an artist ('Wagners "Sachs"', 213).

[115] Anthony Arblaster, *Viva la Libertà! Politics in Opera* (London & New York: Verso, 1992), 176. Also see Schubert, 'Wagners "Sachs"', 246-247. This emphasis on the plural is in contrast to the focus of the later *Künstleropern* in which the artist is always the main character, a factor also reflected in their titles, which frequently refer to a single person. There is an element of conflict within *Die Meistersinger* with the riot in Act Two, but this differs from later *Künstleropern* in that it is a conflict on the explicit, external level, rather than an internal one on the part of the artist or a struggle between artist and society.

[116] Schubert, *Der Künstler als Handwerker,* 96.

lauding of community, and the integration of the artist Walther into Nuremberg society, *Die Meistersinger* presents a political message about art and artistry which anticipates later *Künstleropern.* A further political dimension is added in Sachs's speech in Act Three, where he proclaims:

> Habt acht! Uns dräuen üble Streich: zerfällt erst deutsches Volk und Reich, in falscher welscher Majestät kein Fürst bald mehr sein Volk versteht, und welschen Dunst mit welschem Tand sie pflanzen uns in deutsches Land; was deutsch und echt, wüßt' keiner mehr, lebt's nicht in deutscher Meister Ehr! D'rum sag ich euch: ehrt eure deutschen Meister!

[Take care! Evil trickery threatens us: if first German people and state are divided by false foreign majesty, no prince will understand his people any more, and foreign mists with foreign frippery will be planted for us in German land; no-one will know what is German and true if there is no honour for German masters! Therefore I tell you: honour your German masters!]

This declamation may be read against the nationalism of Wagner's own era, and thereby offers an insight into contemporary political issues.[117] As we shall see below, the relationship between artist and society within *Künstleropern* may be read in particular political terms.

Another, less well-known *Künstleroper,* which falls chronologically between *Die Meistersinger* and the operas to be discussed in the chapters below, is even more directly concerned with art and politics: Richard Strauss's *Guntram* (1893). *Guntram* tells the story of a singer who is a member of a religious group, or *Bund,* of singers called the 'Streiter der Liebe' ('Warriors of Love'). At the beginning of the opera, Guntram meets a group of peasants fleeing their homeland, which is nominally ruled by the Herzog but in actuality by his cruel son-in-law Robert; the hero decides to help them. After chancing to meet the Herzog and Robert, he is invited to their castle, where he sings a song to try to enlighten them and to change their attitude towards the ordinary people. Robert, though, attacks him with his sword, but Guntram retaliates and kills him; he is thrown into prison. He there announces to his friend Friedhold, a fellow member of the 'Streiter der Liebe', that he will turn his back on art, which he sees as a 'furchtbare Waffe'

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[117] See Schubert, 'Wagners "Sachs"', 249, for discussion of this political dimension.

('fearful weapon'). Friedhold reminds him of the purpose of the *Bund,* which is to lead people to God through art; Guntram is impressed by his words, but he has broken the rule that the members of the *Bund* remain pure, and refuses to answer to them for his crime. The opera ends with Guntram being released from prison by Freihild, Robert's wife, with whom he has fallen in love; despite her reciprocation of his affection, though, he decides to spend his life in solitude as a penance for his crime.

Guntram 's foregrounding of an explicitly political issue in relation to art and the artist created a new current within the genre of *Künstleroper* which was only implicit in the operas of Wagner. Indeed, the opera foregrounds the various uses of art: for Friedhold and his band of religious singers, art is solely for the purpose of turning the listener's thoughts to God, as he states to Guntram:

> Frommer Sänger sehnender Drang weihte dem Kreuze die Wunder der Kunst: hohen Gesanges göttliche Gaben im heil'gen Gewande göttlicher Lehre, leite zu Gott die begeisterten Lauscher, in der Liebe zu lösen ihre Leiden Last.

[The yearning urge of pious singers dedicated the wonders of art to the cross: the divine talent of holy songs, in the holy robes of divine teaching, leads the enraptured listener to God; in love their burden of sorrow is dispelled.]

Friedhold's attack on Guntram is therefore double-sided: the hero has transgressed the rules of the *Bund* not only through his murder of Robert, but also by using art for political ends, and using it as a 'weapon'. Strauss's opera has never become particularly well-known – it was deemed a failure musically and dramatically[118] - and its influence on later composers is therefore difficult to assess. Nevertheless, its concern with the artist's position in society demonstrates how artists in this era were involved in this debate, which had preoccupied composers for the past century.

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[118] Norman Del Mar, *Richard Strauss. A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works,* vol. 1 (London / Boston: Faber & Faber, 1986), 94 & 118.

The Künstleroper *and Politics*

The specific aspect of the *Künstleropern* explored in this thesis is the presentation of a conflict between artist and society, and the resolution of that conflict. In this respect, these works engage with an inherently political problem, namely the interaction of individuals within society, and the negotiation of various positions between the artist and his environment which invest power and authority in particular individuals or groups. The wishes of such figures as Wagner or Liszt to bring about revolution in order to create a new context for art, or even Schoenberg, in his explicit rejection of mass society, all have an inherently political content; my examinations of *Palestrina, Jonny spielt auf* and *Mathis der Maler* develop this idea by reading each work against a specific political context. I examine the relationship of each opera, and its composer, to contemporary ideologies about the political organisation of society current in Germany in the period from World War I to the early Third Reich; these ideologies also found expression within organised political parties.[119]

In one sense, we may say with some confidence that all art is political, in that it expresses an ideology of some kind. This may be aesthetic, that is, about the nature of art itself, or may be more closely 'political', about an aspect of society. Anthony Arblaster, in his book on opera and politics *Viva la Libertà!* defines the 'political' in two ways. He writes that 'traditionally, politics has been centred on the question of government or rule: what persons or institutions govern and should govern society'. He contrasts this with a wider question, which is 'about power, meaning not only the struggles of individuals to achieve it or hold onto it, but also the distribution of power in society between various groups and individuals, and the relations between the (relatively) powerful and the (relatively) powerless.'[120] These power relationships, which he says may occur 'within families, within

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[119] While 'Germany' is sometimes used to denote the German-speaking countries, therefore including Austria, my investigation is more precisely focused on Germany itself and its political history in this period. Of the three composers, only Krenek was Austrian, and was living in Kassel, Germany, at the time of the composition and first performances of *Jonny spielt auf.* However, in discussion of the larger cultural context, I will also draw on Austrian sources, as German and Austrian culture were well integrated with each other at this time.

[120] Arblaster, *Viva la Libertà!,* 2.

groups [and] within institutions', are those more frequently studied in recent musicology, particularly the study of the power relationships between men and women or between races (in the writings of such authors as Susan McClary and Lawrence Kramer, for instance).[121] Examinations of music with specific reference to the more limited area of governments and party politics are rarer, however.[122] Arblaster himself traces both these trajectories in his studies of individual operas.

Arblaster's first category may be seen as a 'narrow' definition of politics and political ideology, which signifies the actions of those individuals who govern a society. The 'narrowly' political addresses specific issues such as who should be in power, how power structures should be organised, the degree of equality between citizens, and the distribution of wealth. His second category, conversely, may be termed 'broadly' political; it is more or less synonymous with 'ideology', and signifies a set of ideas which embodies the beliefs and values of a particular group within society.[123] The beliefs on which political actions are based may be termed a 'political ideology', that is, an ideology about specific, literally political questions. The focus of the following chapters is primarily the 'narrowly' political sphere, as I compare the philosophies expressed by the three composers in their works with those espoused by political parties or movements. 'Broadly' ideological issues will also feature, however, overlapping as they do with the 'narrowly'

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[121] See for instance McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991) and Kramer, *Music in Cultural Practice, 1800-1900* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1990).

[122] Some writers on the *Künstlerroman* discuss the relationship of the novel to politics. Theilacker, for example, attributes the number of *Musikererzählungen* ('musician-stories', more specific in both subject and genre than *Künstlerromane)* in any one period of the nineteenth century to the contemporary political situation, and argues that more *Erzählungen* were written in periods when Germany felt under threat from other nations, and fewer when Germans felt they had achieved a success. As proof, Theilacker offers several detailed charts of the publication dates of *Musikererzählungen* and compares them to political events *(Der erzählende Musiker,* 333 and passim). Political events are cited by Marcuse in relation to *Künstlerromane* in the later nineteenth century; he relates the *Künstlerromane* of the *Junges Deutschland* school to the influence of the July Revolution of 1830 in France. Marcuse also identifies a sub-genre of the *Künstlerroman* by this group of writers, which he terms the *Tendenzroman.* In such works, the artist became 'a practical person, a political and social fighter' alongside his fellow revolutionaries ('Der deutsche Künstlerroman', 180 ff.).

[123] Lydia Goehr's essay 'Political Music and the Politics of Music' is a good example of writing on music which uses the term 'political' to signify 'ideological'. She says in a footnote that 'throughout this essay "politics" and "the political" should be understood broadly; oftentimes, one could use the

political; the latter is an expression of wider ideological questions. The three operas which I will consider discuss not only the nature of art, but also that of society, a concern which corresponds with the interests of those involved in politics. Each work manifests a vision of the artist's position in an ideal society, suggesting, in the same manner as a political party, a world for which one should strive.

The distinction between the 'narrowly' and 'broadly' political is conflated by some writers, for instance Bokina in his book *Opera and Politics.* Bokina writes that opera addresses themes such as 'monarchy and republicanism; the relations between classes, statuses and genders, revolution and utopia', all of which he terms a 'macro level'.[124] He contrasts this level, which is about the world at large, with a 'more personal dimension', in which opera is concerned with the lives of individuals.[125] Bokina does not draw a distinction in these definitions between what is explicitly political and what is more ideological; he follows both of these themes in his subsequent chapters. Another book on opera and politics, Jeremy Tambling's *Opera and the Culture of Fascism,* primarily investigates how fascist relationships to conceptions of gender, approached psychoanalytically, may be found in the operatic works of Wagner, Strauss, Schreker, Verdi and Puccini.[126] (He also includes a chapter on Weill's *Mahagonny* as a contrast.) Much of his book is therefore less about politics than about a particular, 'broadly' political, discourse in opera, concerning gender, which also appeared within a political movement. It is true that Tambling deals with a more narrowly political subject matter in his chapters on Italian opera, in which he reads the operas of Verdi and Puccini in the light of contemporary political developments and nationalist ideals. This approach does not extend to the works by German composers, however, and none of Tambling's investigations deal with questions about the organisation of society, something I take as fundamental to a consideration of the 'narrowly' political.

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terms "social" and "moral" interchangeably with "political" without affecting the argument' *(Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52/1 (1994), 111).

[124] Bokina, *Opera and Politics: From Monteverdi to Henze* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1997), 2.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Tambling, *Opera and the Culture of Fascism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.)

Other studies of the relationship of music and politics in early twentieth-century Germany examine a 'broadly' ideological discourse,[127] or consist largely of empirical documentation of the attitudes of political movements towards music, for instance in the Third Reich or within the socialist and communist workers' music movements.[128] However, the music which originated within such movements has to date not been considered in depth, while the possible political associations of works which were not explicitly linked to political movements have also been little investigated. A few studies do exist on the specific relationship of opera and 'narrowly' political issues in the early twentieth century: Bokina's *Opera and Politics* includes the essay 'Resignation, Retreat and Impotence' already discussed, thus providing direct reference to political questions in two of the operas which I will consider below. He also includes a chapter on Strauss's *Elektra* and Schoenberg's *Erwartung,* but this deals with the concept of 'psychological interiorization', a 'broadly' rather than 'narrowly' political theme. A further example of writing concerned with opera and politics during the period under question in this dissertation is Tambling's *Opera and the Culture of Fascism;* Tambling considers works by Strauss and Schreker, although primarily by considering the 'broad' question of gender relations. However, he also deals with a more closely political agenda when he considers the left-wing aspects of *Mahagonny.*[129] Studies also exist of the relationship of individual composers to political trends, and where these are relevant, I discuss them in the chapters below.

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[127] For instance, in relation to the representation of gender in the early twentieth-century in addition to that of Tambling, see Lawrence Kramer, *'Fin-de-siècle* fantasies: *Elektra,* degeneration, and sexual science' *(Cambridge Opera Journal* 5/2 (July 1993), 141-165), or Julie Brown's 'Fantasies of the Feminine: Schoenberg's *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* and the Woman Question' (paper given at the 28th Conference of the Royal Musical Association, University of Southampton, March 1993).

[128] Works on the Third Reich include Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), Erik Levi, *Music in the Third Reich* (London: Macmillan, 1994), Michael Meyer, *The Politics of Music in the Third Reich* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), Potter, *Most German of the Arts* and Joseph Wulf, *Musik im Dritten Reich: Eine Dokumentation* (Frankfurt a.M.: Ullstein, 1983). On the socialist music movement, see W.L. Guttsmann, *Workers' Culture in Weimar Germany: Between Tradition and Commitment* (New York: Berg, 1990). On the socialist movement in Austria, see Dümling, '"Im Zeichen der Erkenntnis der socialen Verhältnisse"'.

[129] Arblaster's book on opera and politics mostly considers operas from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and only briefly considers one opera from early twentieth-century Germany (Berg's *Wozzeck).*

In the subsequent chapters, I will follow the lead of Bokina's essay 'Resignation, Retreat and Impotence' in discussing whether musical works may be read as part of a wider discourse of politics than that of the explicit use of music by political parties. I will explore how a particular relationship to one's environment, either actual or wished for, was configured by Pfitzner, Krenek and Hindemith through the presentation of a fictional artist in their *Künstleropern,* while considering how the work signifies its contemporary culture, especially its political aspects. *Palestrina* is viewed in the light of conservatism during the World War I era, *Jonny spielt auf* is read against attitudes towards democracy during the Weimar Republic, expressed particularly through Americanism, while *Mathis der Maler* is compared to the politics of the Third Reich. In each case, it will be seen that the hero of the opera takes an approach to his environment which resonates with the relevant political discourse, as well as acting as a persona for the composer of the work, which signifies his aesthetic and political beliefs, and through which a particular conception of the idea of the artist is expressed.

2. Pfitzner, Palestrina, *and the Nonpolitical Composer*

Hans Pfitzner wrote his opera *Palestrina* between 1912 and 1915. He had been considering the subject from as long before as 1895, and thought of collaborating with several possible librettists until deciding in 1909 to write his own text. The opera, subtitled 'A Musical Legend', is based on the myth that the Renaissance composer Palestrina 'saved' music from an imminent ban by the Catholic church by writing his *Missa Papae Marcelli;* the beauty of his music convinced the Pope that music was fitting in the praise of God.[1] Pfitzner's opera was first performed in Munich in 1917, and was immediately hailed as a great success for the composer. Many of Pfitzner's contemporaries suggested that the hero of the opera was intended as a representation of Pfitzner himself; Wilhelm Furtwängler, for instance, said to the composer, 'You yourself are Palestrina', while Bruno Walter stated later that Palestrina's personality depicted that of Pfitzner.[2] Thomas Mann, in his book *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen (Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man),* which was written in the same years that Pfitzner was composing his work and published shortly after the première, said that he believed the opera to be 'confessional'. Mann even pointed out the similarities in the physical appearances of Pfitzner and Karl Erb, the singer of Palestrina at the first performance; this fact validated to Mann that the opera was autobiographical.[3] A drawing made of Pfitzner by Karl Bauer a year after the first performance is clearly influenced by the scene in the opera where the mass is dictated to Palestrina by a chorus of angels: Pfitzner is shown in contemplative mood while two angels play the harp and violin above his head (fig.1). Pfitzner's portrayal of Palestrina seemed to catch the imagination of his contemporaries, who readily identified the real composer of the work with the fictional composer in the opera.

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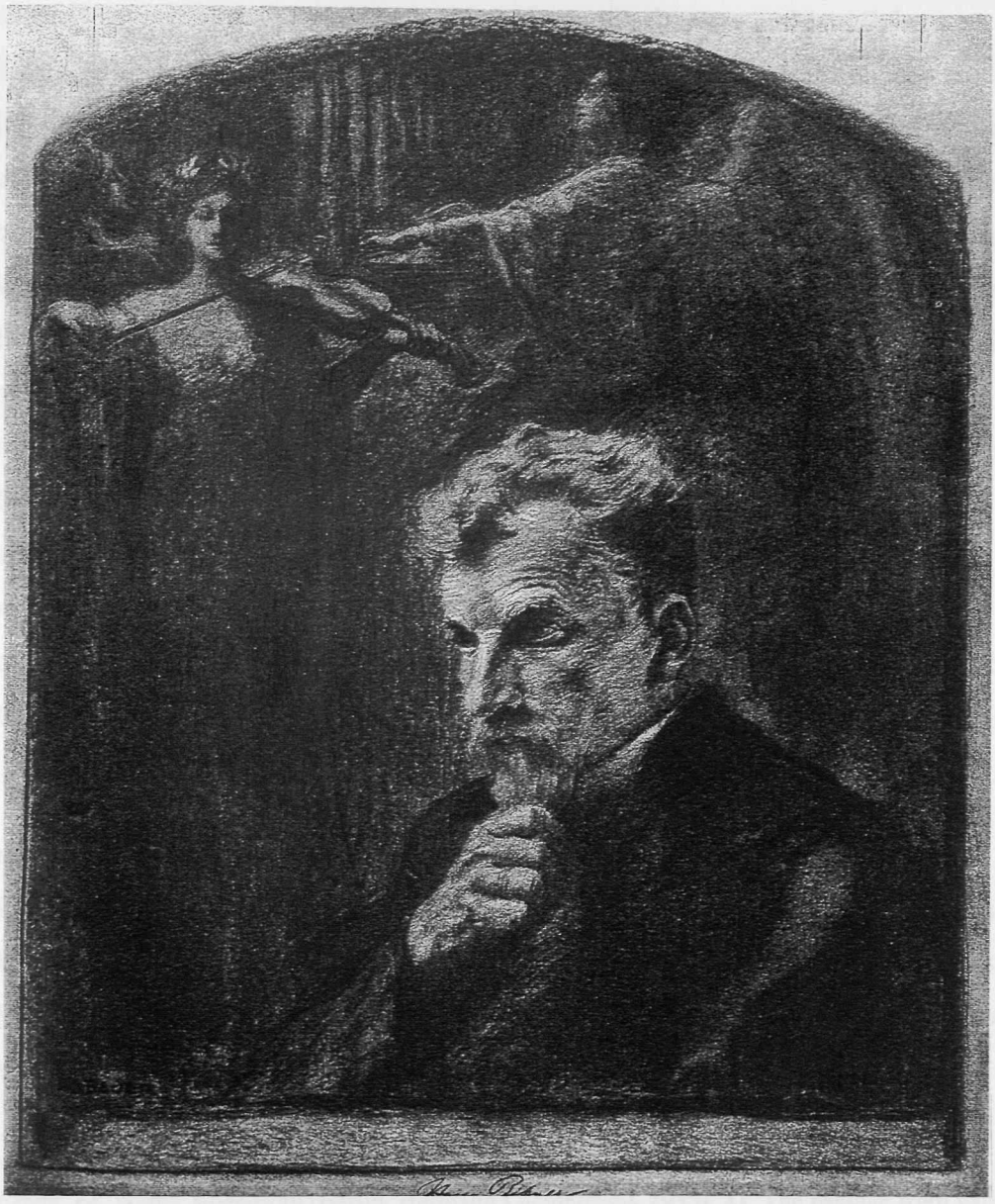
[1] A description of the origins of this myth may be found in Owen Toller, *Pfitzner's Palestrina: The 'Musical Legend' and its Background* (Exeter: Toccata Press, 1997), 218 ff.

[2] Furtwängler and Walter quoted in Johann Peter Vogel, *Hans Pfitzner: Mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1989), 71.

[3] Mann, *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man,* trans. and intro. Walter D. Morris (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1983), 302 & 312. Photographs of the two men can be found in Vogel, *Hans Pfitzner,* 68-69.



The fact that Pfitzner's contemporaries could so easily equate the composer of the opera with his Palestrina, as subsequent writers about the work have also done, suggests that they were propounding a view corroborated by the evidence of Pfitzner himself. However, in an essay he wrote some years after the composition of *Palestrina,* Pfitzner hinted that the work was not intended to be autobiographical, saying 'I didn't think in the least at that time about wanting to identify myself with the title hero, although certain features and parallels crept imperceptibly into such a creation.'[4] The suggestion that parallels between Palestrina and himself crept in 'imperceptibly' seems perhaps *faux naïf,* although profession of such a sentiment is consistent with Pfitzner's maintenance of a degree of mystique around the creative process. This chapter will examine the extent to which these 'features and parallels' are active in the work, and will consider how far the fictional Palestrina functions as a persona for Pfitzner. In particular, I will assess how the opera portrays Pfitzner's conception of a desired relationship between the artist and his environment, thereby demonstrating the concern with this issue which preoccupied many at this time. Palestrina's relationship to his society can be read against Pfitzner's position towards his own culture, and by examining the points of contact in detail, we may judge how far the opera is a reflection of Pfitzner's views, and how it is a construction of an idealised situation for which he may have wished.

Palestrina has received a significant amount of attention from musicologists, perhaps surprisingly seeing as its composer is otherwise little-known. Along with overviews of the themes of the opera by Tim Ashley, Donald Henderson, M. Owen Lee and Owen Toller, there are also more critical discussions by Paul Attinello, Peter Franklin, and John Bokina (as part of his *Künstleropern* essay), which interpret the work in the light of its context.[5] John Williamson's

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[4] Pfitzner, 'Palestrina. Ein Vortrag über das Werk und seine Geschichte', in *Reden, Schriften, Briefe,* ed. Walter Abendroth (Berlin: Hermann Luchterhand, 1955), 31. The passage from which this quote is taken is a denial of one specifically autobiographical point, about Palestrina's wife and Pfitzner's own: Pfitzner is at pains to point out that his own wife was alive and well when he wrote the opera, and her later death (in 1926) follows his opera rather than vice versa.

[5] Ashley, 'In Sympathy with Death', *Opera,* January 1997, 33-39; Henderson, 'Hans Pfitzner's *Palestrina:* A twentieth-century Allegory', *Music Review,* 1970, 32-43; Lee, 'Pfitzner's *Palestrina:* A Musical Legend', *Opera Quarterly* 4/1 (1986), 54-60; Toller, *Pfitzner's Palestrina;* Attinello, 'Pfitzner, *Palestrina,* Nazis, Conservatives: Longing for Utopia', *Journal of Musicological*

comments on *Palestrina* come within the context of a biography of the composer's life, as do those by Johann Peter Vogel and Joseph Müller-Blattau, while Bernhard Adamy's and Reinhard Ermen's discussions are from the perspective of Pfitzner's aesthetics.[6] Pfitzner also frequently appears in other contexts where the conservative trends in music of the early twentieth century are discussed, for instance in Marc A. Weiner's *Undertones of Insurrection: Music, Politics and the Social Sphere in the Modern German Narrative,*[7] and the opera is often referred to as expressing Pfitzner's reactionary aesthetic and political beliefs. It is therefore well known that Pfitzner had a deeply conservative personality, and it is acknowledged that he expressed some of his beliefs through the figure of Palestrina. Indeed, the extent to which Palestrina acts as an alter ego for Pfitzner himself is not a matter of much debate amongst commentators on the opera. Lee, for instance, says that Pfitzner's work is 'something less about Palestrina than about himself.'[8] Henderson writes that 'there can be no doubt that Pfitzner identified himself with the legendary Palestrina', and the same sentiments are expressed by Adamy: Pfitzner 'was convinced from the beginning that he had mirrored himself in the spiritual attitude of his hero and his relationship to art and the world'.[9] Many other writers on the opera seem to take the equivalence of Pfitzner and Palestrina so much as read that it is never made wholly explicit, although it nonetheless forms the backbone of their arguments.[10] As mentioned in Chapter 1, Franklin sees *Palestrina* as a 'psychoanalytic "case study"' of Pfitzner, particularly in the presentation through the fictional composer of Pfitzner's views

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Research 15 (1995), 25-53; Franklin, *'Palestrina* and the Dangerous Futurists'; Bokina, 'Resignation, Retreat and Impotence'.

[6] Williamson, *The Music of Hans Pfitzner* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Vogel, *Hans Pfitzner;* Müller-Blattau, *Hans Pfitzner: Lebensweg und Schaffensernte* (Frankfurt a.M.: Waldemar Kramer, 1969); Adamy, *Hans Pfitzner: Literatur, Philosophie und Zeitgeschehen in seinem Weltbild und Werk* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1980); Ermen, *Musik als Einfall: Hans Pfitzners Position im ästhetischen Diskurs nach Wagner* (Aachen: Rimbaud Presse, 1986).

[7] (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993.)

[8] Lee, 'Pfitzner's *Palestrina',* 58.

[9] Henderson, 'Hans Pfitzner's *Palestrina',* 37; Adamy, 'Das *Palestrina*-Textbuch als Dichtung', in Wolfgang Osthoff, ed., *Symposium Hans Pfitzner, Berlin 1981* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1984), 49.

[10] For instance, Attinello, 'Pfitzner, *Palestrina,* Nazis, Conservatives', Seebohm, 'Triumph und Tragik des Künstlertums', and Müller-Blattau, *Hans Pfitzner,* 62 ff. Ashley concurs with Furtwängler, whom he quotes, that Pfitzner 'is' Palestrina, but he does not go into this in any detail ('In Sympathy with Death', 35).

on art.[11] Franklin's idea of a 'psychoanalytic case study' is significant for my own reading, as I will suggest below the ways in which Pfitzner constructs a version of himself in Palestrina, onto which he projects his aesthetic and political views. I begin by examining the portrayal of artist and society within the opera, and consider the meaning of this representation within the context of Pfitzner's time, particularly through a consideration of the contemporary political milieu. Using Thomas Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* as a focal point, I will demonstrate how *Palestrina* conveys a message about the state of society and the artist's place within it. I will then consider Pfitzner's views about art and society and will compare them to the fictional persona he creates in his opera.

Pfitzner's Palestrina and his Society

Palestrina

Palestrina depicts the contrast of artist and society through Pfitzner's juxtaposition of two 'worlds', that of the Council of Trent and that of the composer Palestrina. This division was described by Pfitzner in his essay 'Palestrina. Ein Vortrag über das Werk und seine Geschichte'; he said that the opera is 'a kind of triptych in form: a first and third act for the real world of Palestrina, and in the middle, the picture of the hustle and bustle *(bewegtes Treiben)* of the outside world, which is always an enemy to the quiet creation of the genius.'[12] Palestrina is completely separate from the world represented by the Council: we never meet him outside the room in Rome where he first appears in Act One, and the Council is geographically distant from him. He exists in a secluded world, either alone or with only a few other characters around him. The composer's largely solitary existence in one room symbolises his separate, 'inner realm' of artistic and spiritual experience; his later imprisonment similarly accentuates his distance from society.[13] Pfitzner's conception of the separation of the artist from the world

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[11] Franklin, *'Palestrina* and the Dangerous Futurists', 135.
[12] Pfitzner, *Reden, Schriften, Briefe,* 27.
[13] Franklin, *'Palestrina* and the Dangerous Futurists', 133.

outside is shown in a quotation from Schopenhauer which he used to preface the score of the opera:

> [The] purely intellectual life of mankind consists in its advancing knowledge through sciences and in the refinement of the arts, both of which slowly continue across the ages and the centuries, and to which the individual generations bear their contribution as they pass by. This intellectual life, like an ethereal adjunct, like a fragrant aroma produced by fermentation, hovers above the bustle of the world, above the real life of the nations, which is guided by the will; and alongside the history of the world there proceeds the history of philosophy, of science and of the arts, guiltless and untainted by blood.[14]

Palestrina's isolation from the world alters in status during the course of the opera. It is problematic to him in Act One; since the death of his wife Lukrezia, when he lost all inclination to compose, he has felt his separation acutely. He enunciates his loneliness most clearly during his long monologue in Act One Scene Four, which follows his refusal to write the mass and Borromeo's angry departure. Here, Palestrina despairs of his estrangement from the world, and wonders how he could ever have created art. He says 'Wie fremd und unbekannt sind sich die Menschen!' ('How strange and unknown are people to each other!'), and declares that he is now like someone who watches the rest of the world rushing by like 'fremde Larven' ('strange creatures'). Although he could create when his wife was with him, he now feels utterly lonely and isolated from the world; everything is 'sinnlos, gänzlich sinnlos' ('meaningless, completely meaningless'), he says, and it is all the same 'ob die Flamme sie [meine Werke] rasch oder die Zeit sie langsam frißt' ('whether they [my works] are eaten up quickly by flames or slowly by time').

As he is at his most despairing, though, Palestrina is visited by 'Nine Dead Masters of Composition', who encourage him to write the mass (without success), and subsequently by a choir of angels, whose song inspires him to compose. Both the Masters and the angels are sent from God, and belong to a higher order of

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[14] No attribution is given for this quote in the score of *Palestrina,* but it is taken from *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays,* vol. 2, trans. E.F.J. Payne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 75.

reality than that of the mundane world. It is thus suggested that Palestrina also exists on this level. He is an artist of genius, ordained by God and implicitly 'true' and 'correct'. The Masters tell the composer quite explicitly that he must write the mass because God wishes it. In answer to Palestrina's question 'wer befiehlt's?' ('who commands it?'), they answer:

> Der alte Weltenmeister, der ohne Namen ist, der gleichfalls untertan uraltem Wort am Rand der Ewigkeit. Er schafft sein Werk, wie du das deine, er schmiedet Ringe sich, Figuren, Steine zu der schimmernden Kette der Zeiten der Weltbegebenheiten.... Den Schlußstein zum Gebäude zu fügen sei bereit... Dann strahlst du hell, dann klingst du rein, Pierluigi, du, an seiner schönen Ketten der letzten Stein.

[The age-old Master of the world, who has no name; who's likewise subject to the primeval word on the rim of eternity. He does his work as you do yours, he forges rings, images, stones, into the shimmering chain of ages and into the events of the world.... Be ready to add the structure's final stone... Then your light will shine, your sound be pure, Pierluigi, you will be the last stone on his chain.]

Palestrina only suffers while he 'löck[t] wider den Stachel' ('opposes necessity'), the Masters tell him. He must accept his fate, which is to be separated from the world in order to create great art; once he has assented to this, his place as 'der letzte Stein' on 'seiner schönen Ketten' ('the last stone on his [God's] chain') is assured. This meeting and Palestrina's experience of angelic intervention leads him to the realisation that his artistic calling makes it necessary for him to live apart from other mortals.

The angels' dictation to Palestrina of the substance of his mass illustrates his connection with the divine and his removal from the world. Their music is set apart texturally from the music which led up to it: the previous comparatively 'empty' texture and tonally ambiguous music following the meeting with the Masters is replaced by the expansive A-major of the Kyrie, with high sopranos, first one singing solo and later a whole chorus, and a richer orchestral texture. The orchestration of the angels' music draws on traditional signifiers for the angelic or divinely supernatural found in music of the nineteenth century, for instance, in

Mahler's Eighth Symphony, Liszt's 'Faust' Symphony, or the end of *Parsifal.* It is distinguished particularly by prominent harp arpeggios and high solo violins, as well as by the lofty vocal lines. The music which the angels sing is based on the *Missa Papae Marcelli* by the real, historical Palestrina, although Pfitzner adapts this music substantially. For example, he suggests the 'angelic' and literally 'higher' nature of the mass by shifting the whole register up from the historical Palestrina's original into a higher tessitura . In Pfitzner's version, the choir of sopranos and altos never descends below middle C, in contrast to the more bass-dominated SATTBB of the original. The angels are also frequently situated above the stave in Pfitzner's reworking, even reaching the stratospheric heights of high C, while Palestrina's original music never goes above a G. Palestrina's inspiration by the angels is depicted through his literal repetition of the angels' motifs. Pfitzner uses the head motives from the Kyrie, Christe and Credo of the real *Missa Papae Marcelli,* but does not use the motives 'straight', staying close to Palestrina's original music. Rather, he adapts them into his own style, embellishing the original through adding extensions and melismas to Palestrina's phrases, as well as adding the lavish orchestral accompaniment, transforming the tempered Renaissance music into an effusive jubilation.[15] (Ex.1 shows the melodic correspondences between Palestrina's original and Pfitzner's reworking.) As the scene progresses, Palestrina sings more of his own music, without copying the angels. Such original music is used to express his own sentiments. It may be derived from the angels' music, and may work in conjunction with it, for instance, the passage from fig.164+1 where Palestrina imitates the angels' 'Christe', and then sings his own line in chorus with the angels. This suggests how Palestrina is inspired by the angelic music, but at the same time is able to act independently of it, demonstrating the ability of the genius to be originally creative once inspired.[16]

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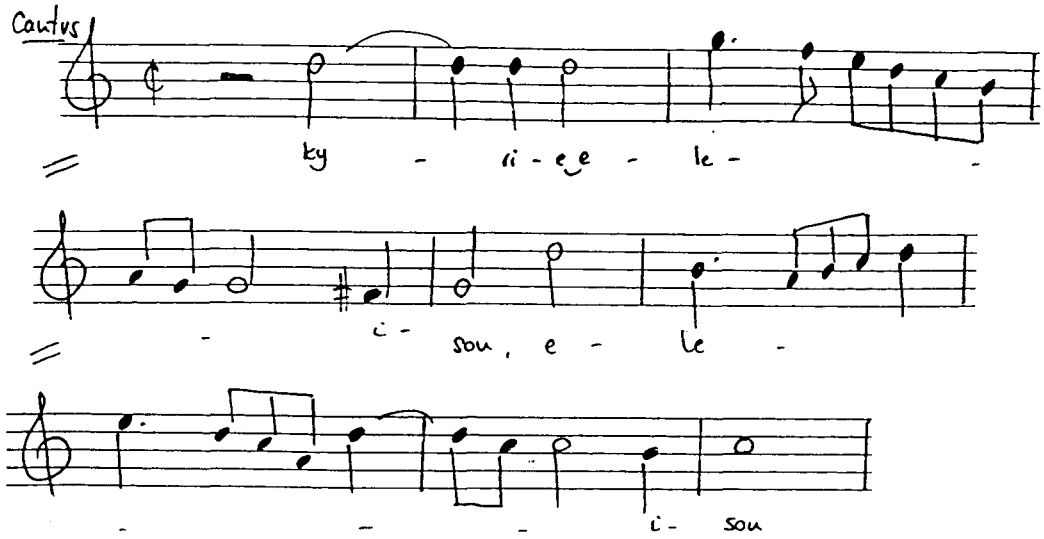
[15] For the words 'Gloria in excelsis Deo', Pfitzner uses a phrase from the original Credo. A detailed analysis of the affinities between Pfitzner's music and the *Missa Papae Marcelli* can be found in Williamson, *The Music of Hans Pfitzner,* 189 ff; also see Toller, *Pfitzner's Palestrina,* 163 ff.

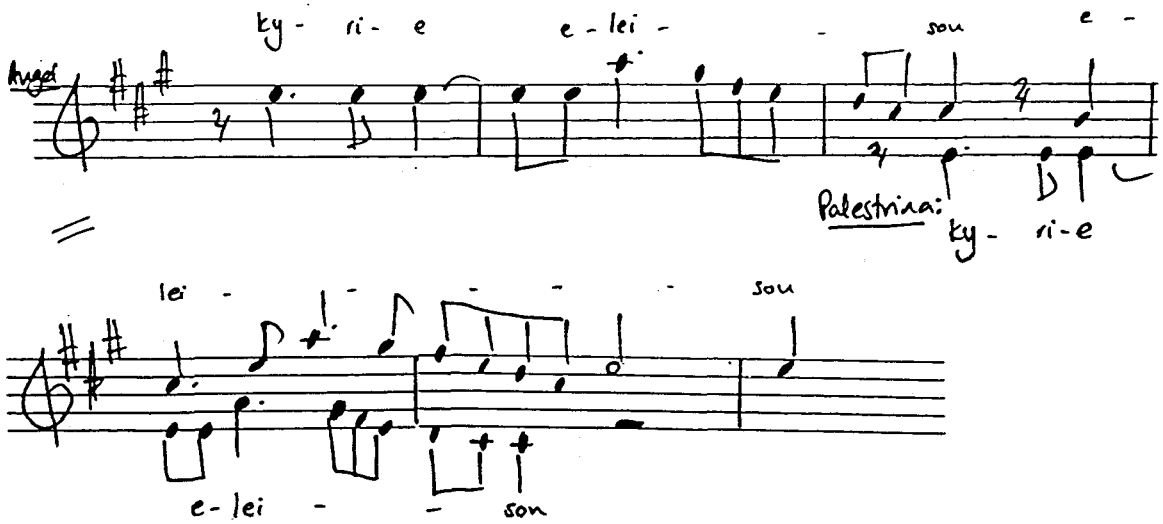
[16] Similar 'angelic' music to that in this scene is used almost leitmotivically elsewhere in the opera, appearing whenever angels are mentioned, such as in Act One, as Borromeo sings 'Die Engel halten Wacht' ('The angels keep watch'), or when the Cardinal Morone sings in Act Two, 'der hohe Papst, er sprach zu uns: "Engel des Friedens seid!"' ('the holy Pope, he told us to be "Angels of peace!"').

Ex.1 - Comparison of melodies of Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli* and Pfitzner's reworking

Palestrina - opening of Kyrie

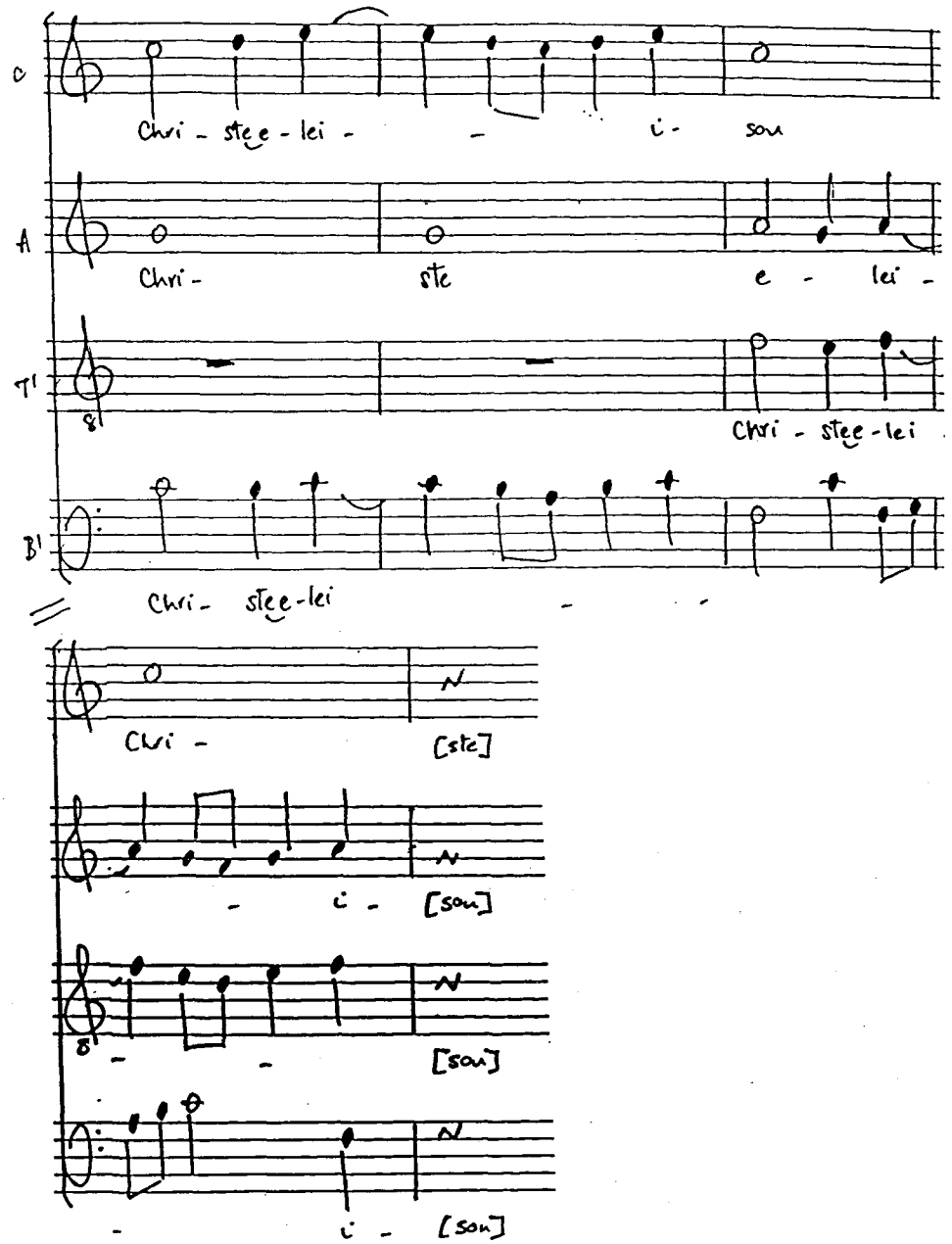


Pfitzner - beginning of Angels' Kyrie (fig.161+7)

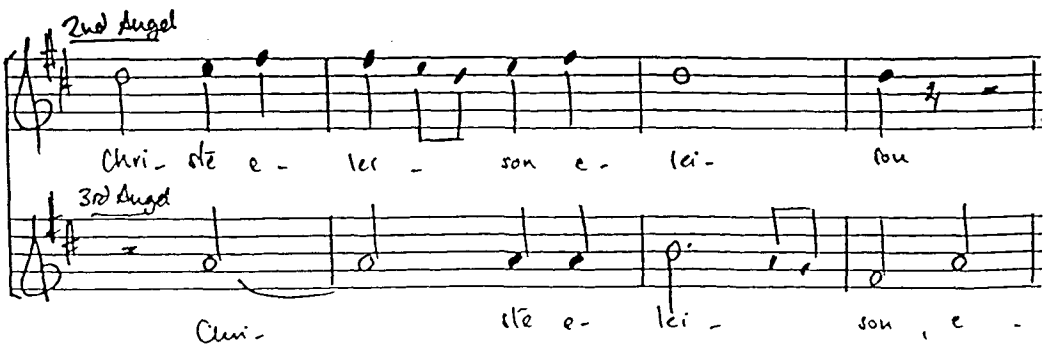


Ex.1 continued

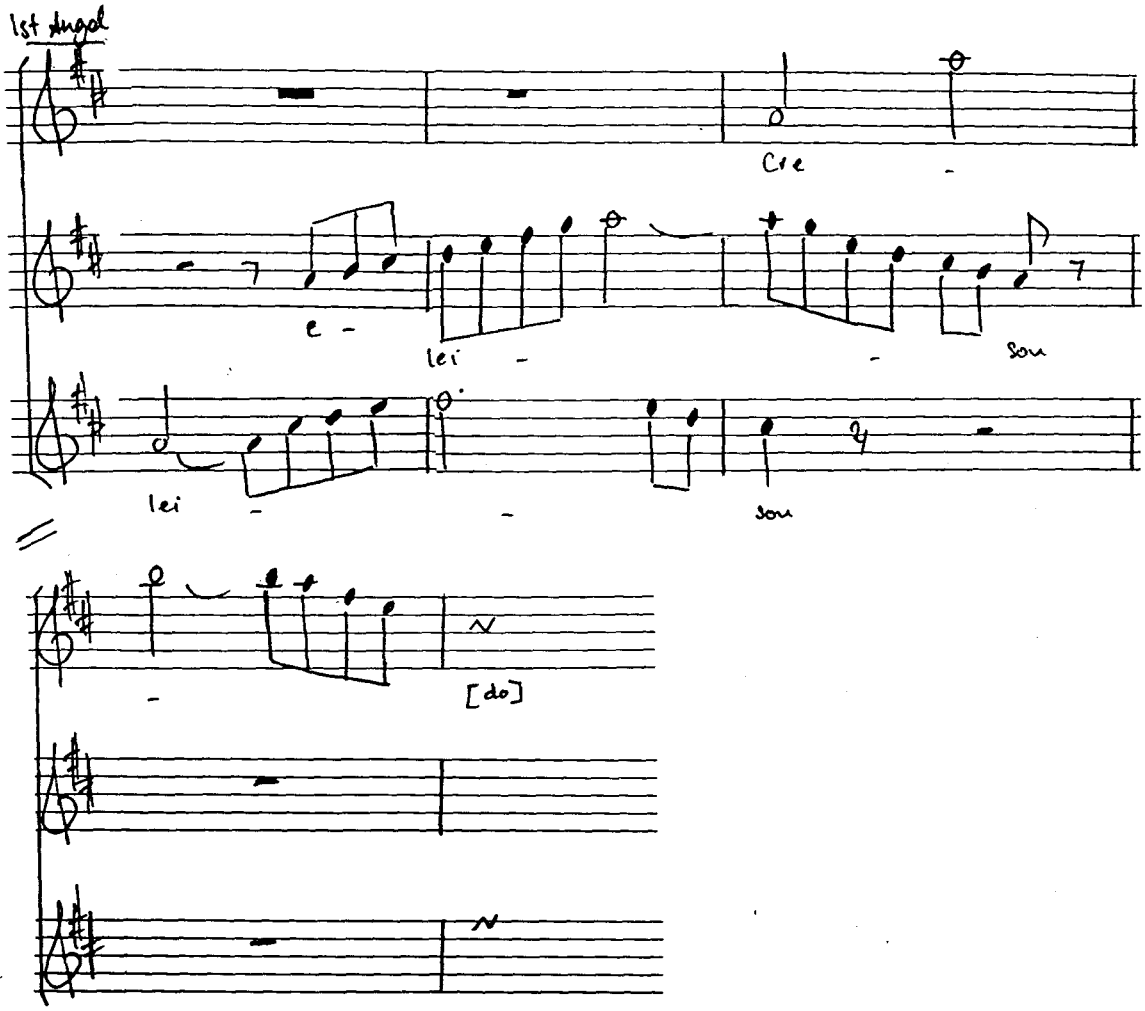
Palestrina - opening of Christe



Pfitzner - Christe (fig.164+3)



Ex.1 continued



After this scene, we next meet Palestrina in Act Three, where he has become comfortable with his lot. He is still in the same room as in Act One, and remains isolated from the world around him; on the surface, it seems that little has changed. However, his inspiration by the angels and the creativity he experienced has re-assured him that his true place in the world is to produce art. The composer's continuing separation from the world is emphasised by his behaviour in this act. He assumes the posture of the slightly-distracted Romantic genius, with his thoughts on a higher level: he moves slowly, 'gazes straight ahead', and is 'lost in thought'. The music of the final bars of the piece (from fig.59-2) further articulates Palestrina's continuing isolation. According to Hans Rectanus, in his study of the music of the opera, this passage encapsulates the separation of artist and world expressed in the Schopenhauer citation in the score which I quoted above.[17] Two musical worlds, signifying the composer and the society outside him, are vividly juxtaposed; as the composer sits down at his organ in contemplation, 'lost in thoughts of music', cries of 'Evviva Palestrina!' ('Long live Palestrina!') can be heard outside. The musical style associated with Palestrina, comprised of one of the motifs associated with him throughout the work (see below), appears at the beginning and end of the passage, in the orchestra; in between, Palestrina plays the organ on stage using the same style. This material is instrumental, predominantly polyphonic and based around a pitch centre of D. Set against this is the distant music of the people on the street, whose interruptions are in a choral, homophonic texture, with a simple mandoline accompaniment; this music is centred around a C/E dyad. The division of texture, tonal centres and instrumentation between Palestrina and the world outside reinforces the separateness of the two realms, while the final closure, Palestrina's organ playing a sustained D, indicates whose world is the more important and lasting.

The employment of a number of significant leitmotifs during the opera forms a distinct musical 'world' for Palestrina. For instance, a nexus of five leitmotifs is used to signify his genius. Williamson points out that the term 'motif'

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[17] Rectanus, *Leitmotivik und Form in den musikdramatischen Werken Hans Pfitzners* (Würzburg: Konrad Triltsch Verlag, 1967), 107.

is not strictly accurate here, as it implies a fairly short and distinct musical entity.[18] Within this nexus, however, the motifs are not easily differentiated, as some of them are derived from each other and often appear together in longer musical passages, with one motif leading seamlessly into another. Nevertheless, I shall continue to use 'motif' as a generic term, although its insufficiencies should be borne in mind. The opening of the first act Prelude is an instance of a motif which is germinal for other motifs (ex.2a). Its 'archaic' fifths, which allude to the historical Palestrina's own compositional style, give rise to other related ideas, such as the motif of ex.2b, and a transposed and rhythmically altered version, ex.2c. Another motif used to invoke the composer and his world is found in the Prelude to Act One, ex.2d; its harmony and use of suspensions again evoke the musical style of the historical Palestrina.[19] The same passage of the Prelude includes a cadential figure, ex.2e, which also assumes its own motivic status during the ensuing music. Some writers on the opera have drawn attention to these motifs in their analytical investigations and sought to categorise them. Rectanus, for example, calls the motif of ex.2c the 'creation theme' *(Schaffensthema),* pointing out that both the full and shortened appearances of this motto are associated with text which refers to the creative process of the artist.[20] Similarly, Williamson comments that ex.2a is equated 'both with Palestrina's fortitude in creation and with the drying-up of that creativity', as well as being linked to the Masters. In sum, he says, this motif 'connotes a variety of states and ideas, representing an ideal substance lurking behind them: ecstasy, inspiration, music, and creation.'[21] Franklin offers a different view, suggesting that this motif is not a 'Palestrina motif' but that its occurrence 'suggests rather that it stands both for the ideal and the memory of the "old times" that are symbolized for Palestrina by the noble polyphonic style.'[22] Williamson

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[18] Williamson, *The Music of Hans Pfitzner,* 174.

[19] Ibid.

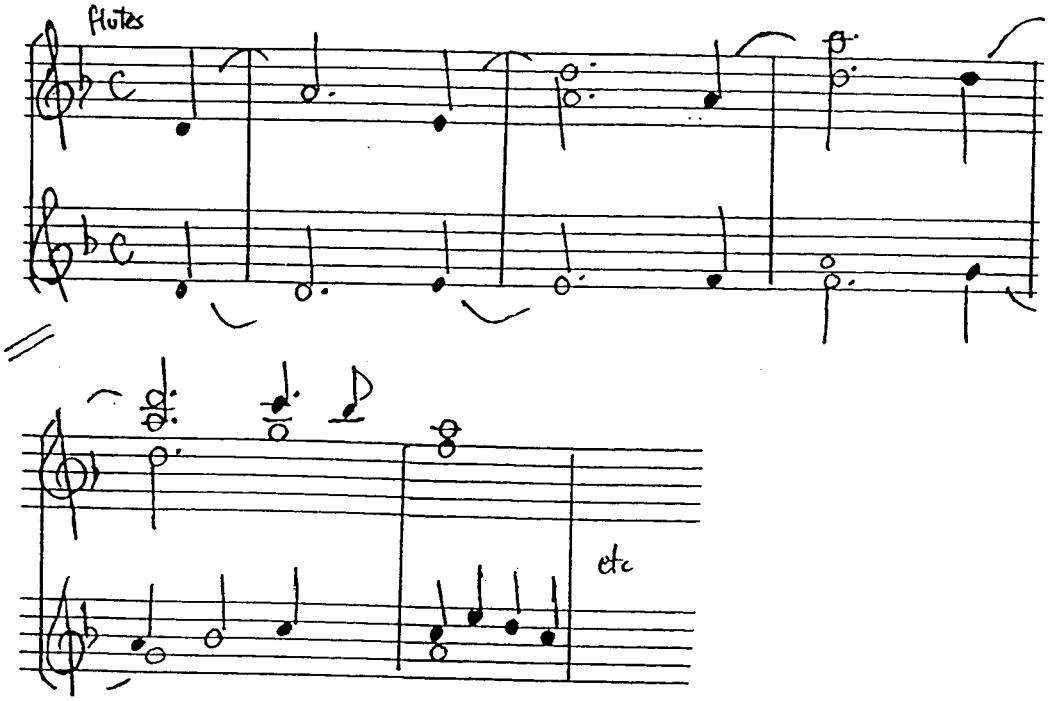
[20] Rectanus, *Leitmotivik und Form,* 111. Rectanus draws on a 1917 appraisal of the work by Walter Riezler, 'Hans Pfitzner und die deutsche Bühne' (Munich, 1917).

[21] Williamson, *The Music of Hans Pfitzner,* 179.

[22] Franklin, 'A Musical Legend', in the programme book for the Royal Opera House production of *Palestrina,* January-February 1997, 15.

Ex.2 - Leitmotifs associated with Palestrina and his creativity

(a)



(b)

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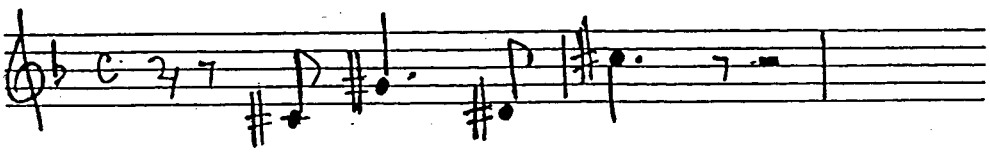
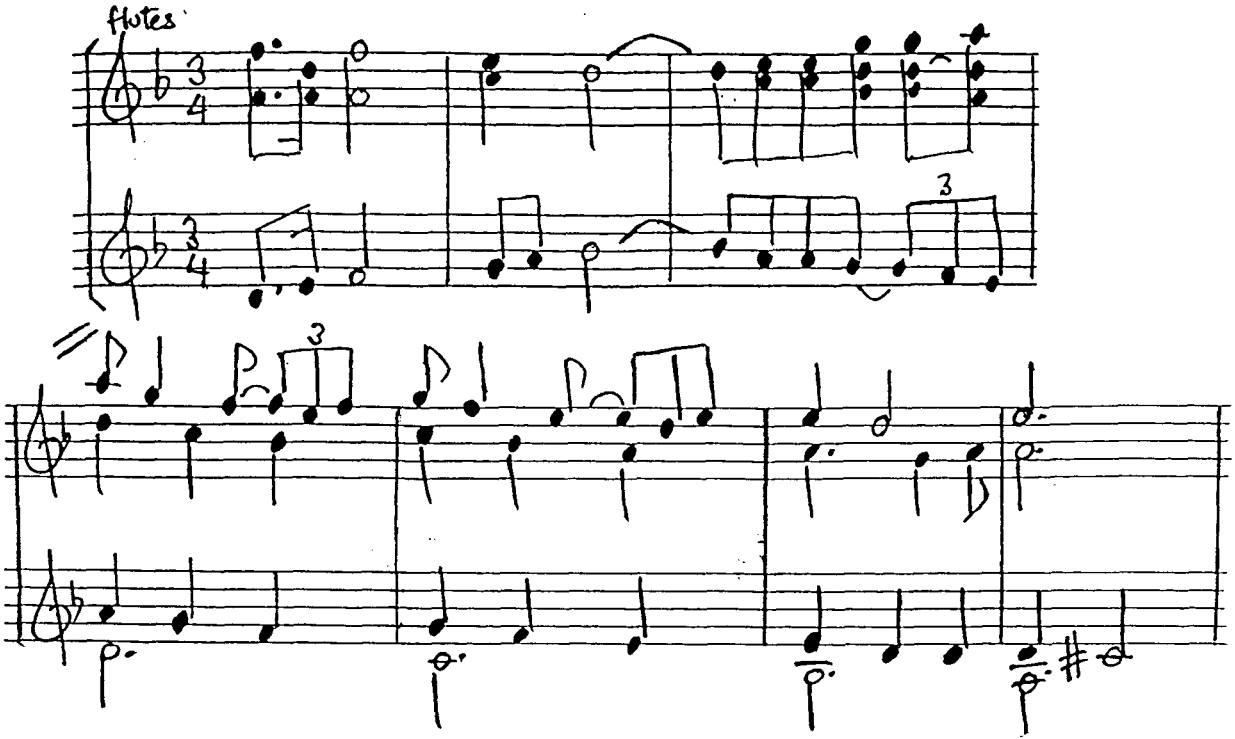
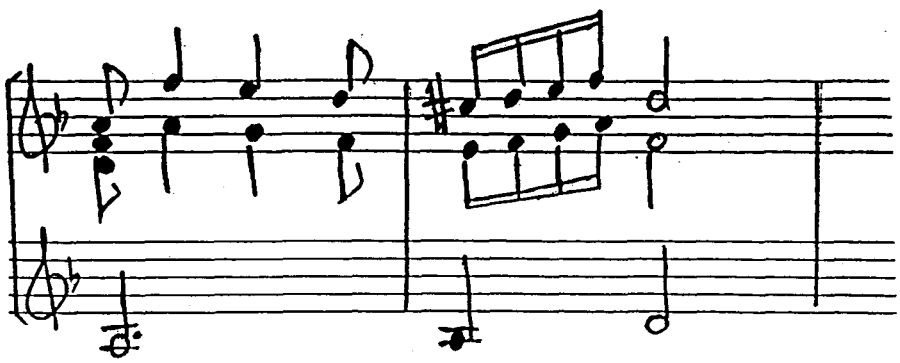


Ex.2 continued

(d)



(e)



designates the motif of ex.2b the motif of the 'Masters of the Past', and also says that ex.2d belongs to the Masters, as well as being related to Palestrina.[23]

This diversity of opinion shows that it is difficult to tie any one of these motifs down precisely to a definite 'meaning', because of their appearance in a variety of contexts. However, all pertain to the creation of art, by either Palestrina or his predecessors, and to Palestrina's place in his compositional lineage. Taken together, this group of motifs may be seen to present a musical picture of Palestrina the genius; they establish a separate musical plane for the composer, stylistically distinct from the music elsewhere in the opera, and constitute a musical environment in which he lives and with which he interacts. The motifs in the orchestra circle around Palestrina, his words and his actions, sometimes accompanying the composer himself, or occasionally occurring with characters with whom he is associated, such as Borromeo, Ighino or the Masters, when they talk about his creativity. In all of these cases, the motifs allude to Palestrina's talent and heritage.

After their introduction in the Prelude of the first act, these motifs occur principally in four passages. The first is during Ighino's conversation with Silla about Palestrina in Act One Scene Two, the second in Borromeo's scene with the composer in Act One Scene Three, the third during Palestrina's meeting with the Masters, and the last at the end of Act Three. The music accompanying Ighino's, and later Borromeo's, speeches create the musical environment for the doubting composer, and fixes the association between his own music and the composers of genius of the past. In Ighino's speech, the motifs of ex.2a and ex.2e are used in connection with Palestrina's former compositional creativity, such as when he says 'Ein Menschenalter schuf und schuf er Werke' ('He created work after work his whole life'). Sometimes this functions through a negative association, such as when Ighino tells how Palestrina can no longer compose: 'Da ward es still in ihm und leer' ('So everything in him became still and empty'). The music here contradicts Ighino's words, suggesting how Palestrina remains a genius despite his current lack

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[23] Williamson, *The Music of Hans Pfitzner,* 183 & 176.

of inspiration. In Borromeo's speech, associations are made particularly between Palestrina and his predecessors: the motif of ex.2b appears as Borromeo tells him how 'die toten Meister heben ihre Hände' ('the dead Masters lift their hands [to you]') and at 'wenn denn in Eurem Herzen keine Liebe für Jene, denen Ihr soviel verdankt' ('if you have no love in your heart for those to whom you owe so much'). The music of the opening of the Prelude (ex.2a) accompanies Borromeo as he says that Palestrina will create the mass in order to 'save' music: 'Auf, Meister! Euch zum ew'gen Ruhme, zur Rettung der Musik in Rom' ('Come, Master! For the sake of your eternal fame, for the saving of music in Rome').

Palestrina's place in a line of great composers is accentuated in the scene of his meeting with the Masters. Here, the significance of the nexus of genius motifs is underlined through their use by the Masters in association with text which describes Palestrina's talent and his connection to his predecessors. For instance, the ex.2b motif is used by the Masters with the words 'Auch du uns vertraut' ('You are familiar to us too'). The same motif is used in the orchestra when the Masters affirm that they really exist ('Wir sind'), supporting them and underlining the fact that they are really 'alive' through the motif's insistence on the presence of creativity. Similarly, the orchestral voice asserts this presence when Palestrina asks the Masters 'starbt Ihr nicht schon?' ('have you not already died?'); the motif of ex.2b contradicts him, being heard in the orchestra in answer to Palestrina's question. In this scene, the music depicts the dramatic tension between the Masters and Palestrina through the separation of the characters in terms of musical material. Only the Masters use the genius motifs; Palestrina himself uses or is accompanied by different music, signifying his resistance to their endeavours to persuade him to write the mass. However, Palestrina's assimilation into the world of the Masters is demonstrated at the end of Act Three, after his 'conversion' by the angels. In the final scene of the work, as Palestrina sits contemplating at his organ, he offers a supplication to God: 'Nun schmiede mich, den letzten Stein an einem deiner tausend Ringe, du Gott! Und ich will guter Dinge und friedvoll sein' ('Now forge me, God, as the last stone on one of your thousand rings! And I will be content and at peace'). Here the motif of ex.2a is used, as well as the motif of ex.2b and its inversion. The motif of ex.2d forms the music for the final bars,

surrounding Palestrina's organ playing and its juxtaposition with the 'Evvivas'. The previously conflicting voices of the Masters scene, between the Masters and Palestrina, are therefore reconciled, as Palestrina accepts his fate as a composer and genius.

Another important motif in addition to the 'genius' motifs is what we may designate the 'loneliness' leitmotif, first found at fig.113-3 played by a solo viola.[24] The melody is particularly predominant during Palestrina's monologue in Act One Scene Four, following Borromeo's departure. It first appears preceding the phrase 'Wie fremd und unbekannt sind sich die Menschen! Das Innerste der Welt ist Einsamkeit' ('How strange and unknown are people to each other! The essence of the world is solitude'), and later at 'Wie schrecklich, sich plötzlich einsam tief im Wald zu finden' ('How terrible to suddenly find oneself alone deep in a wood'). (It also recurs in the viola during the final part of the monologue.) In addition, the motif occurs at the beginning of the sixth scene, just before the appearance of the angels, as Palestrina sings 'Allein in dunkler Tiefe voll Angst ich armer Mensch rufe laut nach oben' ('Alone in deepest darkness, I, a poor man full of fear, lift my voice upwards').[25] The use of the 'loneliness' motif by the solo viola, and its relationship to the rest of the orchestra in the passage from fig.113-3 to fig.124+7, may be read as depicting Palestrina himself. The viola becomes a kind of alter ego, an instrumental version of the composer; its relationship to the orchestra signifies the composer's relationship to the world. The viola is almost literally alone in its placement with the other instruments: it appears either completely unaccompanied or with a very sparing accompaniment, and even when it is accompanied, it stands out against the rest of the texture, 'strange and unknown' to the rest of the orchestra. The characterisation of the viola as an alter ego for Palestrina is accentuated by the instrument's use of the same melodic material as Palestrina, particularly the 'loneliness' motif, either simultaneously or in dialogue. When the

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[24] Toller, *Pfitzner's Palestrina,* 156. Also see Rectanus, *Leitmotivik und Form,* 113 and Williamson, *The Music of Hans Pfitzner,* 182-183.

[25] The motif is heard again in the last act, when Palestrina remembers his night of creative fervour: 'Ich schrieb sie [die Messe] in einer Nacht' ('I wrote it [the mass] in one night').

solo viola returns later in the scene, at fig. 121+2 (after passages which use different musical material), it again shares notes and motifs with the voice.

The Council of Trent

Pfitzner says in his description of the 'triptych' in the opera that the world of Palestrina is the 'real' world, and this positive depiction is set against the negative portrayal of the Council of Trent through contrasts of music, geography, and through the *dramatis personae.* The Council is constructed as a representation of the 'hustle and bustle of the outside world', as Pfitzner terms it, and its disorder is established in various ways. For instance, the conflict between the different factions of the Council, from the opening bars of the act, depicts its primarily argumentative nature. The divisions follow national lines: Spanish, Italian and French. Derogatory references to nationalities are rife, for instance, Severolus's 'die Spanischen! Stets Hindernis und Dorn' ('the Spaniards! Always a hindrance and a thorn'), Madruscht's complaint when he sees 'ein Italiener mehr!' ('yet another Italian'), or Budoja's 'wir [sind] gesegnet... mit französischer Krätze und dem spanischen Grind' ('we're blessed with French itches and Spanish scabs'). At the beginning of the act, the conflict between groups is expressed through free-flowing insults, but these are contained at this stage within groups of fellow-countrymen. As the Council meeting proceeds, the antagonism becomes increasingly vehement, as an argument breaks out about the order in which the items on the agenda should be discussed. As this quarrel escalates, the earlier insults against nations are made explicit: Count Luna of Spain comes into open conflict with the French Cardinal of Lorraine, who questions the way the Count has been given a chair 'against established practice'. The Spanish provoke the Italians and the French, with Luna saying that 'wenn Spanien es will, so will's die Welt' ('If Spain wants it, then the world wants it') and then crying that he will invite the Protestants to the debate. At these remarks, the Council breaks out into 'pandemonium', and the meeting is adjourned, the various Council members still arguing as they leave. After they have dispersed, the conflict augments yet further,

as the servants of the Council members break out into open riot. The servants '[act] out on their own level the drama Their Eminences have staged for us on theirs'.[26]

The disorder and inherent tendency to argumentation amongst the Council members is established at the beginning of the Act in the Prelude, which employs musical materials found during the three arguments between the various factions later in the act. Although the first dispute, between the clerics (at fig.164-1), is constructed from new material, the second, as they depart while still disputing (fig.170+2), is based on music from the middle of the Prelude (fig.10-5), and the last, between the groups of servants (fig.183-1), is a recapitulation of the opening of the Prelude. The Prelude thus anticipates the presentation of the Council: both musically and dramatically, the Council is constituted from the beginning of the Act in negative terms, and this negativity is sustained until its conclusion.

The quarrels within the Council come about because of the disputed power relationships between the various participants. The political relations of the different nations - particularly the relationship between Spain and the Holy Roman Empire - are in flux, and as a result, arguments are based around these national questions. The Council members themselves display no small degree of hunger for power; as John Bokina states, 'Pfitzner lampoons the world of politics... This is not a world of spirituality, justice, or reconciliation. Rather, politics is associated with self-interest, pomp, and deceit, with force and violence lurking not very far in the background.'[27] Within this context of power-playing and ill-temper, the rare references to God seem ironic. The speech by the Cardinal Legate Morone, for instance, which contains the most extended exposition of the Council's purpose, is juxtaposed with some rather pompous self-praise, despite his call for 'humility':

> Den Heil'gen Geist, der die Konzilien leitet, der auch die heutige Versammlung lenkt, wir bitten ihn, daß er auf uns sich senkt und unserm Werk ein gutes End' bereitet. Des Diener die Legaten sind, der hohe Papst,

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[26] Lee, 'Pfitzner's *Palestrina*', 57.

[27] Bokina, 'Resignation, Retreat and Impotence', 165. Also Henderson: 'The Council of Trent is portrayed as an arena of power politics between supporters of Emperor and Pope, of conflicting national interest, of heated arguments, and of eventual disorder and violence' ('Hans Pfitzner's *Palestrina*', 36).

er sprach zu uns: 'Engel des Friedens seid!' Dies Wort im Herzen tragend, bitt' ich Gott, daß mir das Friedenswerk bei Euch gelinge... Ehrwürd'ge Väter! Liebe Brüder! Bei aller Demut, die den Christen ziert, seid heute eingedenk: Wir sind die Blüte alles Menschentums. Wir sind berufen, ihm zum Heile den Turm zu baun, der allen Zeiten trotzt. Wir, vor dem Herrn zwar klein, doch vor den Menschen aller Völker groß.

[We beg the Holy Ghost, who guides all councils and also steers today's meeting, to descend to us so that our work might reach a good end. Our Lord the Pope, whose servants we legates are, bade us 'Be angels of peace!'. Carrying these words in my heart, I pray to God that the work of peace may succeed with you... Reverend fathers! Beloved brothers! With all humility, which graces Christians, keep this thought in mind: We are the flower of all humanity. We are called to build a tower for its salvation that will defy the course of time. Although we are truly small before God, yet we are great in the eyes of all people.]

As the reverse side to their wishes for power, many of the churchmen are portrayed as shallow and obsessed with trivia, focusing on minor details rather than on important issues in an effort to exert their authority. Instances of this concern with trivia are shown by Bishop Budoja, who worries about whether his expenses will be paid, and by the lack of agreement between Council members regarding the order of the agenda.

The portrayal of the Council's 'hustle and bustle' is further achieved simply through the large number of people who appear in the second act. This stands in direct contrast to the more sparsely populated environment of Palestrina in Acts One and Three. The Council of Trent is a chaotic hubbub, with a panoply of different characters coming and going, all in clerical garb, and many with the same voice type. Out of twelve solo characters in the act, Morone, Luna and Borromeo are all baritones, Madruscht, Brus and Lorraine are basses, Severolus and Avosmediano are bass-baritones. The potential difficulty of distinguishing between characters is exacerbated by the rapid pace of events in the act, particularly in the first section before the Council meeting officially starts. This section is a rush of activity, with one churchman arriving shortly after another, and sometimes barely being introduced before his successor appears.

The appearance of one Council member, Abdisu, the Patriarch of Assyria, highlights the real nature of the meeting by acting as a foil to the other, self-important, members. Unlike the other delegates, Abdisu is not concerned with consolidating his own power, but is the one man who seems truly in touch with God, wishing to serve God and the Pope, and to help to bring about decisions that will be in the best interests of the Church. As he first enters the Council, he sings with a sentiment which is more pious and religious than anything expressed by other Council members:

> Von weither wandert' ich, durch Mühsal und Beschwerde, doch meine Füße trugen froh mich her. Daß ich den Tag des Herrn erleben darf, daß meine alten Augen dieses Werk noch schaun: die Neugeburt der ganzen Christenheit - des freuet sich und jubiliert mein Herz. Und gerne scheid' ich nun von dieser schönen Erde.

[I have come from afar through misery and hardship, yet my feet have borne me here with joy. That I should live to see the day of the Lord, and my old eyes should see this work: to see all Christianity reborn - that fills my heart with joy to overflowing. And now I'd gladly take leave of this beautiful world.]

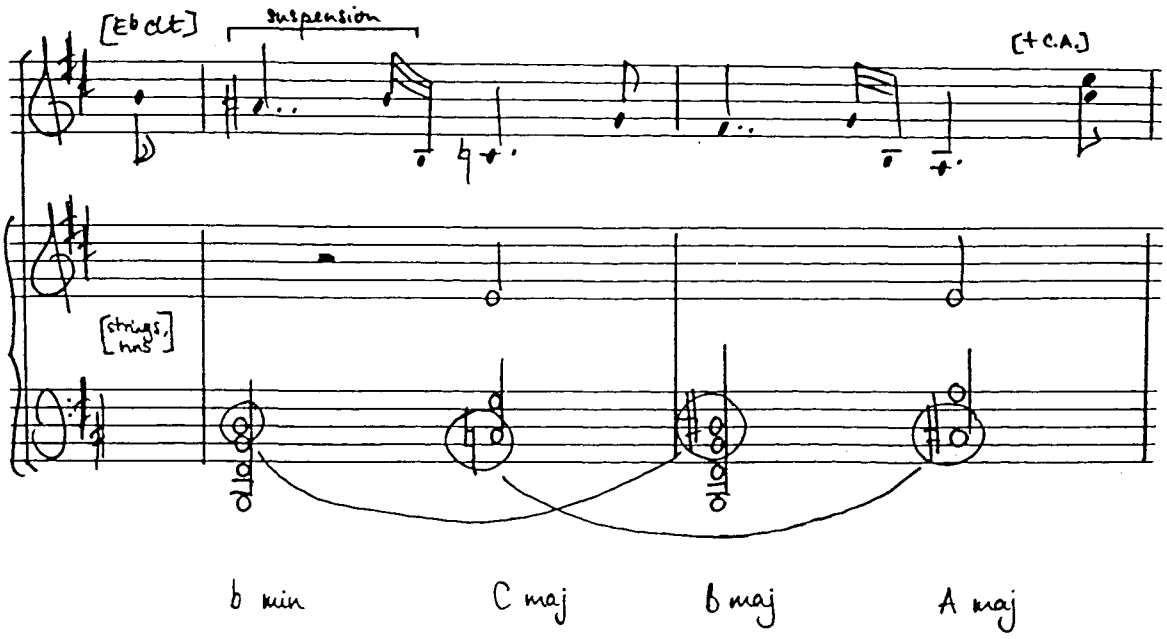
Abdisu cuts a slightly ridiculous figure: he is old, partly senile, and spends most of the meeting asleep. Nevertheless, his peacefulness and quietness, although taken to extremes, form a strong contrast to the raucous argument of the rest of the Council.

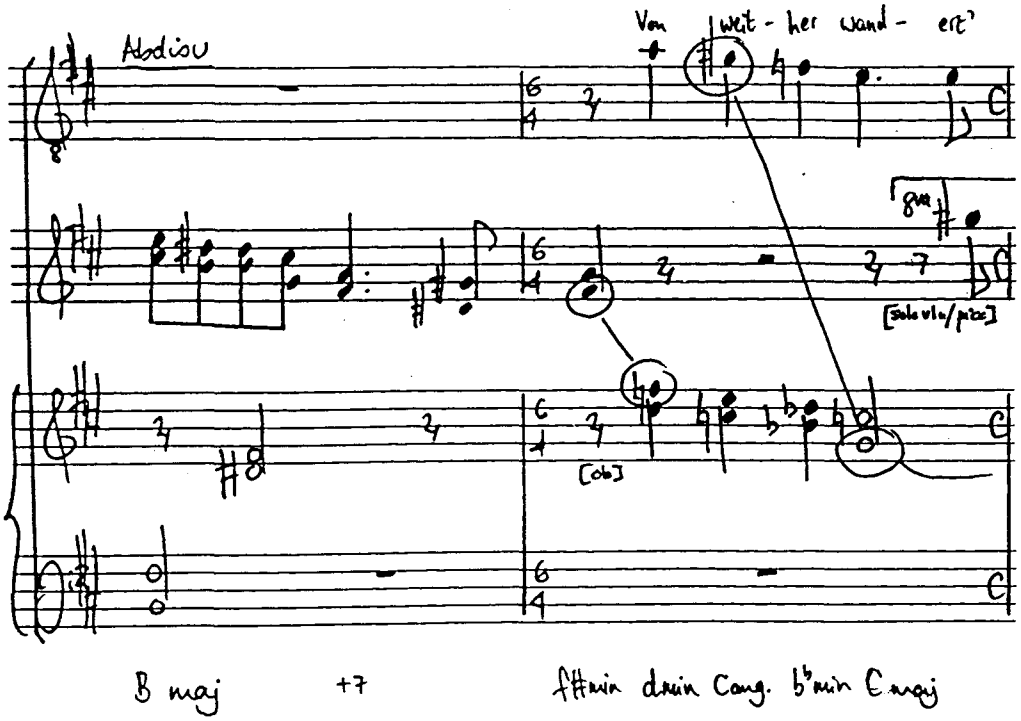
Abdisu is 'otherworldly' in a double sense: he has his mind more on matters spiritual than mundane, and is literally from another 'world', the distant and strange land of Assyria. His portrayal as distanced from the society around him, and in touch with the divine, is comparable to the character of Palestrina. The Patriarch only sings twice, first when he enters the Council's hall, and later, in a moment of comedy, when he stands to comment on the discussion about Palestrina (although the discussion has already moved on) and gets the composer's name wrong. The fact that the only time he speaks, Abdisu talks about Palestrina rather than any other Council business hints at an affinity between the two men. Furthermore, like the composer, Abdisu is accompanied by a parallel, distinct, musical world, which suggests a connection with Palestrina by virtue

of its 'otherness' and through similarities of orchestration and melody. Its peculiar harmonies and instrumentation form a small section of musical exoticism distinguished from the music around it. Abdisu's song divides into an ABA' form: the A sections are the more harmonically peculiar, with a minimum of functional harmony, and instead a shifting between adjacent chords. The occurrence of false relations and alternations between major and minor versions of a chord contribute to the lack of conventional functionality in the harmony. Melodically, the sliding upwardly-resolving suspensions in the clarinet, later taken over by the violin, add to the strange effect. (Ex.3 shows the first A section of the song with its distinctive harmonies and melody.) The second, B, section (fig.102+5 to fig.103+4) is unequivocally in C major for much of its duration, apart from a two-bar interlude (fig.103-3 and -2), but becomes more ambiguous at the end of the section. The B section's C major passages are those which are most directly concerned with text about God: 'Daß ich den Tag des Herrn erleben darf... Die Neugeburt der ganzen Christenheit' ('That I should live to see the day of the Lord... to see all Christianity reborn'). These situate Abdisu as otherworldly in a spiritual sense, just as the A sections' exoticism places him as geographically separate.

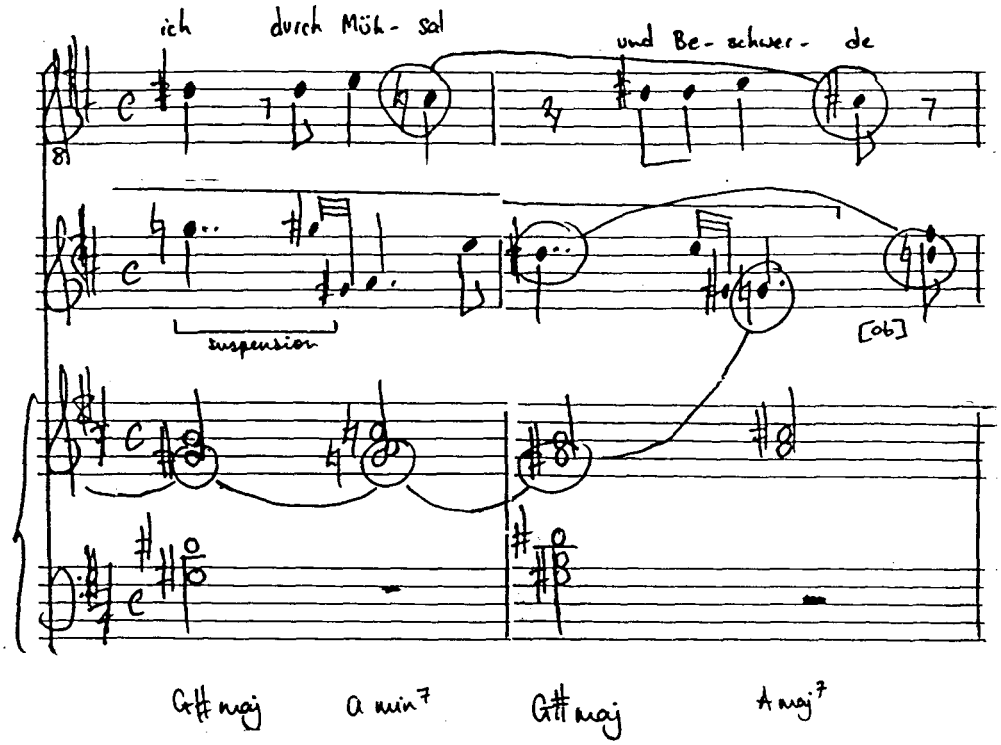
Similarities between Palestrina's music and Abdisu's song include the instrumentation of the latter, which parallels the orchestration of the angels' scene in Act One. For instance, there is prominent use of the 'angelic' harp, and the high solo violin, accompanied in this instance by the piccolo. The instrumental range is also particularly high at first, with a preponderance of instruments playing above middle C, and only the occasional punctuating bass note, suggesting, as is the case with Palestrina's angelic dictation, the 'higher' standing of Abdisu spiritually. The B passage, which is distinct melodically from the A sections, introduces melismatic writing, while the intervals between notes are expanded, from intervals of a major third or smaller in the A sections (with only one exception, at 'gerne'), to more frequent fourths and fifths in the B section. Both these rising fourths and fifths and the melismas may be compared to the music of the angels' Kyrie in Act One, as shown in ex.4. In the same way that Palestrina's music sets the composer apart from the world, Abdisu's music formulates him as distinct from the rest of the

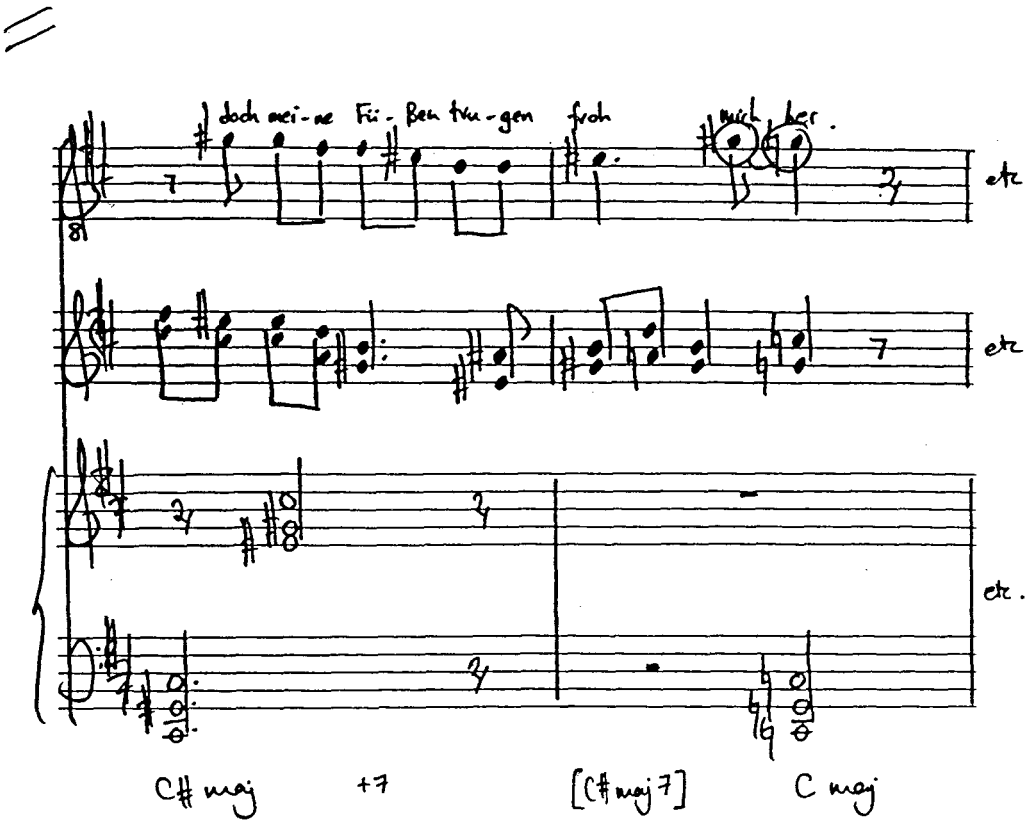
Ex.3 - Abdisu's song





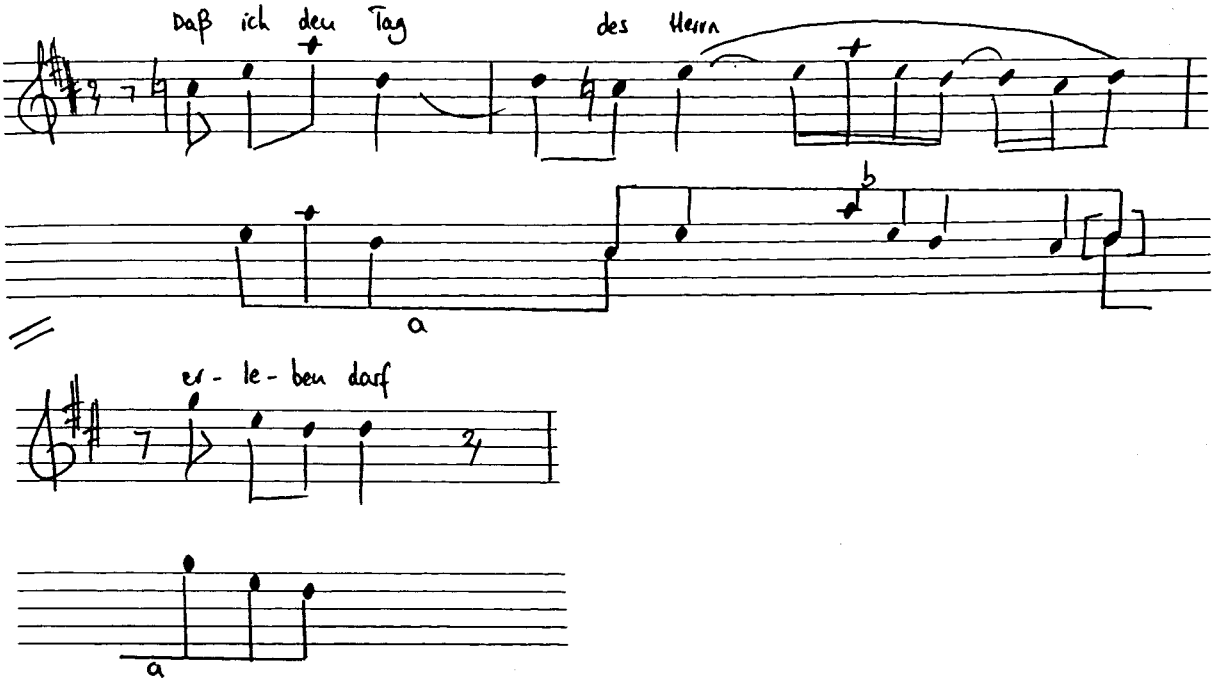
Ex.3 continued



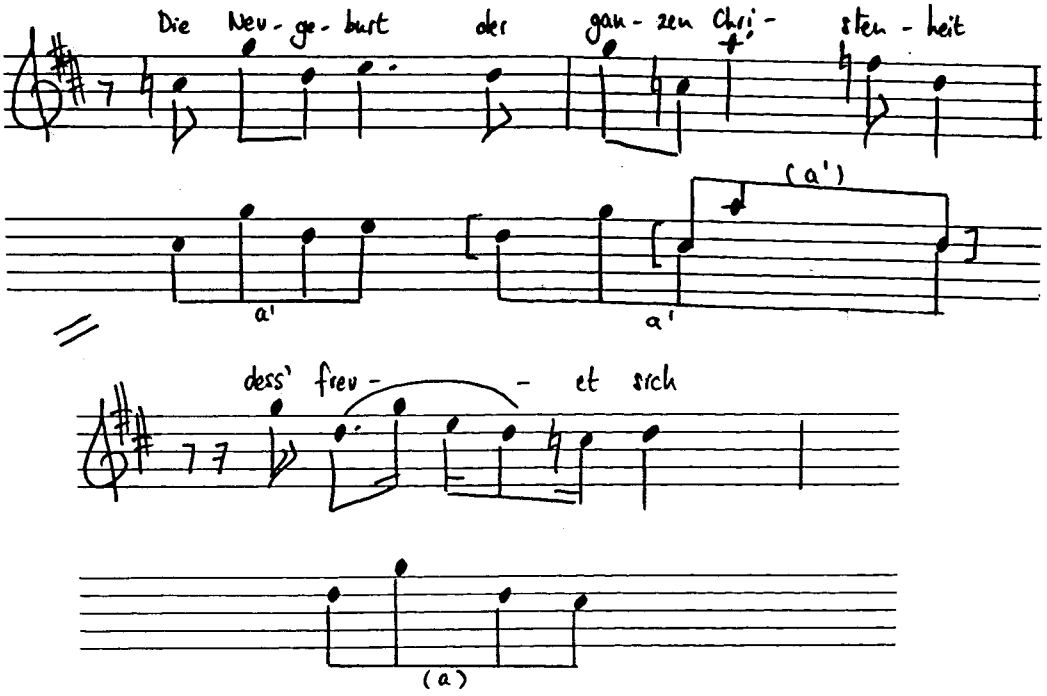


Ex.4 - Comparison of Abdisu's song to Angels' Kyrie of Act One

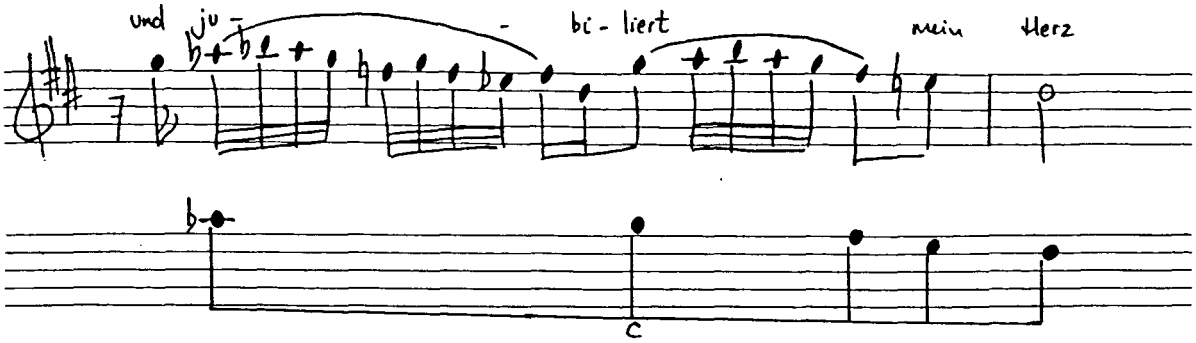
a) Abdisu (fig.102+5 - fig.102+7)



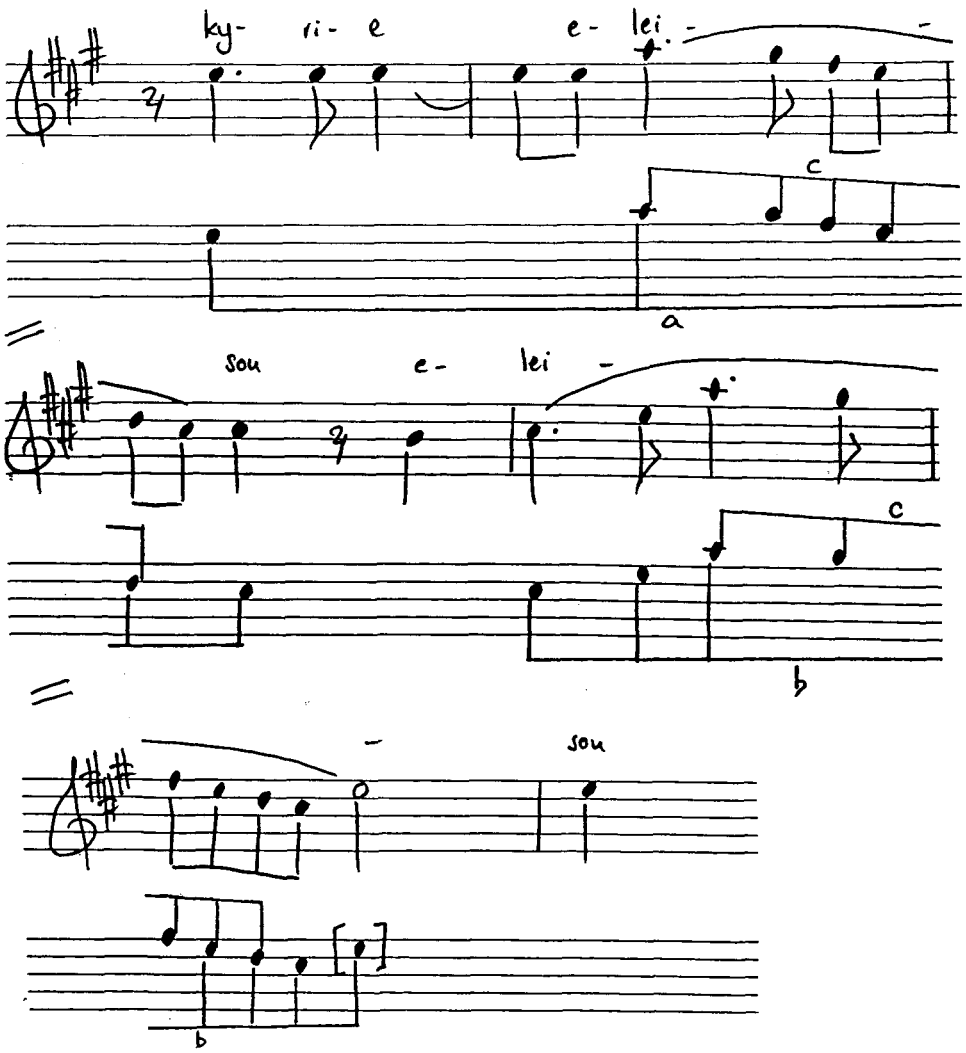
(fig.103-1 - fig.103+4)



Ex.4 continued



b) Angels (fig.161+7 - fig.162+2)



Council; the two characters are both separated from the everyday world through their closeness to the divine.

Palestrina's configuration as two distinct worlds demonstrates the essential opposition of artist and society that lies at the heart of the work. The Council, as symbolic of society, is painted in negative terms, and is contrasted with the solitary and contemplative milieu of the composer, whose disassociation from worldly affairs is essential if true art is to be created. Palestrina's abstention from involvement in society is shown to be necessary: it is through his preclusion from participation in the outside world that he is able to partake fully of his existence on a higher spiritual plane, in touch with angels and with God.

***Palestrina*'s Context**

Political Conservatism c. World War I

We may understand the dualistic portrayal of the Council and Palestrina by examining the context in which the opera was written, and in particular, by turning to a book written when the dominant political system of that era was under threat, Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen.* This book, to which I shall return in more detail shortly, exemplifies the concerns of the ruling classes, and expresses them in a way which may be compared to Pfitzner's presentation of society and the artist in *Palestrina.* Both Mann and Pfitzner lived in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Germany, where cultural and political norms had been institutionalised since the previous century, with the structures of power long in position. A hereditary aristocracy had been the system of governance in the princely states which had existed in Germany before their unification in 1871; after this date, the Prussian monarch was Kaiser of Germany.[28] This dominant governmental system, where there was one absolute and ultimate source of power, was therefore so long established that it was generally simply accepted as normal

[28] Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire 1871-1918,* trans. Kim Traynor (Providence & Oxford: Berg, 1985), 54.

and 'correct' within the nation's psyche. Alternatives to this state of affairs were not to be considered, and threats to the established regime, such as democracy, could be dismissed as foolish aberrations. This was despite the nominal existence of an elected Reichstag, or parliament, since 1871; this Reichstag was little more than token representation as it could be overruled by the Kaiser.[29] Because it was effectively answerable to the monarch, the Reichstag was, perhaps, tolerated, as well as because the electoral system was not at all a democratic one, but heavily skewed in favour of the right wing.[30] Even so, some thought the parliament too 'democratic', and would have preferred a return to absolutism: the German Conservative Party, for instance, thought democracy was a sin against 'Divine Law'.[31]

A predominant rhetorical discourse gave these power structures validity. The dominant culture had deemed that that which was consistent with the prevailing view was 'right' and 'natural', and especially, truly 'German'. Turn-of-the-century nationalist associations, such as the Pan-German League and the 'Reich Association against Social Democracy', for instance, conveyed their arguments in favour of 'Germanness' 'as scientific "insights" gained from Nature and History', rhetoric which convinced many people of their accuracy.[32] The conservative and monarchist political climate was perpetuated by (and because of) its inscription into the whole social and educational milieu. For example, on the command of Wilhelm II, the school curriculum was drawn up in 1889 in order to 'instil a conservative image of existing conditions in the young', children being educated in traditional

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[29] Volker R. Berghahn, *Imperial Germany, 1871-1914: Economy, Society, Culture, and Politics* (Providence & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1994), 190 ff. The Reichstag, which represented the whole of Germany from 1871, was preceded by the 'North-German Confederation', founded in 1867, as well as by other, smaller elected assemblies on city or state level; these could generally be overruled by the appropriate aristocrat, however.

[30] The voting system varied between different states: in Prussia, for instance, a vote from a man in the highest tax bracket carried between 16 and 26 times more weight than a man in the lowest tax bracket; 10% of the population fell below the minimum tax threshold and were not allowed to vote. With partialities such as this, it was not surprising that the conservatives generally gained the most seats, so for example, in the 1908 Diet elections, the conservatives won 47.9% of the seats even though only 16.7% of the electorate voted for them. Ibid., 210.

[31] Ibid., 217. Also see William Carr, *A History of Germany 1815-1945* (Second Edition. London: Edward Arnold, 1979), 196 ff.

[32] Berghahn, *Imperial Germany,* 228.

and monarchical values.[33] The higher an individual progressed in the educational system, the more conservative the institution became, so that those men with university educations - the ones who would go on to positions of power and influence - were the ones who were most thoroughly indoctrinated with reactionary ideas. Churches similarly propagated conservatism, while two years of national service brought thousands of young men into the reactionary environment of the armed forces.[34] The identity of the majority of people was therefore formed in relation to the predominant culture, thereby ensuring its perpetuation. Conservatism was established as the dominant frame of reference within the whole social structure, and as a result, would prove extremely difficult to remove.[35]

In these circumstances, progressive left-wing parties such as the SPD *(Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands,* or German Social Democratic Party), which campaigned for greater democracy, made no headway into the Reichstag for many years. The SPD favoured democracy because it was an egalitarian system which would enfranchise everyone; such beliefs could be readily aligned by those on the Right with socialism. These threatening concepts were demonised, as they were antagonistic to the right-wing's own, 'correct', perspective. Democracy threatened centuries of privilege for the upper classes; its egalitarianism may have been only for electoral purposes, but was deemed to set a dangerous precedent. If all citizens were equal in voting rights, where would their demands for equality end? Democracy was therefore to be resisted, as it represented the potential overthrow of the existing social structure by the Socialists.

Conservatism had formed the dominant social context for the years up to World War I, but towards the end of the war it began to look increasingly likely that, in addition to losing, Germany would experience a fundamental change in its whole political system, because of the growing power of the SPD.[36] During the

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[33] Ibid., 90.

[34] Ibid., 93.

[35] E.J. Passant, *A Short History of Germany 1815-1945,* with W.O. Henderson, C.J. Child & D.C. Watt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 92.

[36] Despite the heavy bias in favour of conservatism in the suffrage system, there was a steady growth in support for the SPD in the years of the late nineteenth century and leading up to the first World War. In the 1912 parliamentary elections, the SPD had seen an increase in their seats from 43

war, the politicians of the left had been happy to suspend their principles on political reform for the sake of patriotism; they had joined with the Right in a *Burgfrieden,* a political truce that meant that all sides would work together in their belligerent aims.[37] However, when defeat began to look likely, the Socialists, now increased in number in the Reichstag, became a threat to those on the right.[38] Inspired by the Russian Revolution in 1917, and able to point to the daily hardships which the war had induced, the Left could again assert its demands for a more responsible governmental system. The opposition by the SPD within the Reichstag to the existing status quo was accompanied by unrest amongst ordinary citizens, who became increasingly critical of the perpetuation of a war which they realised they were unlikely to win. Civil discontent, in the form of general strikes, began to take place in a variety of cities from 1917.

Conservatism under Threat: Mann's Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen

The growing threat of the left wing and the shifts in the German political landscape gave rise to a flood of invective and apocalyptic predictions by those who were part of the previously unquestioned ruling classes. Pfitzner, who was conservative and nationalist himself, was part of these attacks with his polemical writings, which not only railed against modern music but also took exception to suspicious political movements and ideas. (I will discuss these further below.) Thomas Mann was another objector to the left wing's cause, and his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* crystallised the conservatives' objections to the new political

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to 110, and with the left-leaning portions of the centre parties (the Centre Party and the Left Liberals) could command a majority coalition in the Reichstag. This state of affairs continued throughout the war until the 1918 revolution, although the Chancellor and Kaiser still held the same powerful positions. The growing threat of the SPD is seen by some historians as one factor, amongst others, which precipitated the German government's decision to go to war in 1914. Ibid., 132 and Berghahn, *Imperial Germany,* 278.

[37] Carr, *A History of Germany,* 266.

[38] More radical left-wing parties also appeared at this time, such as the *Unabhängige Sozial-Demokratische Partei* (USDP, or Independent Social-Democratic Party), a breakaway group from the SPD, and the Spartacus League, the forerunner of the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* (KPD, or German Communist Party).

currents.[39] Mann readily acknowledged his right-wing stance in the book; the author was to change his political position later in his life, abandoning his anti-democratic stance in the 1920s and starting to defend the Weimar Republic (a *volte face* which was later to lead him into difficulties with the Nazis).[40] Nevertheless, as a representation of contemporary conservatism, his *Betrachtungen* is extremely useful, and is an effective way of understanding right-wing thought of the era. Hugh Ridley says that the book 'provides a good summary of many of the deeply held but largely unconsidered convictions which the German intellectuals of the Second Reich held concerning their political and social function. It is a crucial text for the transfer of pre-1914 attitudes into the Weimar Republic... and for demonstrating the continuity of conservative ideology across the divide of the war.'[41]

Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen is also a particularly suitable vantage point from which to examine Pfitzner's opera. Mann's and Pfitzner's views were close in these years; Vogel says that the two men 'were largely united in their political opinions'.[42] In his *Betrachtungen,* Mann says that *Palestrina* is 'completely... to the point of this book', and says he has made the opera 'into my own, my intimate possession.'[43] He goes on to commentate upon Pfitzner's work, and its agreement with his own 'innermost idea of humanity', in some detail. During his discussion, he calls the second act of *Palestrina* 'nothing other than a colorful and affectionately studied satire on politics, specifically on its immediately

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[39] The book is a diatribe against Mann's brother, the author Heinrich Mann, with whom he was in conflict at this time. Nevertheless, Mann's opinions have a wider political implication. See Ernst Keller, *Der unpolitische Deutsche: Eine Studie zu den 'Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen' von Thomas Mann* (Berlin: Francke Verlag, 1965), 5 ff and Erich Heller, *Thomas Mann: The Ironic German* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958).

[40] Part of Mann's important pro-democracy essay dating from the twenties, 'Von deutscher Republik', can be found in Anton Kaes, Martin Jay & Edward Dimendberg, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1994), 105-109.

[41] Ridley, 'The Culture of Weimar. Models of Decline', in Michael Laffan, ed., *The Burden of German History 1919-1945: Essays for the Goethe Institute* (London: Methuen, 1988), 16.

[42] Vogel, *Hans Pfitzner,* 84. In 1918, Mann founded a 'Hans-Pfitzner-Society for German Music', which would not only promote Pfitzner, but would educate the people through popularising German music and folk music. Adamy, *Hans Pfitzner,* 231.

[43] Mann, *Reflections,* 297.

dramatic form, the parliament'.[44] The Council is easily recognisable as a political forum, and as a satire on such an assembly. However, to fully understand Mann's views about the opera, and his political position in general, we must first understand his use of the word 'politics' in the *Betrachtungen,* as it has a very particular meaning. As becomes apparent during the course of the book, 'politics' signifies only those tendencies to which Mann is opposed - broadly speaking, liberal and left-wing ones. Conversely, the beliefs which he espouses are termed 'nonpolitical', as alluded to in the title of the book. The dichotomy between the 'political' and 'nonpolitical' may be seen as implicit in conservative thought of the era more widely, and Mann acts as a focal point for this ideology. His book encapsulates the negative and positive beliefs of conservatism, discernible throughout the cultural and political environment of contemporary Germany, in the neat and explicit dualism of 'political' versus 'nonpolitical'. Mann's dichotomy between 'political' and 'nonpolitical' is complex, and as a result initially difficult to understand, because he amalgamates two spheres, the political and the aesthetic. His book is a diatribe again the 'politicization of the intellect', not only against politics *per se,* although the two are intimately connected.[45] Mann sets up two contrasting domains. What is termed the 'political' is concerned with the worldly: society, the state, governmental systems (specifically democracy), as well as 'lower' types of art which Mann terms 'civilisation' and 'literature'. These apparently neutral words are used by him in a derogatory fashion. Against this 'political' realm is contrasted the 'nonpolitical' sphere, which is concerned with matters spiritual and metaphysical, the individual (which he terms the 'personality' and, confusingly, contrasts with the denigrated term 'individual') rather than the social, and with 'culture' and 'art'.[46] 'The artist is concerned with the timelessly human and with the traditional rather than with the modern or with the ephemeral,

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[44] Ibid., 301.

[45] Ibid., 17. The reasons for this come back to Mann's dispute with his brother Heinrich; Heinrich advocated that artists should be more explicitly involved with politics, a view which Thomas rejected. The latter's attempt at an 'unpolitical' stance is therefore based in opposition to Heinrich's 'political' point of view. See Hans Eichner, 'Thomas Mann and Politics', in Hans H. Schulte & Gerald Chapple, eds., *Thomas Mann: Ein Kolloquium* (Bonn: Bonvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1978), 11, and Heller, *Thomas Mann.*

[46] Thus Mann is inconsistent in his use of such terms. 'Individual' has a positive connotation when contrasted with 'society', but a negative one when set against 'personality'. He also sometimes uses other terms inconsistently.

time-serving issues of politics'.[47] This 'nonpolitical' sphere also has a 'higher' kind of government, namely monarchy, which is supposedly distanced from the worldly. Dichotomies between what is seen as 'political' and what is 'nonpolitical' are fundamental to Mann's argument; as Hans Eichner says, Mann 'returned time and again to such antitheses as "Kultur" and "Zivilisation", the individual and society, "Dichtung" and "Literatur", the "Obrigkeitsstaat" and democracy, and every time he presented the first of these alternatives as more German and better.'[48] Both the 'political' and 'nonpolitical' realms described by Mann in fact combine the political (in that they espouse a particular ideology and a system of government) and the aesthetic. However, this fact is disguised somewhat by Mann's persistent use of 'political' to denote only worldly matters, and, comparatively, 'nonpolitical' to denote a metaphysical, higher realm, ostensibly defined by aesthetic, spiritual matters, and supposedly distant from ideology despite its own inherent ideological roots.

Mann admits to his own conservatism while holding that it is nonpolitical; simultaneously, he demonstrates how 'politics' are those beliefs which conflict with conservatism. Mann's objections to the 'political' are strongly grounded in his environment. What he defines as 'political' are those views held by the contemporary socialist and liberal parties, principally the SPD. Mann does not actually name the SPD, nor any other particular group; however, he attacks the notion of 'democracy', and seen against the context of the time, it is clear who his enemies are. 'Politics' and 'democracy' are treated as synonymous, as Mann states unequivocally:

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[47] Ridley, 'The Culture of Weimar', 17.

[48] Eichner, 'Thomas Mann and Politics', 10-11. According to Stephen Lamb and Anthony Phelan, Mann believed that the terms 'culture' and 'civilisation' had been used imprecisely. As a remedy, Mann explained the meaning of 'culture' in partly militaristic terms, such as 'unity, style, form, self-control, and discipline'. He contrasts this with 'all the French liberal traditions of *Zivilisation:* liberty, equality, and fraternity, all of which he dismisses as the "cosiness of the social contract"' ('Weimar Culture: The Birth of Modernism', in Burns, ed., *German Cultural Studies,* 54). The contrast of 'culture' with 'civilisation' is a recurrent idea at this time, also to be found in the writings of Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Moeller van den Bruck; see Robin Lenman, John Osborne & Eda Sagarra, 'Imperial Germany: Towards the Commercialization of Culture', in Burns, ed., *German Cultural Studies,* 20, and Keller, *Der unpolitische Deutsche,* 136.

> When, in the following discussions, the identity of the concepts 'politics' and 'democracy' is defended or treated as obvious, it is done with an extraordinarily clearly perceived right. One is not a 'democratic', or, say, a 'conservative' politician. One *is* a politician or one is not. And if one is, then one is democratic. The political-intellectual attitude is the democratic one; belief in politics is belief in democracy.[49]

Mann's dichotomy between the 'political' and the 'nonpolitical' is augmented by that between the 'social' and the 'metaphysical', which operates along the same axis. 'Democracy' is grounded in the 'social', in its concern for the worldly; according to Mann, this concern with practical matters is wrong and misguided. The 'metaphysical' element is more important than the social. He points to the 'irrevocable conflict between individual and society', but says that 'politics', which is 'namely enlightenment, social contract, republic, progress toward the "greatest good for the greatest number"' - broadly speaking, the liberal, progressive tendency - cannot resolve this conflict. The only reconciliation possible is on the metaphysical level, 'in the sphere of personality'.[50] It is, he says, 'wrong to confuse the supraindividual element with the social one, to place it completely in the social sphere: in the process one neglects the metaphysical supraindividual element.'[51] Reconciliation between individual and society is possible 'only on a spiritual path, never on a political one'.[52] Mann sees the 'personality', which has a metaphysical essence, as being of primary importance, and of no concern with the state: 'the state... cannot be the bearer of personal life'.[53]

Mann extends his distinction between the 'social' and the 'metaphysical' to the nation as a whole. 'The nation, too, is not only a social but also a metaphysical being; the bearer of the general *(des Allgemeinen),* of the human quality is not "humanity" as the sum of individuals, but the nation... Here we have the difference between the mass and the *Volk,* the difference between which is that between individual and personality, civilization and culture, social and metaphysical life.

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[49] Mann, *Reflections,* 15-16. Also 190: 'democracy is not only political, *it is politics itself.*'
[50] Ibid., 185.
[51] Ibid., 179.
[52] Ibid., 185.
[53] Ibid., 188.

The individualistic mass is democratic, the nation aristocratic.'[54] Because of his contrast of the 'political' or 'social' with the 'nonpolitical' or 'metaphysical', a term such as 'democracy', aligned as it is with 'politics', has a wider meaning for Mann than simply as an electoral system. He understands it as a method of social reform having fundamental ramifications for the structure of the nation (along with its further debasing aesthetic connotations of 'literature' and 'civilisation'). For Mann, democracy means the 'dominance of the people' *(Volksherrschaft),* a phrase which, he says, 'has its terror'.[55] Power would be wielded by the people - who are implicitly the working classes - rather than by those qualified by birth or education. If all of the population were given an equal vote, he believes, then everything would be reduced to the lowest common denominator; the different strata of society would be levelled out into a homogeneous mass. Democracy therefore leads to a social, and socialist, levelling process. In contrast to the homogenising effects of socialism, to be German is to prefer social inequality: 'German-national means "free", inwardly and outwardly, but it does not mean "equal" - neither inwardly nor outwardly.'[56] In Germany, which Mann calls 'the land of great men', the levelling which comes about through socialism is particularly dangerous. The 'great man' by definition stands above the mass, on a higher plane of achievement, but democracy would level out such disparities between individuals, and the great men to be found in Germany would disappear.[57] Mann thinks that superiority and expert authority are anathema to the democrats, because they want equality: 'democracy... is equality and therefore hatred, ineradicable and jealous republican hatred of every superiority.'[58]

'Democracy' is held by Mann to be 'hostile to Germany'; it is 'in itself something un-German, anti-German'.[59] To the conservative Mann, democracy was

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[54] Ibid., 179-180. I have made some alterations to the translation and added the phrase about the 'mass and *Volk',* which is missing from the English version *(Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer Verlag, 1956), 240).

[55] Mann, *Reflections,* 192 & 267. The translation of *Volksherrschaft* in *Reflections* is 'rule of the people', but *Herrschaft* has more of a connotation of power and dominance.

[56] Ibid., 201.

[57] Ibid., 265 ff.

[58] Ibid., 219.

[59] Ibid., 16 & 190.

a foreign invention, championed by some of the very countries with which Germany was then at war - Britain, France and the USA. Mann inveighs against the idea of Germany as a republic in language associated with the French Revolution, especially Rousseau: 'Germany as a *republic,* as a virtue-state with a social contract, a democratic people's government and the "complete absorption of the individual in the totality"; Germany as a *state* and nothing more, and the German human being as a Jacobin and *citoyen vertueux* with the citizen's certificate in his pocket - this would be a fright! And especially: it would no longer be Germany.'[60] The traditional German system of government, monarchy, is held to be the superior one, and the idea of democracy is characterised as 'international' and 'foreign': 'democratic and international are one and the same'.[61] Hatred of democracy is explicitly linked to being truly German, because democracy is threatening to 'real' and 'true' German values, and is 'foreign and poisonous to the German character'. Mann is 'deeply convinced that the German people will never be able to love political democracy... the much decried "authoritarian state" is and remains the one that is proper and becoming to the German people, and the one they basically want.'[62]

The conservative, 'national' position is held by Mann to be not only 'nonpolitical', but suprapolitical: it is simply 'higher', natural, true and superior. He explains that 'it is not just patriotic prejudice when one imagines and perceives in the strangely organic, unforced and poetic word combination, *deutsches Volk,* something not only national, but also essentially different, better, higher, purer, yes, holier than in the expression, "English people" or "French people".'[63] Mann's ability to see such nationalism as 'nonpolitical' may be explained by the supremacy of such thinking within contemporary German society, in which conservatism was the 'norm' and therefore taken to be 'unpolitical'; only that which challenged the

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[60] Ibid., 202. Also see Keller, *Der unpolitische Deutsche,* 48. Mann uses 'virtue' throughout the book in a derogatory way.

[61] Mann, *Reflections,* 189. Eichner comments that the Allies also saw themselves fighting 'to keep the world safe for democracy... against the fact and the idea of a monarchy, against the paternalistic state which the Germans... called "Obrigkeitsstaat"' ('Thomas Mann and Politics', 9).

[62] Mann, *Reflections,* 16-17.

[63] Ibid., 208 & 267.

dominant state of affairs was deemed 'political'. In calling himself 'nonpolitical' Mann merely exemplifies the highly characteristic, and political, position of the era. The embeddedness of this discourse within German culture of this time was to have significant ramifications for the political events of subsequent years.

Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen *and* Palestrina

While the political aspects of *Palestrina* have sometimes been considered in existing literature on the opera, the meaning Mann gives to 'politics' and its ramifications for any consideration of the opera's political context has not been studied. Ashley, for instance, reads the opera in the light of Pfitzner's essay, 'Die neue Ästhetik der musikalischen Impotenz' ('The New Aesthetic of Musical Impotence', 1919), and considers manifestations of right-wing thought in the opera. However, rather than comparing *Palestrina* to the contemporary political environment, he examines how the ideology of the later political movement of fascism might appear in the opera, asking whether the 'fascist tendencies' which he sees in 'Die neue Ästhetik' are 'already implicit in *Palestrina.* '[64] Franklin's essay 'A Musical Legend' points to the opera's 'unholy alliance with elements of xenophobic, proto-fascist politics', but does not examine the relationship of *Palestrina* to the right wing around the time of World War I in detail.[65] Bokina does consider the relationship of Pfitzner's opera to its political context: he says that *Palestrina* exemplifies the aesthetics and politics of 'romantic conservatism', by which he means the conservatism of the World War I period before it became transmuted into the more dynamic National Socialist movement. He discusses how Pfitzner's second act is a satire on 'parliamentary politics', and how the opera reflects Pfitzner's nationalist stance during the first World War.[66] However, he simultaneously suggests that the Council exemplifies 'unromantic, realpolitik conservatism', because of its resistance to Protestantism.[67] To hold these two

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[64] Ashley, 'In Sympathy with Death', 34.

[65] Franklin, 'A Musical Legend', 12.

[66] Bokina, 'Resignation, Retreat and Impotence', 167.

[67] Ibid., 165-166. As he states in a footnote, Bokina's idea of two types of conservatism is founded on a passing point in Mann, who refers to the 'robust conservatism' of Borromeo *(Reflections,* 306).

viewpoints seems to suggest that for Bokina, parliamentary politics can encompass conservatism, whereas seen from the perspective of Mann's discussion, the two are radically opposed.[68]

Although many writers, including Ashley, Franklin and Jon Newsom, make reference to the *Betrachtungen,* this is usually limited to Mann's comments about *Palestrina,* specifically where he refers to Palestrina's positioning outside the everyday world and the work's backward-looking nature.[69] The only studies which do mention Mann's 'political' - 'nonpolitical' dualism are those by Toller and Adamy. Adamy devotes little space to the theme, and does not draw out its implications for Pfitzner's wider context; he sees Palestrina's 'nonpolitical' position as an aesthetic rather than as an intrinsically political one. Moreover, he concurs implicitly with Mann's belief that conservatism is 'nonpolitical', saying that Pfitzner's conservatism 'excludes any real political engagement in his life'. He also comments that the second act is a portrait of a world driven by a Schopenhauerian Will, rather than being anything to do with democracy directly.[70] Toller fundamentally misinterprets Mann because he overlooks the negative implications which Mann attaches to 'politics' and the concepts he aligns with the 'political'. Perhaps influenced by Mann's later, anti-Nazi stance, Toller states that 'Mann's political inclinations were progressive' and that there is a 'gulf between Pfitzner's and Mann's views of progress'; therefore he says that Mann saw *Palestrina* as reactionary and opposed to his own liberal tendencies.[71] A closer reading of the *Betrachtungen* shows that this is inaccurate.

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[68] Attinello, in 'Pfitzner, *Palestrina,* Nazis, Conservatives', studies the relationship of Pfitzner's opera to politics with specific reference to the question of gender, drawing on Klaus Theweleit's study of fascist psychology, *Male Fantasies.* Despite its interesting conclusions, Attinello's essay is peripheral to the current discussion, as it compares the opera to a psychological rather than to a clearly political discourse, albeit one with political ramifications. The other writers on *Palestrina* as *Künstleroper,* Weisstein ('Die letzte Häutung') and Seebohm ('Triumph und Tragik des Künstlertums'), neglect the cultural milieu within which the work was written, as well as largely overlooking the music; they see the division of artist and society as reflective of Pfitzner's own aesthetic position, rather than illustrative of a political one.

[69] Franklin, *'Palestrina* and the Dangerous Futurists', 119; Ashley, 'In Sympathy with Death', 33. Newsom's 'Hans Pfitzner, Thomas Mann and "The Magic Mountain"' *(Music and Letters* 55/2 (1974), 136-150) considers Mann's novel in more depth than the *Betrachtungen;* his comments on the latter are restricted to the 'sympathy with death' encounter (see below).

[70] Adamy, *Hans Pfitzner,* 238.

[71] Toller, *Pfitzner's Palestrina,* 103-104. He likewise writes that Mann takes 'almost any general expression of the situation of humanity to be essentially political', a comment which is also

Mann's dichotomy between the political and the nonpolitical may be clearly seen in Pfitzner's contrast between the two worlds in *Palestrina.* The Council not only represents the 'political' in a literal sense, as a political forum, but has the further quality of representing the 'political' in Mann's sense: it attempts to be democratic, as it is intended that the issues at hand are discussed and a consensus reached. Admittedly, elements of the Council seem on the surface to contradict the presentation of democracy. Some of the Council members are given more importance than others, for instance, exercising different degrees of privilege (Count Luna is given a throne, for example). This semi-democratic nature of the Council is shown as ridiculous; as Franklin says, the Council is portrayed as a 'garish and often comic pantomime of democracy'.[72] Nevertheless, the Council can be seen as *representative* of a democracy, and of 'politics' in Mann's sense. As well as being concerned with the 'political', the Council is also international, with members coming from a mixture of countries, while the lack of differentiation between these characters forms a palpable representation of the supposed homogeneity which follows when democracy is implemented. The Council functions as a double satire: firstly, Pfitzner's presentation attacks the idea of democracy itself. Secondly, at the time when the opera was written, such democracy did not exist in Germany, and so, as in Mann's *Betrachtungen,* this kind of government is aligned with the 'foreign', the satire attacking those countries outside Germany with democratic governments. This 'foreignness' is supplemented by the Council's physical separation from the world of Palestrina.

In contrast to the 'political' Council, Palestrina himself may be read as representing the 'nonpolitical'. The signification of Palestrina as 'nonpolitical' within the opera works on a subtle level. He does not display any transparently conservative, anti-democratic or nationalist tendencies of his own, but is constructed as 'nonpolitical' through his separation from the 'political', a detachment which is advanced as a positive alternative. Furthermore, the pages concerning Pfitzner's opera in the *Betrachtungen* state that the Renaissance

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incorrect. Toller himself believes that 'there is no justification for political arguments to influence creative artists in the abstract field of music' (ibid., 104).

[72] Franklin, 'A Musical Legend', 17. Also see *'Palestrina* and the Dangerous Futurists', 123.

composer 'tends in attitude toward conservatism'.[73] Thus, Palestrina is 'nonpolitical' in two senses: firstly, he is literally uninvolved in political matters, and secondly, his contrast to the 'political' realm of the Council positions him as politically conservative, in opposition to the progressive. Palestrina is also divinely ordained as a genius and, in the same manner as Mann believes that all superiority is abhorrent to democrats, this places the composer as conservative. Just as Mann characterises conservatism as ideology-free and 'natural', and opposes this to the 'political', Palestrina's genius places him not only above society and politics, but as implicitly 'right'. With his construction of the character of Palestrina, Pfitzner is consistent with Mann's belief in the 'irrevocable conflict between individual and society', and the latter's conviction that this antagonism can only be resolved 'in the sphere of personality'. Read from the perspective of its context, the opera shows a picture of the 'nonpolitical man', and advocates a stance towards society which may be seen as part of the ideology of the contemporary political right.

The Artist as Nonpolitical: Palestrina and Pfitzner

Pfitzner's construction of Palestrina as 'nonpolitical', opposed to and separate from the world outside him, may be seen as an idealisation of a preferred relationship between artist and society. Pfitzner was faced with fundamental changes in the world around him, both political and artistic, and responded in real life by attempting to reassert his position in vociferous polemics. Simultaneously, he sought an escape from the world in his construction of an idealised artistic milieu in his opera. Pfitzner's alter ego may be read as acting as a psychological reconciliation, a kind of wish-fulfilment, and is a means whereby Pfitzner could play out his preferred conclusions and attempt to come to terms with his conflict with threatening aspects of the modern world, as well as with what he saw as lack of recognition of him as a composer.[74] *Palestrina* expresses the distrust of the modern world characteristic of political conservatism, coming as it does at the

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[73] Mann, *Reflections*, 308.

[74] Pfitzner's own knowledge of this may be indicated to some extent in a letter of 1926; he says that he can never achieve the solution found in the opera in his own life, although he undergoes the same tribulations *(Briefe,* ed. Bernhard Adamy, Bd. 1 (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1991), 436 (12.5.26)).

turning-point between the Wilhelmine era and the Weimar Republic. It demonstrates these political tensions, and seeks to reaffirm the norms of the 'nonpolitical' man.

An effective way in which Pfitzner is able to present himself, in an idealised version, as a composer of genius inspired by the angelic host is through his use of the historical Palestrina's music in the opera. This is, perhaps, an obvious ploy; if one is writing an opera about a composer who once existed, it might seem only natural to use some of his or her music. In one respect this is certainly the case, and we could leave the matter at that, understanding Pfitzner's use of the *Missa Papae Marcelli* as merely localised historical colour. However, this does not answer the question completely: it is, after all, not entirely necessary for Pfitzner to use Palestrina's music. Moreover, if Pfitzner merely wished for localised colour, then he could have quoted Palestrina's music literally. Instead, though, he tampers with it, thereby inscribing himself into that music. Pfitzner's music becomes a vicarious version of Palestrina's music, because of the ways in which he rewrites Palestrina's original (as discussed above). What is notable about the quotation of the mass is both its alteration by Pfitzner, and its positioning within the opera: it is not included as part of a performance, which would be perhaps the most obvious context for it, but as part of the scene of inspiration, indicating that it has a more strategic dramatic role than a simple quote.[75] The figure of Palestrina on stage represents the real composer of the *Missa Papae Marcelli,* and by merging his music with that of the historical composer, Pfitzner merges himself both with the character of Palestrina on stage, and with the actual Palestrina. He becomes conflated with Palestrina, 'taking over', as it were, the shell of his predecessor; it is impossible to say decisively where one composer's music stops and the other one's starts. The amalgamation of Palestrina's music with Pfitzner's means that it is not simply a localised quote for historical colour; rather, Palestrina's mass becomes possessed by the spirit of Pfitzner, the two personalities sharing the same musical body. In

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[75] Weisstein considers the mass itself, rather than Palestrina, to be the focus of the opera, which explains its prominent positioning, but he refuses to consider Pfitzner's possible motivation for this. He says only that the 'writers, critics, and scholars... of the *Künstlerdrama* have, by and large, agreed that attention should be focused on the aesthetic rather than the psychological dimension of this genre' ('Die letzte Häutung', 208).

producing this compound, Pfitzner writes himself 'into' the opera; he is not merely outside as a controlling 'presence' but an actor in the drama himself. In so doing, he can construct an 'alternative' life: the image of Palestrina at the end of the opera, acclaimed by the world but still more inwardly concerned with his art, may be interpreted as a manifestation of the ideal state of affairs to which Pfitzner aspired, reconciling the man of genius with a world which understands and accepts him.[76] As Vogel comments, 'Pfitzner had certainly imagined for himself an old age in the style of his *Palestrina,* released in the main from daily duties, generally surrounded by attention and above all, constantly performed on German stages.'[77]

Pfitzner, Modern Music and the Political

The presentation of Palestrina, and the opera's dichotomy between the 'nonpolitical' composer and the 'political' Council, may be compared with Pfitzner's right-wing ideology and his position towards the left-wing elements of his society. Pfitzner, like Mann, was situated firmly within the dominant conservative context of his time, and made no secret of his political convictions, which remained the same throughout his life. His polemical writings, as well as his letters and the texts he set to music, betray beliefs close to those expressed by Mann in his *Betrachtungen* in their opposition to left-wing, progressive political forces. Like Mann, Pfitzner demonises political trends to which he is opposed, for instance in his 'Die neue Ästhetik der musikalischen Impotenz', an essay which inveighs against modern music in explicitly political terms. Pfitzner sees modern art as a manifestation of left-wing politics: atonal music is described as 'communist', 'Jewish' and as 'free-and-easy, new, international, socially-constructive power-art' *(frisch-fröhliche, neue, internationale, gesellschaftsbildende Kraftkunst).* The more popular type of new music, jazz, he calls 'American-international vulgarity'.[78] Pfitzner says that:

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[76] Vogel calls Palestrina Pfitzner's *'Idealgestalt' (Hans Pfitzner,* 71).

[77] Ibid., 106.

[78] Pfitzner, 'Die neue Ästhetik der musikalischen Impotenz', *Gesammelte Schriften,* Bd.2 (Augsburg: Dr. Benno Filser-Verlag, 1926), 250-251. Translation partly based on Attinello, 'Pfitzner, *Palestrina,* Nazis, Conservatives', 31. Attinello's translation of 'Kraftkunst' as 'power-

> The atonal chaos, along with the corresponding forms in the other arts, is the artistic parallel of the bolshevism which is threatening the European states.... The other tendency, though, is accepted, is already here! It is the jazz-foxtrot-flood, the musical expression of *Americanism,* this danger for Europe. It kills the soul, and flatters the body, which is why its danger remains unnoticed as it is welcomed in.[79]

Modern music, which Pfitzner terms the 'struggle against the musical *Einfall'* ('inspiration'), 'stands on very, very weak legs'. It is led by the 'Jewish-international spirit' *(Geist),* and to the Germans is a 'wholly strange madness of destruction and devastation'.[80]

Pfitzner complains in 'Die neue Ästhetik' that modern music is 'impotent' because it is not based on inspiration, and turns its back on the fundamentals of music such as harmony and melody. Again, Pfitzner uses a specifically political comparison: 'One can... abolish aristocracies, kill, banish and exile kings and Kaisers, but one cannot kill or abolish the aristocracy of nature and art.'[81] In 1919, when Pfitzner was writing, these words would have had a particular resonance: the November Revolution of 1918, which led to the founding of the Weimar Republic, saw the abolishment of the German monarchy. With language such as this, Pfitzner signifies his political views as well as his aesthetic ones. His antipathy towards the hostile political forces which he links with progressive musical styles places him squarely on the conservative wing of contemporary politics; Ulrich Kurth

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art' is literally correct, but Pfitzner's original has a further meaning because of its reference to a phrase used by Paul Bekker, *gesellschaftbildende Kraft.* I will discuss the idea of *gesellschaftbildend* music further in Chapter Three.

[79] Pfitzner, 'Die neue Ästhetik', 115. Also see 119: 'The un-German, in whichever form it appears, as atonality, internationalism, Americanism, German pacifism, assaults our existence and our culture from all sides, and European culture along with it.' Pfitzner's strategy of painting progressive art as a manifestation of liberal politics was recurrent. His typical amalgamation of the two spheres is summed up in a letter written towards the end of his life, in 1947, where he complains that he has never been recognised as an important composer, either in Wilhelmine or Nazi Germany, or in the intervening *'er-schrekerlichen Jonny-Deutschland'.* This translates as 'frightful Jonny-Germany', but also contains a pun on the name of Schreker (Pfitzner, *Briefe,* 1035 (12.1.47)). Wilhelmine and Nazi Germany are defined here by their political regimes, but the Weimar Republic is defined only by its art. This indicates Pfitzner's belief that the Weimar Republic's democracy was redundant as a system of government, and that only the Wilhelmine and Nazi regimes possessed recognisable political validity.

[80] Pfitzner, 'Die neue Ästhetik', 230.

[81] Ibid., 229.

comments that Pfitzner's critique of modern music contains the 'conventional themes of the conservatism of these years'.[82] Pfitzner's polemics are not only representative of right-wing beliefs of the era, but also indicate the anxiety of this group in the face of threats to society in its existing form.[83] Marc Weiner comments that 'the terror with which Pfitzner perceived [jazz]... underscores its function as a symbol of forces threatening to change an established social order'; his comment, though, also goes for the other changes in musical style at this time.[84] Pfitzner shows a disquiet about changes in society amongst conservatives which would eventually lead to political reaction and Nazism.

The conflict between old and new styles of music which is part of Pfitzner's aesthetic and political philosophy can be found in *Palestrina* in his portrayal of Silla, Palestrina's pupil. As well as the danger of a ban by the church, Palestrina's music is threatened by the new music of the Florentine Camerata, represented through Silla, who yearns to join them. A number of authors have drawn attention to this antithesis of old and new musics in the opera. Bokina, for example, says that Palestrina 'is not only charged with the task of saving the current polyphonic musical style from reactionaries who want to restore Gregorian chant, but he is also faced with the challenge of the new music being developed in Florence.... Pfitzner uses [the] new Palestrina legend of his own creation as a platform to view the modernist works of his own contemporaries.'[85] The Renaissance composer says that the threat to his music comes from 'Dilettanten in Florenz' ('dilettantes in Florence') who 'aus heidnischen, antiken Schriften [haben] sich Theorien künstlich ausgedacht' ('have devised artificial theories for themselves from antique, heathen writings'). We hear an example of this 'modern' music with a song in the 'new

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[82] Kurth, '"Ich pfeif' auf Tugend und Moral". Zum Foxtrott in den zwanziger Jahren', in Sabine Schutte, ed., *Ich will aber gerade vom Leben singen...: Über popülare Musik vom ausgehenden 19. Jahrhundert bis zum Ende der Weimarer Republik* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1987), 375.

[83] For a discussion of contemporary right-wing politics in the *Zeitschrift für Musik,* see Sachs's 'Some Aspects of Musical Politics in pre-Nazi Germany'. Many of the arguments presented by this journal, around the ideas of 'Germanness' versus 'internationalism', 'Bolshevism', 'Americanism' and modernism, are clearly part of the same discourse as that expressed by Pfitzner.

[84] Weiner, *Undertones of Insurrection,* 67.

[85] Bokina, 'Resignation, Retreat and Impotence', 162. Bokina perhaps plays up this stylistic question at the expense of other themes, such as the separation of artist from society in a more

style' by Silla, which is supposed to be a humorous invocation of 'bad' music, like Beckmesser's song in *Die Meistersinger.* It is full of such things as consecutives, odd seventh chords, and strange voice leading. Attinello comments that it is 'amusingly incompetent: the awkwardness of "Da-a-a-me," the weight of the inappropriate melismas, and the tendency of the harmony to backtrack against its own functional processes are enjoyably ridiculous.'[86] The style of the song forms a direct contrast to Palestrina's own music later in the act, with the new monophony of the 'modernists' being juxtaposed with the traditional polyphonic style of Palestrina. (It is also set against the musical style of the opera as a whole.) Silla's 'modern' music represents that with which the fictional Palestrina is in conflict, and acts as a metaphor for the music Pfitzner himself opposed. Mann, in his *Betrachtungen,* contrasts Palestrina to the 'political' Silla and sees the latter's enthusiasm for the new musical style of the Florentine Camerata as being aligned with 'democracy'. He scorns Silla's wish for liberation from Palestrina's school, saying that such a wish for liberation, expressed in 'insidious verses', is 'individualistic emancipation in idealistic connection with the endless progress of the human race, that is politics, *that is democracy'.*[87]

Silla's song is generally held to be the point where Pfitzner's opposition to new music can be seen most clearly, but the twentieth-century composer's opposition to new music is also demonstrated in the Prelude at the beginning of Act Two. Mann talks about this Prelude, saying that is 'perhaps the most splendid musical piece of the evening, [and] has a completely stirring effect: this crashing, storming, falling, breath-taking agitation... tragically illustrates Palestrina's statement about the "movement that life constantly whips us into".'[88] Despite Mann's observation on the Prelude, subsequent writers rarely consider its music. An exception is Franklin, who calls the Prelude the 'most advanced and "modern" music in the opera' and describes it as a 'Shostakovich-like fracas'.[89] The Prelude

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general way which is not specific to music. Also see Rectanus, *Leitmotivik und Form,* 106 and Ashley, 'In Sympathy with Death', 36.

[86] Attinello, 'Pfitzner, *Palestrina,* Nazis, Conservatives', 35.

[87] Mann, *Reflections,* 305. Mann's emphasis.

[88] Ibid., 301.

[89] Franklin *'Palestrina* and the Dangerous Futurists', 132. Williamson disagrees: 'Although the [Prelude] suggests Shostakovich to Franklin, he analyses this impression in rhythmic and

may be read as Pfitzner's portrayal of 'modernist' music. Although its music, taken out of context, may not strike us as particularly unusual for its time, it has definite 'modern' implications when viewed against the archaic evocation of Palestrina's music in Acts One and Three. (It also contrasts with Silla's song, and with the generic, late-Romantic, style of the opera as a whole.) The music also suggests the chaotic and argumentative nature of the Council through the unstable and agitated nature of the components of its musical texture. Rather than starting on the tonic chord, Eb, the Prelude begins with four bars of cadential-type music, beginning on a diminished chord and an upbeat.[90] It then moves to the first inversion of the tonic chord before Pfitzner asserts some measure of stability with a conventional perfect cadence onto the tonic in the fourth bar. The unsteadiness of the opening harmonic progression is strengthened through the continuing obscuration of the tonal movement: although the overall key of the passage is Eb, this is concealed in the bars between the cadence in the fourth bar (fig.1-7) and that at fig.2-3. In many passages of the Prelude, particularly near the beginning, it is difficult to ascertain a particular tonal centre at all, and while there are some more stable harmonic progressions later, the larger-scale harmonic movement is not clearly established until some way into the Prelude. The effect created by this obscuration of tonal centre is supplemented by the chromatic, moto perpetuo melody of the horns, which refuses to settle even at the cadence, and is then carried through into the strings and lower woodwind in the subsequent bars. Compared with the archaisms of Palestrina, such writing seems singularly 'modern'.

Much of the first half of the Prelude is based on the moto perpetuo quavers, which form the principal melodic material or act as an accompaniment to other melodies. This material is constructed around a number of motivic cells, many of which are predominantly chromatic or made up of a combination of semitones and whole tones. Their pitch structure does little to establish a definite tonal centre and thus reinforces the music's 'modernity'. (Ex.5 shows the formation of these cells at

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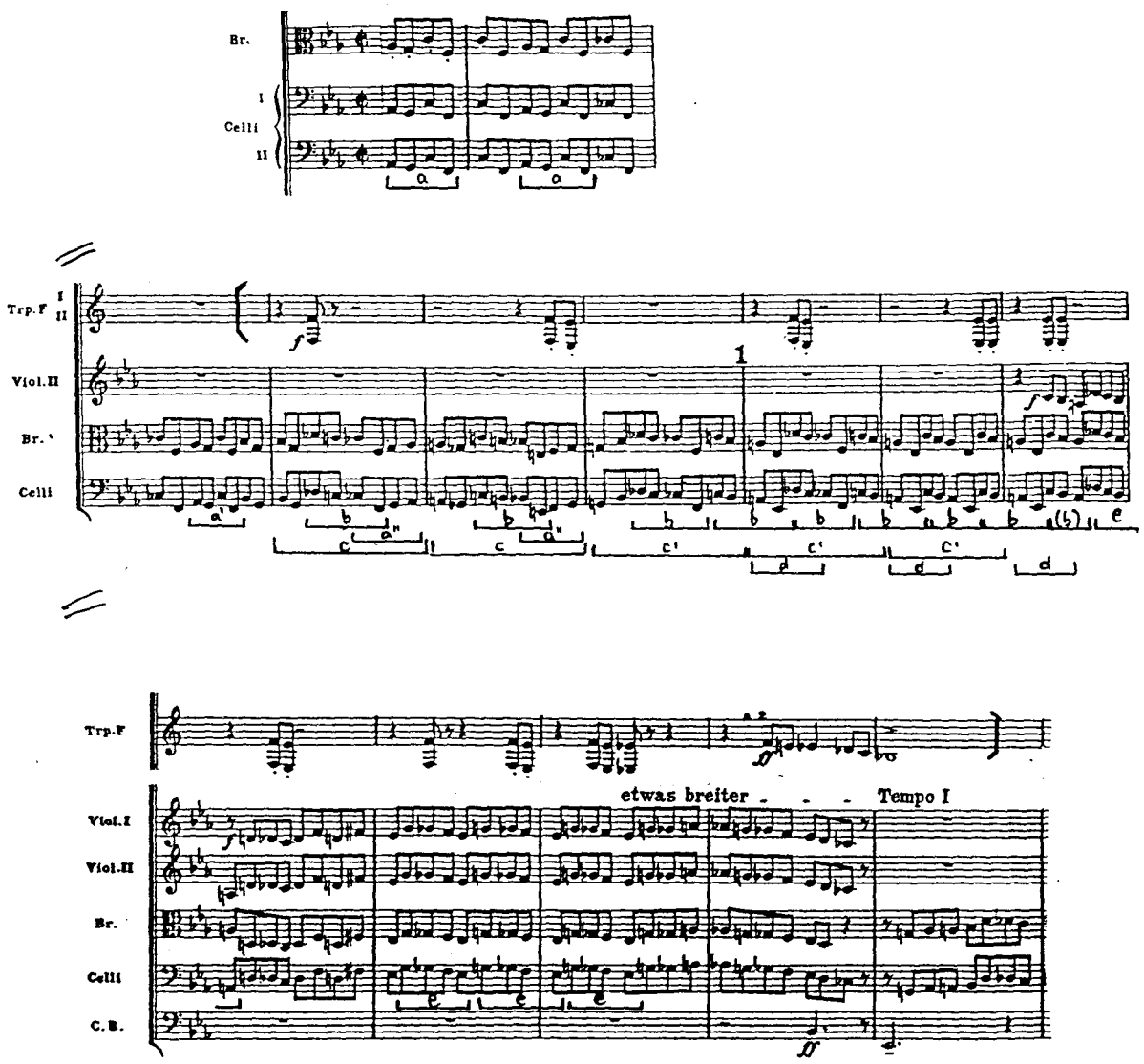
instrumental rather than harmonic and contrapuntal terms' *(The Music of Hans Pfitzner,* 196). However, I do not believe Williamson's objection holds: even if he is correct, rhythmic and instrumental criteria are equally as valid a ground for the comparison as harmony and counterpoint.

[90] Owen Toller points out that Eb is the key at the furthest possible point from the A of the angels in Act One *(Pfitzner's Palestrina,* 119).

Ex.5 - Motivic cells in Act Two Prelude (b.5 - fig.2-3)



the opening of the Prelude.) The repetition and lack of any particular melodic development may be further read as representative of the inherent nature of the Council: like the arguments in the Council chamber, the musical argument here goes round in circles and does not progress. At fig.1-3, the feeling of instability is augmented by the trumpet melody (if it may be called such), which comes dangerously close to atonality. The trumpet melody begins on the dominant, Bb, but then alternates between that note and its semitonal neighbour, A, forming a tritone with the tonic. The trumpet then gradually descends to the tonic through an unconventional route, although the bulk of the descent does not take place until the last moment (see ex.5). The trumpet melody's unsettled nature is added to by the continuing moto perpetuo chromatic bass quavers underneath.

The 'modern' nature of the music is heightened through its rhythmic construction, particularly the way in which the quaver cells are grouped. The grouping often appears to lie across the strong beats of the bar, as can be seen in ex.5: at the beginning of the extract, the first quaver of each group tends to be not on the first or third beat of the bar, but on the second or fourth. Later groups fall into odd numbers, such as the suggestion of a Bartókian 2+3+3 rhythm at fig.1-3 to -2. The melodies of the first section of the Prelude function similarly: for instance, the violin melody of fig.2+4, itself derived from the motivic cells of previously, which does not conform to an expected beat but evades any regular metre by slurring over barlines and grouping quavers irregularly. The trumpet melody of fig.1-3 (ex.5) similarly plays consistently off the beat. Through such devices, we may interpret the Prelude as portraying the 'modern' in music, but more broadly, it aligns the Council with the progressive and new-fangled. When this 'modernity' is interpreted in political terms, it signifies parliamentary democracy; like 'democracy' or 'socialism', modern music challenged an established cultural norm. Thus, the music of the Prelude, like the Council as a whole, acts as a representation of all those factors to which Pfitzner, like other conservatives, was opposed.

Music as Nonpolitical: Tradition and the 'Truths' of Art

In the same way as he portrays the hero of his opera, Pfitzner saw himself as the 'saviour of music', fighting a battle in order to rescue true German music from the clutches of atonality. In 'Die neue Ästhetik', he contrasts modern music to 'good' art, which, according to Pfitzner, is 'national' and 'German'. 'The fate of our national art, especially music', he says, is under threat from the proponents of atonality: 'internationalism, which is the enemy of the *Volk*... not only wants to break up states, but also poisons the innermost life of the *Volk,* their heart, as it were.'[91] Pfitzner contrasts modern art with *echt* (true) German art in phrases which describe the latter as 'German and true', 'national and true' and 'magnificent and deep' *(herrlich und tief).*[92] Modern art is for Pfitzner not just aesthetically suspect, but attacks the very essence of what it means to be German. He tries to suggest that music itself is above politics: when he says at the end of the essay that 'the melody of a Schubertian linden tree lives longer than the empires of Alexander and Napoleon', he infers that music is 'nonpolitical'.[93]

Pfitzner attacks modern music again in his other important essay, 'Futuristengefahr' ('The Dangers of Futurism', 1917), a denunciation of Busoni's treatise *Entwurf einer neuen Ästhetik der Tonkunst,* and proposes his alternative to modernism, namely, a return to established aesthetic 'truths'. Pfitzner takes issue with Busoni's proposal that a change in the materials of music is the best way forward. As Franklin notes in his essay on this polemic, Pfitzner holds instead to the belief 'that the *means* of artistic expression develop in accordance with changes in what artists feel that they have to say; with the nature of their "inspiration"'.[94] It is useless to change the material of music in the attempt to create new art, Pfitzner argues, as Busoni suggests; this would be to put the cart before the horse.[95] Pfitzner shows in 'Futuristengefahr' his participation within pre-existent, traditional musical norms in his treatment of tonal music as a 'given' and as 'natural'. In response to

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[91] Pfitzner, 'Die neue Ästhetik', 109.

[92] Ibid., 130 & 251.

[93] Ibid., 252.

[94] Franklin *'Palestrina* and the Dangerous Futurists', 126. Also on Pfitzner's response to Busoni, see Ermen, *Musik als Einfall,* 87 ff, and Adamy, *Hans Pfitzner,* 90 ff.

[95] Franklin *'Palestrina* and the Dangerous Futurists', 127.

Busoni's criticism of the 'lawgivers' of composition, Pfitzner rubbishes the Futurist's desire for the new and modern and replies that 'systems, rules, forms in music grow from music itself, just as with species of animals and plants in nature; some die out there, many survive. The rule against fifths has its own eternal correctness, as every real musician feels.'[96] He pours scorn on musicians who looks for new techniques; speaking of Busoni - although, by implication, all 'Futurist' musicians are included - he says that:

> He sits at the piano. How stubborn of the keyboard that no gentler transition is possible between the B and C. This limitation must go! He hears an orchestra: that is still almost the same clarinet and trumpet and violin that appeared in the orchestra of Beethoven's and Wagner's time. How boring is this limitation! He opens scores: what was the tyrannical and pedantic composer thinking of to expect me to play hundreds of bars in the same tempo? I cannot endure longer than eight bars! It curtails my freedom!... I can well believe... that if one has a bad spiritual and physical disposition, one could find it strange and intolerable that for as long as one lives, each day arrives in the morning and leaves in the evening; that the body always takes up the same space; that one must pay for every minute of one's life with a breath; that one could find it highly tedious to always have the same nose on one's face.[97]

By holding the progressive composer up to ridicule in this manner, Pfitzner indicates that tonal music is the established, 'natural' and 'right' way of composing; one can no more escape it than one can escape breathing. Such a view again situates Pfitzner as a conservative: in the same manner as the traditionalist political view in his Germany, tonality was so ingrained that it was accepted as the norm. In contrast to the 'communist' and 'international' modernists, Pfitzner's music is governed by eternal laws, allegedly above the realm of the political.

While one of Pfitzner's principal arguments against the 'Futurists' is their wish to break away from the pre-existent tradition of music, he himself believes he is at the end of a tradition. As he asks in 'Futuristengefahr', 'What if our last

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[96] Pfitzner, 'Futuristengefahr', *Gesammelte Schriften,* Bd.1 (Augsburg: Dr. Benno Filser-Verlag, 1926), 194.
[97] Ibid., 222-223.

century or century and a half represented the flowering of Western music, the climax, the real golden age, which will never return and which is now passing into decline, into a state of decadence, as after the age of Greek tragedy? My own feelings incline... to this view.'[98] Nevertheless, according to Pfitzner, the 'truths' of this tradition should still be upheld. Pfitzner's sense of his position at the end of the tradition of German music is demonstrated by the comparison he made between his opera and *Die Meistersinger,* which Mann reports in the course of his remarks on *Palestrina* in his *Betrachtungen:*

> we compared Ighino with David, Palestrina with Stolzing and Sachs, the mass with the prize song... Pfitzner said: 'The difference is expressed most clearly in the concluding scenic pictures. At the end of the *Meistersinger* there is a stage full of light, rejoicing of the people, engagement, brilliance and glory; in my work there is, to be sure, Palestrina, who is also celebrated, but in the half-darkness of his room under the picture of the deceased one, dreaming at his organ. The *Meistersinger* is the apotheosis of the new, a praise of the future and of life; in *Palestrina* everything tends toward the past, it is dominated by *sympathy with death.* '[99]

This culminatory feeling pervades the whole of *Palestrina;.* Mann describes the opera as 'the grave[-]song *[Grabgesang]* of romantic opera'.[100] The fictional composer's place within a teleology of music, and specifically as the culmination of that progression, is asserted by the Masters' reference to Palestrina completing their 'noble circle'; as mentioned above, Palestrina is 'an seiner schönen Ketten der letzte Stein' ('the last stone on his [God's] chain'). Franklin calls *Palestrina* an 'opera of cadences', saying that the artistic conservatism of Pfitzner's aesthetics is shown in its 'decadent and terminal aspect'.[101] In its backward-looking nature and 'courting of oblivion', he says (quoting Adorno) that the opera has the character of

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[98] Ibid., 221. Translation taken from Franklin, *'Palestrina* and the Dangerous Futurists', 128. Franklin suggests that Pfitzner also expresses some degree of hope, with his comment at the end of his essay that 'all around there stretch beautiful green pastures'; this suggests the ability of artists to continue creating great work, if only they hearken to their deepest inspiration and do not pursue the wild-goose chase of sterile technical innovation ('Futuristengefahr', 223, and Franklin, *'Palestrina* and the Dangerous Futurists', 130).

[99] Mann, *Reflections,* 311. Mann's emphasis. Mann had used the phrase 'sympathy with death' himself in one of his short stories, the predecessor to *Der Zauberberg.*

[100] Mann, *Reflections,* 313.

[101] Franklin, 'A Musical Legend', 12, and *'Palestrina* and the Dangerous Futurists', 130.

a 'message of despair from the shipwrecked'.[102] Indeed, Franklin sees a close proximity between the conservative composer Pfitzner and Adorno; both recognise the contemporary crisis for art, but Pfitzner, he says, 'does little more than anticipate Adorno's later and more philosophically searching reduction of the technical aspects of musical modernism to a tragic function of despair in an age whose greatest truth was to be found beyond the cold labyrinths of "progressive art" in a willing silence'.[103] The musical world which is constructed around Palestrina adds to the culminatory ambience by drawing on the 'archaic' musical idioms of the historical version of the composer.

The tradition of which Pfitzner felt he was at the end was, characteristically for such a nationalist composer, a specifically German one. Like Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger,* who expresses the sentiment 'Ehrt Eure deutschen Meister' ('Honour your German masters'), Pfitzner revered his compositional forebears. His 'Masters' included composers such as Wagner, Hoffmann, Beethoven, Schubert, Weber, Marschner, and Schumann, about whom he wrote numerous essays, as well as conducted their works. Real, important music is described by Pfitzner as national, German, *'echt'* music; the great composers uncovered 'the deepest mysteries of the national life of the soul *(Seelenleben),* music as soul of the nation'.[104] Pfitzner's commitment to the German musical heritage of which he was a part was frequently expressed by the composer, for instance in a letter he wrote in 1946:

> I... remain true to this land in spite of all; the land of Luther in which the B minor mass and Faust originated, the land that brought forth 'Freischütz' and Eichendorff, the 'Pastoral', and 'Die Meistersinger', the land in which the 'Critique of Reason' and 'The World as Will and Representation' were conceived - *I shall remain true to this land until my last breath.*[105]

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[102] Ibid., 120 & 123, quoting Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music,* 133.

[103] Franklin, *'Palestrina* and the Dangerous Futurists', 130-131.

[104] Pfitzner, 'Die neue Ästhetik', 130 & 233.

[105] Pfitzner, *Reden, Schriften Briefe,* 325 (5.10.46). Pfitzner's emphasis. Translation as Newsom, 'Hans Pfitzner, Thomas Mann and "The Magic Mountain"', 138.

Elements of the importance of this heritage to Pfitzner may be discerned in *Palestrina.* For instance, as well as its affinities with *Die Meistersinger* already mentioned, the work also reveals the influence of other Wagnerian operas: Pfitzner originally subtitled his work a 'Bühnenweihfestspiel', and its three-act structure, moving between different worlds, can be affiliated with the dramatic structure of *Parsifal.*[106] Pfitzner's reverence for his compositional ancestors underlines his place within the prevailing cultural environment.

The composer's nationalism also finds an outlet in his opera in his depiction of characters of various nationalities, although this is not without some degree of ambiguity. Palestrina himself is Italian, for instance, a characterisation which may seem problematic: why does the arch-nationalist Pfitzner choose an Italian and not a German? A solution may be found in the fact that Palestrina is located apart from the world: his separation from society makes him suprapolitical, and his own nationality is therefore irrelevant. The most important German character in terms of the plot is the Emperor Ferdinand. It is through Ferdinand's persuasion that the Pope decides to waive his ban on music in church until a trial mass has been composed; the 'saving' of music is at least partly thanks to him. The Emperor is thus presented as a man on the side of culture against the potential barbarities of the Italians, a thoroughly fitting position, perhaps, for a German. Ferdinand never appears in person, but is only talked about, a fact significant in itself. Like Palestrina, the German Emperor is separate from the world of 'politics'. German clerics (with one exception) are also absent from the Council meeting, as Novagerio tells Borromeo: 'die Deutschen... [sind] von der Synode fortgeblieben' ('the Germans... have stayed away from the synod'). The Council does take place on nominally German soil, in 'Trident, der deutschen, unbequemen' ('uncomfortable, German Trent'). Although in present-day Italy, at that time Trent would have been under the rule of Ferdinand as part of the Holy Roman Empire (in German, the 'Altes Deutsches Reich'). This explains the presence of German servants at the end of the act, whose designation as German might otherwise be

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106 Letter to Paul Cossmann, in Pfitzner, *Reden, Schriften, Briefe,* 294 (9.5.03). Also on Pfitzner's relationship to Wagner, see Toller, *Pfitzner's Palestrina,* passim, and Ermen, *Musik als Einfall.*

puzzling; rather than having travelled with their masters, they are the habitual inhabitants of the city. Significantly, the Germans play a smaller part in the brawl than the Italians and Spaniards, and utter few insults in comparison. The fact that the Germans are mostly absent from the Council indicates their 'non-political' nature, and demonstrates Pfitzner's belief, like Mann's, that Germans have no place in 'political' democratic assemblies.

Trent's geographical location as part of Germany explains the presence of the only German cleric we meet in the Council, Madruscht, the Prince-Bishop of Trent. His presentation is less unambivalently positive than Ferdinand's. The stage directions present him as 'a powerfully built man who, despite his ecclesiastical robes, gives the impression of being a warrior or a nobleman', these latter two occupations perhaps being suitably Germanic for Pfitzner. The way Madruscht behaves, though, is ambiguous; depending on one's point of view, it could be taken as either positive or negative. He is opposed to the way in which Council business is rushed through, and stands somewhat aloof from those clerics who try to curry favour with him (for instance, in his conversation with Novagerio at Madruscht's first entrance). This stance could be interpreted as positive, even an attempt at remaining 'nonpolitical'. More problematically, at the end of the act it is Madruscht who orders that the rioting servants should be shot. This order may seem obdurate to us, but within the militaristic society of Pfitzner's time may have seemed reasonable, or even advisable. The German cleric's presentation is therefore equivocal at best; he does not unambiguously stand out as an exemplar of nobility and magnanimity, and nor does he especially invite our sympathy.[107]

Pfitzner's Ideal of the Nonpolitical Artist: The Composer as Genius

In addition to instances of Pfitzner's conservative and nationalistic stance being presented in *Palestrina,* his construction of the fictional composer further supports a 'nonpolitical', conservative, position, specifically in his characterisation

[107] Peter Franklin observes that Madruscht represents 'what in the nationalistic Pfitzner was dangerously in accord with that element in his society that would shortly replace democratic inoperancy with Fascist intolerance' *('Palestrina* and the Dangerous Futurists', 132).

of Palestrina as a genius. According to Pfitzner, the genius must necessarily remain apart from society in order to be able to create, and in so doing, becomes 'nonpolitical'. We may recall here Mann's belief, discussed above, that democracy would flatten out the achievements of 'great men' for the sake of homogeneity: if the 'political' is against the concept of genius, it therefore follows that the genius must be 'nonpolitical'. Pfitzner's idea of genius draws on nineteenth-century aesthetics, and in particular is influenced by Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer states that the supremely gifted man stands apart from, and above, his fellow mortals. He holds to the conviction that the genius must remain separate from the world in order to create: 'genius lives essentially alone. It is too rare to find its like with ease, and too different from the rest of man to be their companion.'[108] In particular, the genius must disassociate himself from politics, and instead should work 'without regard for any reward, approbation or sympathy, and in solitude and with no attention to his own well-being... he is urged to think more of posterity than of the contemporary world by which he would merely be led astray.'[109]

Unlike Palestrina, who does not initially realise his superior talent, Pfitzner seemed to have believed in his own genius absolutely. He frequently wrote about the concept of genius in terms which seem to display a familiarity with the phenomenon that comes from personal experience.[110] Pfitzner believed that genius is essential for true artistic creation, saying that 'the conception of a genius is the alpha and omega of all art'; as he believed his own art to be 'true' art, his own qualities of genius therefore had to be acknowledged.[111] Pfitzner referred to his

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[108] Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea,* vol.3, trans. R.B. Haldane & J. Kemp (Sixth Edition. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd., 1909), 156; also see the section 'On Genius', 138-166, and *Parerga and Paralipomena,* vol.1, 330. For more details on Pfitzner's relationship to Schopenhauer, see Williamson, *The Music of Hans Pfitzner,* 32 ff, Ermen, *Musik als Einfall,* 52-57 and Adamy, *Hans Pfitzner,* 141-169.

[109] *Parerga and Paralipomena,* vol. II, 72 & 86. The idea of genius itself has many political implications, not least that the 'great man' can be positioned as a kind of *Übermensch,* or a *Führer.* (See Jochen Schmidt, *Die Geschichte des Genie-Gedankens in der deutschen Literatur, Philosophie und Politik, 1750-1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988) and Adamy, *Hans Pfitzner,* 236.) These have their own particular resonances for the period under question, but Palestrina is quite definitely not constructed as a leader; his opposition to the political actually prohibits him from taking such a role.

[110] See Pfitzner, 'Über musikalische Inspiration', in *Sämtliche Schriften,* Bd.4, ed. Bernhard Adamy (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1987), 300, or *Briefe,* 794 (18.12.37).

[111] Pfitzner, 'Zur Grundfrage der Operndichtung', *Gesammelte Schriften,* Bd. 2, 10.

own superiority, for instance, by calling his works *Meisterwerke,* while in 1933 he said that 'No-one knows how long the "Third Reich" will exist, *but I know that my works will last, according to an eternal law.* '[112] However, he felt that this genius was unrecognised, leaving him on the margins of musical society, a fact which caused him displeasure through much of his life. He expressed his despondency in a letter of 1909:

> Every new work of mine is a failure... I have to drag my greatest stage works around to hack-theatres *(Schmieren)* - the economy craves easy fare.... Hope after hope deceives me; but in spite of that, I wring from myself a work like the Quartet, in the most unfavourable circumstances - it meets with incomprehension, and was almost booed off stage in Berlin.[113]

During the Third Reich, he complained that he was still 'improperly neglected': 'I should be... the foremost man in the country in artistic matters, i.e. in the highest position', but 'of all the great names in music, I am the only one who has not yet once been given a worthy place.'[114] This lack of recognition helps to explain why he felt moved to idealise an image of himself in a composer who is recognised as the 'saviour of music'.

The idea of inspiration is a central part of the genius concept, and consistently with his philosophical heritage, Pfitzner held that inspiration 'is the only point of view by which the higher worth of any music can be judged; it is the highest criterion of any music'. One moment of inspiration, he stated, is better than 'a hundred thousand notes of musical work!'.[115] The idea that inspiration merely arrives unsolicited, and that the artist can do nothing to anticipate nor to prevent it, recurs frequently in Pfitzner's writings:

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[112] Pfitzner, *Briefe,* 152 (12.2.09) & 638 (1.10.33). Pfitzner's emphasis.

[113] Ibid., 151 (12.2.09).

[114] Ibid., 902 (13.3.42), 647 (17.1.34) & 643 (5.12.33). Also on Pfitzner's belief in his neglect, see Adamy, *Hans Pfitzner,* 52 ff.

[115] Pfitzner, 'Über musikalische Inspiration', 300, and Pfitzner quoting Reger, in Adamy, *Hans Pfitzner,* 116. Also on the importance Pfitzner attached to inspiration, see Adamy, *Hans Pfitzner,* 20, and Mosco Carner, 'Pfitzner v. Berg, or Inspiration v. Analysis', *Musical Times* (May 1977), 379-380.

> Just as the essence of art lies in the concept, so the essence of the concept lies in the involuntary *(im Unwillkürlichen)*... If there were a machine that could exactly indicate the degree of voluntariness or involuntariness, the borders of reflection and inspiration... then the key to all aesthetics would certainly have been found. For, strictly speaking, every argument can only be concerned with that which one cannot decide in practice, [i.e.] what is voluntary or involuntary in artistic creation.[116]

Consistent with the idea of the involuntary nature of inspiration is the belief that inspiration comes from a higher source, and therefore that the artist has no control over it. The word for inspiration in German, *Einfall,* suggests how something 'falls in' to the artist's mind from outside; logically, the thing which has 'fallen in' must have originated from somewhere 'higher'. The genius, therefore, is implicitly in touch with the divine; inspiration is, according to Pfitzner, 'the breath of God'.[117] The influence of this nineteenth-century ideology of genius may be traced in Pfitzner's presentation of Palestrina. Palestrina himself realises that his ability to compose is dependent upon higher factors when he is intransigent in the face of Borromeo's requests to write the trial mass. The composer states that the Pope 'kann befehlen, doch niemals meinem Genius - nur mir' ('can command, but can never command my genius, only me'). The visitation of the angels in Act One of *Palestrina,* who dictate to the composer the music of his mass, is a fairly literal representation by Pfitzner of the concept that the genius is in touch with the divine. This visit has definite resonances with Pfitzner's own philosophy; the scene is a moment of self-representation, wherein the twentieth-century composer's *Weltanschauung* concerning his own artistic abilities finds expression in his work.

Although the genius's inspiration comes from a higher source, according to Pfitzner the divine manifests itself through the artist's unconscious; by being aware of his unconscious the artist becomes aware of the divine. He said that the unconscious is the 'womb of inspiration', and stated that he was 'convinced that every real creative person, thus every true philosopher, composer or poet, sees the

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[116] Pfitzner, 'Zur Grundfrage der Operndichtung', 13. Also, 'The work demands to be born, it doesn't ask after the cost', *Gesammelte Schriften,* Bd.3, 345, quoted in Adamy, *Hans Pfitzner,* 32.
[117] Pfitzner, 'Über musikalische Inspiration', 284.

unconscious as the real creative force in the artist'.[118] The importance given to the realm of the unconscious goes back to Kant, who defined the ability to create art whilst in touch with the unconscious as a gift belonging only to the artist of genius; this idea, bolstered by the growing importance of the idea of the irrational, persisted in philosophy and aesthetics throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.[119] In *Palestrina,* the importance of the unconscious for the composer serves to accentuate his separation from the world outside. Paradoxically, Palestrina does write the mass which the world, as represented in the Council, wants from him, but he does not do this with conscious intention, as the manner of his inspiration makes clear: he writes in the ecstasy of inspiration, as a 'vessel' of God, and then forgets having done so. The outcome, where the Pope is convinced not to ban music in church, is almost by accident as far as Palestrina is concerned. Palestrina's separation from society remains intact because he has not *consciously* tried to serve society with his art. The premise that consciousness is inimical to artistic creation is articulated in the Masters scene, where the contrast of the conscious and unconscious is expressed through the ideas of light versus dark. Palestrina says that 'des Bewußtseins Licht, das tödlich grelle, das störend aufsteigt wie der freche Tag, ist feind dem süßen Traumgewirk, dem Künsteschaffen' ('the fatal, glaring light of consciousness that rises to disturb us like the bold day is enemy to sweet fantasy, to creativity').[120]

The importance of the unconscious is constructed further in Palestrina's 'loneliness' monologue at the beginning of the Masters scene. Here, the motif of ex.2b, one of the 'genius' motifs, appears in canon in the double basses, with six imitative entries during the last part of the monologue (from fig.121-1). (The polyphony forms an obvious allusion to the historical Palestrina's own compositional style.) Palestrina says here that everything is 'sinnlos, gänzlich sinnlos' ('meaningless, completely meaningless'), but the double bass accompaniment flatly contradicts this. Pfitzner plays on the idea of Palestrina's

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[118] Ibid., 282 & 284. Also see Adamy, *Hans Pfitzner,* 121.

[119] Schmidt, *Die Geschichte des Genie-Gedankens,* 364.

[120] This is reminiscent of the light-dark dichotomy of *Tristan,* again indicating the influence of Wagner.

unconscious, constructing a conceit around the fact that, despite his protestations and despair, Palestrina *is* a composer of genius. The passage of polyphony is barely audible, either as polyphony or as the genius motif. Within the context of the whole passage, one hears the low rumble of the double basses, but because of the extremely low register and thick, deep texture, it is difficult to distinguish the individual entries. Nor are the last two entries, in bass clarinet and cellos, any easier to hear, as by this time the texture is filled out with woodwind and more strings. The allusion to the 'unconscious' here is therefore two-fold: firstly, the low register at the start of the passage almost literally suggests the 'depths' of the unconscious, while the fact that the quotation is barely audible, perhaps even completely inaudible as a distinctive motif, suggests that it can be heard by the listener only on a subconscious level, rather than recognised as an obvious leitmotif.[121]

A further aspect of the genius concept, its association with immortality, may be found in Pfitzner's aesthetics. The composer stated that 'the greatest achievements of the genius... defy temporality *(Zeitlichkeit)'*, and 'ability, talent, genius is eternal, out of time, inexplicable.'[122] Because he believed himself to be a genius, it follows that Pfitzner would think himself immortal thanks to his works, as his comment *'I know that my works will last, according to an eternal law'* makes clear.[123] Again, this aesthetic is expressed in his opera. Although Palestrina's visitors are called the 'Nine Dead Masters of Composition', this title is, perhaps, something of a misnomer: they may be dead, but because of their works, they are also living. When Palestrina asks them to tell him, an 'arme[r] Geist, in Sterblichkeit befangen' (a 'poor soul, imprisoned by mortality'), whether these apparent ghosts 'wirklich [sind]' ('really exist'), they answer in the affirmative. The Masters' invitation to Palestrina to join their circle demonstrates that he will

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[121] Technically, there is a difference between the subconscious and the unconscious, the former being accessible to the conscious mind under certain conditions, the latter not accessible at all. However, the appeal to the listener's subconscious with this device can nevertheless be seen as representative of the unconscious.

[122] Pfitzner, 'Eindrücke und Bilder meines Lebens', *Sämtliche Schriften,* 646; 'Über musikalische Inspiration', 300.

[123] Pfitzner, *Briefe,* 638. For a discussion of immortality from a more philosophical angle, see Pfitzner's 'Über die persönliche Fortdauer nach dem Tode', *Reden, Schriften, Briefe,* 59-66.

become immortal like them. In Act Three, when Palestrina has completed his mass, Ighino comments on the composer's now assured immortality: 'Du bist jetzt der Berühmteste von allen, in fernsten Zeiten wird man dich noch nennen. Und nicht nur nennen, deine Werke singen!' ('Now you're the most famous of all people, in far off ages they will still speak your name. And not only speak your name, but sing your works!'). Composers of genius are different from ordinary mortals because they rise above the usual constraints of death; this confirms the separation of the man of genius from the world around him.

Conclusion

With its invocation of genius, inspiration, immortality, heritage, and notions of tonality and musical convention, Pfitzner's self-construction through the persona of Palestrina creates an ideal of the artist which encompasses many of Mann's ideas of the 'nonpolitical'. Pfitzner's picture of the isolated composer works to assert a musical, and social, order, in which the privileged place of the genius in society is assured, in the face of the threat from progressive atonal composers which Pfitzner criticised in his writings. The conclusion of *Palestrina* represents the triumph of art over politics, and by extension, the triumph of conservatism over liberalism, socialism and democracy. In this respect, the opera encapsulates Pfitzner's own political position. As a snapshot of political beliefs in the years around World War I, the opera portrays the dominant forces of the era, and their hopes for the future of the German nation, namely, that it would remain precisely as it was. But because of the events of 1918, this was not to be the case: German politics took a step away from conservatism and towards the progressive. The new *Zeitgeist* of the Weimar Republic was encapsulated by an opera written by Ernst Krenek some eleven years after *Palestrina,* his *Jonny spielt auf.*

3. Krenek spielt auf: Jonny, *Jazz and the Modern Composer*

Ernst Krenek's opera *Jonny spielt auf,* written in 1926, brought the composer almost instant renown. It transcended the bounds of the usual operatic repertoire to achieve wide popular appeal: there were 45 stagings in German-speaking countries in the 1927/28 season alone, with later productions reaching across the rest of Europe and to New York.[1] It also achieved the most unusual feat, for an opera, of becoming something of a cultural phenomenon: not only were sheet music and recordings of numbers from the opera sold in huge numbers, but there was even a brand of cigarettes produced called 'Jonny'.[2] The innovative elements of the work, particularly its use of popular music, attracted much attention at the time from commentators. Krenek admitted in later years that the opera contained autobiographical elements, although contemporary observers did not consider this issue at the time of the opera's success. *Jonny spielt auf* contains not one artist, but three: the title character Jonny, a jazz musician, Max, a composer in the classical tradition, and Daniello, a violinist, a fact which is itself indicative of the way the opera reflects varying personae of its composer. Of the three characters, Daniello is the most minor; he appears less often and only functions as a prop to the main plot. He is also a performing musician, rather than a creative one as Jonny and Max are, and therefore less open to a comparison with Krenek. From a structural point of view, Jonny is clearly the main character of the opera: the climax at the end of Act One and the dénouement in the final scene are based on the events surrounding Jonny. However, despite the opera's title, it may be argued that the principal character is Max. It is certainly he who occupies the central position if we regard the work in terms of a *Künstleroper:* as is typical for the hero of such a work, Max feels distant from society and lacks inspiration. Jonny acts as a representative of, and a metaphor for, the society with which Max is in conflict.

It is not only the multiple artist-characters which make *Jonny spielt auf* unusual amongst *Künstleropern.* The work is set in a time contemporaneous with

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[1] Eva Diettrich, 'Auf den Spuren zu Jonnys Erfolg', in Otto Kolleritsch, ed., *Ernst Krenek* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1982), 119; Wolfgang Rogge, *Ernst Kreneks Opern: Spiegel der zwanziger Jahre* (Wolfenbüttel & Zürich: Möseler Verlag, 1970), 63-64.

[2] Hailey, *Franz Schreker,* 242.

its composition, rather than in a historical past, something found in only a few other *Künstleropern* of this period.[3] The up-to-date setting, and the situation of a persona for the composer of the *Künstleroper* within a contemporary environment, creates a degree of engagement with society, rather than the distance which results when a historical past is invoked. *Jonny spielt auf* is frequently cited amongst writers on music in the Weimar Republic as the quintessence of *Zeitoper,* that is, an opera set in the modern world of the 1920s. Nevertheless, the ways in which the work partakes of contemporary trends are mostly only described by these writers on a superficial level; a more comprehensive analysis of how this representation is configured within the opera itself, and the wider contextual implications of this portrayal, is frequently lacking. Musicological work on Krenek himself is scarce, and focuses mostly on his later, serial music. Musicologists writing on Krenek have often overlooked the existence of *Jonny* altogether, and seem to treat it as an aberration on the record of a serious art composer. George Perle's short overview of the composer's life and works, 'Standortbestimmung', for instance, contains only one sentence on *Jonny,* while the opera is similarly passed over in Lothar Knessl's monograph on the composer.[4] Another essay, Walter Gieseler's '"Was an der Zeit ist". Versuch einer Annäherung an Kreneks Musikdenken', surveys Krenek's views on music and his aesthetics, but are focused around the post-*Jonny* period.[5] One of the few longer books on Krenek, Claudia Maurer Zenck's *Ernst Krenek: Ein Komponist im Exil,* concentrates, as its title states, on music dating from after Krenek's emigration from Austria in 1938; the collection of essays edited by Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn exclusively examines the music from *Karl V* (1933) onwards.[6] The lacuna in interpretations of *Jonny spielt auf* may have been prompted by Krenek himself: shortly after the success of the opera, he began to distance himself from it, protesting that it was intended as a serious work, not a light-hearted, populist comedy. (I shall return to this issue in Chapter 5.)

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[3] The only other *Künstleropern* unambiguously set in a contemporary era are Schreker's *Christophorus* and Strauss's *Intermezzo,* as well as, possibly, Schreker's *Der ferne Klang.*

[4] 'Standortbestimmung', *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 48/3-4 (1993), 152-160; Knessl, *Ernst Krenek* (Vienna: Lafite, 1967).

[5] *Musica,* 34/2 (1980), 127-131.

[6] Zenck, *Ernst Krenek: Ein Komponist im Exil* (Vienna: Lafite, 1980); Metzger & Riehn, eds., *Ernst Krenek* (Musik-Konzepte 39/40. Munich: edition text + kritik, 1984).

Of the writings which do exist about *Jonny spielt auf,* Eva Diettrich's essay, 'Auf den Spuren zu Jonnys Erfolg', is influenced by Krenek's later belief that the opera had 'failed' because it was not taken 'seriously' and did not manage to speak to the circle of intellectuals for which, according to Diettrich, it was intended.[7] Diettrich's approach to the work is one-sided, as it does not examine Krenek's writings contemporary with the opera's composition, which contradict her premise. Other examinations of the work usually rely heavily on description of its use of popular music; a result of this is that the focus of such writing is placed almost exclusively upon Jonny rather than Max. These writers do not examine the significance of the use of popular music within its contemporary cultural context to any depth, however. John L. Stewart's biography of Krenek is typical; he draws attention to the main themes of the work, but does not consider the cultural or ideological environment in which it was written. His comments on the jazz in the opera are on the level of description rather than assessing its meaning within contemporary society, and even this description is dismissive, with its criticism of the music's 'lightheartedness'. Stewart seems to edge towards greater critical insight when he says that the opera is 'a fairly conventional sexual farce with some genial incidental satire on modish fads', but this idea of satire is not explored.[8] The 'modish fads' must surely be jazz and the other contemporary elements, but how these are presented satirically is difficult to imagine, and Stewart offers no elucidation. Stewart falls into the same trap as Diettrich by over-focusing on Krenek's later comments about the work. The jazz, he says, contradicts whatever 'serious intent' there is to the opera.[9] His conclusion is that it is 'hard to take [the] central theme seriously';[10] however, I will contend that the subordination of the 'serious', and the light-hearted tone of the work as a whole, is the most important part of Krenek's conception.

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[7] Diettrich, 'Auf den Spuren zu Jonnys Erfolg'.

[8] Stewart, *Ernst Krenek: The Man and His Music* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & Oxford: University of California Press , 1991), 82. Stewart also says dismissively that much of the music which is not popular in style is 'simply melodramatic or even funny'.

[9] Ibid., 84-85.

[10] Ibid., 83.

In his *Ernst Kreneks Opern: Spiegel der zwanziger Jahre,* Wolfgang Rogge, discusses the appearances of popular music in *Jonny spielt auf* within the context of a descriptive overview of the themes and the musical style of the work.[11] He draws connections between the 'up-to-date' features of the work and its contemporary environment in order to illustrate his contention that the opera is a 'mirror' of its time (as he does with the other operas he discusses). However, his tracing of such connections is brief and without particular detail; for instance, he does not examine the use of jazz as part of the cultural trend known as Americanism, instead merely saying what Americans thought of *Jonny spielt auf.* He discusses the employment of jazz in aesthetic terms, suggesting that its popularity amongst art composers was due to its distance from Romantic aesthetics: 'Jazz provided a certain way of distancing oneself from pathos', and 'corresponded to the authoritatively defended and practised opinion expressed at that time that art music in general should be relieved from the spiritual dominance *(geistigen Überbau)* into which it had fallen through Romanticism.'[12] Rogge also sees the use of jazz as being motivated by musical reasons, commenting that it was a way of freeing music from the dissonance which had become the dominant language of art music in the early twentieth century.[13] In his essay on the same theme, 'Oper als Quadratur des Kreises. Zum Opernschaffen Ernst Kreneks', he dismissively says that *Jonny* 'proved itself as a moneyspinner', but was only a 'superficial' and 'sensationalist' work.[14]

The only other detailed discussion of *Jonny spielt auf* is Susan Cook's chapter in her *Opera for a New Republic: The Zeitopern of Krenek, Weill and Hindemith.* Cook's book provides a comprehensive overview of the jazz phenomenon in 1920s Europe, through a historical survey with illustrative musical examples. Within her section on *Jonny,* she shows how passages of music in the opera were influenced by contemporary popular dances. Cook's weakness, as Rogge's, is that she does not consider the significance of popular music as an

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[11] Rogge, *Ernst Kreneks Opern,* 58 ff.
[12] Ibid., 32.
[13] Ibid., 18.
[14] *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 34 (1980), 454.

ideological phenomenon, instead seeing the innovations of jazz in art music primarily in musical terms. She acknowledges that composers like Weill, Krenek and Hindemith wished to reach a new audience, and wrote *Zeitopern* in order to 'revitalize' German opera, but takes the view that they used popular music for primarily stylistic ends, to inject new life into the pre-existing musical language: 'for many Central European composers, jazz... provided a viable alternative to their worn-out nineteenth-century language'. They considered jazz idioms 'as suitable material for their compositions, particularly in their need to break with the past and write for the present'; those composers 'seeking artistic renewal... turned to the rhythms and timbres of jazz for deliverance'.[15]

None of the existing writing on *Jonny spielt auf* discusses the political implications of the use of popular music within the work, nor the ideological currents of which the opera was a part. I will explore both of these subjects in this chapter, and will discuss how the opera's connection to the world in which it was written was part of the on-going debate about art's place in the modern world. Further, the opera may be viewed against the wider political trends of the era, and as indicative of concepts about progress and reaction, in art and in political life. I will examine how the contemporary setting of *Jonny spielt auf* signifies a particular *Zeitgeist,* the cultural and political implications this possesses, and how the opera came to form an effective focus for a set of beliefs in 1920s Germany. I will begin by examining how the worlds of Jonny and Max are constituted within the opera and how they reflect contemporary culture and politics; I will then compare this picture with Krenek's own political and aesthetic outlook.

[15] Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 59, 65 & 70. Despite the promises of its title, Wolfgang Molkow's 'Der Sprung über den Schatten. Zum Opernschaffen Ernst Kreneks in den 20er und 30er Jahren' *(Musica* 34/2 (1980), 132-135) does little more than outline the principal contrast in *Jonny* between Max and Jonny and compares the opera to other operas of the era, by Krenek and others.

Artists and Society in *Jonny spielt auf*

Max's World

The problematic relationship between artist and society within *Jonny spielt auf* is located in the figure of the art-composer Max. At the beginning of the opera, Max is shown to be wholly set apart from the world around him: he is consistently shown in isolated locations, firstly on top of a mountain glacier and then in his home. He rarely interacts with anyone, with the exception of Anita whom I shall discuss further shortly. Max feels he has no place in society, saying he 'kann in diesen Städten nicht mehr leben' ('cannot live in these towns any more'). Instead, he is to be found on the glacier; in contrast to his estrangement from city life, on the glacier he is 'zu Haus' ('at home'). The composer is a 'Gletschermensch' (a 'person of the glacier'), as Anita calls him in Scene 2. The mountain, like Max, can be seen as set apart from, or above, the world around it. Max's isolation is suggested in Scene 7, when the glacier gains a voice and speaks with the composer: rather than having conversations with real people, he talks with mountains. Krenek said that Max was modelled on the type of artist 'who doesn't concern himself with whether he will find an ear that wants to listen to him... What we see is his isolation, his remoteness from life, and his anxious contrast to the basic attitude of the world around him'.[16]

Max goes to the glacier in order to escape the world, believing that there he will derive strength and inspiration: he says in Scene 6 that the mountain is his source of stability, while in Scene 7, he declares that the mountain 'mir immer Trost und Kraft gesandt... [und] meine Jugend stärkte' ('always sent me comfort and strength... [and] fortified my youth'). The leitmotif of ex.6, associated with the glacier, is employed as a metaphor for the isolation of the composer.[17] Max's relationship to the glacier is initially unproblematic, and at the beginning of Scene 1, he seems happy with his situation apart from the world. He is full of praise for the mountain which lures him away from his work and his fellow men: 'Du

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[16] Krenek, 'Jonny spielt auf', in *Im Zweifelsfalle: Aufsätze zur Musik* (Vienna: Europa, 1984), 18-19.

[17] On the appearances of the glacier motif, and its meaning within the work, see Rogge, *Ernst Kreneks Opern,* 57-58.

Ex.6 - The glacier leitmotif

schöner Berg! Der mich anzieht, der mich antreibt, zu gehen, fort aus der Heimat, fort von der Arbeit! Deinen Gletscher sendest du mir entgegen, groß und herrlich, weiß und strahlend im Mittagslicht' ('You beautiful mountain! You attract me, you drive me to go away from home, away from work! You send your glacier out to me, great and magnificent, white and sparkling in the midday light'). He tells Anita that he loves the glacier's 'lange Zeit, sein Wachsen in der Stille. Er kommt überall hin. Er ist mir Symbol der Gestalt, der geformten Natur, des gefaßten Lebens' ('longevity, its growth in stillness. It moves over everywhere. To me, it is a symbol of form, of shaped nature, of tranquil life').

Max's situation as a composer isolated from society is illustrated through the only composition of his which we hear, an aria called 'Als ich damals am Strand des Meeres stand'. The text of the song alludes to his position apart from the world:

> Als ich damals am Strand des Meeres stand,
> suchte das Heimweh mir heim.
> Ich suchte mein Heim in der Träume Land,
> daß das Weh mich ließe.
> Doch ward meiner Träume ich nicht froh,
> Das Leid blieb das Gleiche im Schlaf.
> O Schmerz, der mich tödlich traf!
> Drum, o Träne, fließe.

[As I stood once on the seashore, homesickness sought a home in me. I sought my home in the land of dreams, so that my grief would be eased. But my dreams gave me no happiness, the sorrow remained the same in sleep. Oh pain which has mortally wounded me! Flow down, oh tears.]

While we are told nothing of the character of the song, it may be read as a persona for Max. Max's separation from reality is suggested by the 'land of dreams' he seeks out in the song, in his case this being the world of solitude and the mountains. An indication that the character speaking in the song is identifiable with Max appears later, in Scene 5; Max says to the absent Anita, 'Als du damals am Rand des Gletschers zu mir tratest' ('When you came to me then at the edge of the glacier'), and is accompanied by the melody which appeared in the original version

of the song. 'Als ich damals' is constructed as 'Art' by being disconnected from the 'reality' of the rest of the opera. In terms of plot, the song is mostly irrelevant to the dramatic action of the opera, and does not move it forward in any way. It is also presented as geographically separate, being performed in one room and 'heard' only by the performers themselves. The opera's audience is privileged to eavesdrop on their performance. Finally, the song is temporally distinct, bringing the action to a standstill while it is being performed; for Anita and Max, it is a way to pass the time before Anita must leave. The definite and obvious break which separates 'Als ich damals' from the non-diegetic music on either side of it accentuates the contrast between 'art' and 'reality'. The song has the purpose within the opera of portraying Max's musical style and personality, but the way in which it is distinct temporally, geographically, and in terms of plot helps to underline the composer's distance from the 'normal' music around it, and therefore from the world outside.

The characterisation of Max as an isolated artist may be interpreted in a number of ways. The first of these is that Max is a parody on the stereotypical Romantic artist figure, out-of-date and slightly ridiculous. He is situated as such a figure through the rhetoric he characteristically employs. For instance, in Scene 5 of the opera, as he awaits Anita's return from Paris, his language is overstated in typical nineteenth-century fashion:

> O Herz, mein Herz, brause noch nicht so wild,
> noch mußt du mich bei klarem Verstand lassen,
> Blut, o mein Blut, tose nicht so laut,
> laß mich noch atmen!...
> O Freude, töte mich noch nicht,
> nicht zu früh, laß mich noch leben,
> laß mich noch diesen Augenblick erleben!
> O Herz, mein Herz, schlage nicht so wild,
> du mein Herz, gedulde dich noch!

[Oh heart, my heart, do not yet thunder so furiously, you must let me still keep some reason. Blood, oh my blood, do not roar so loudly, let me still breathe!... Oh joy, do not kill me yet, not so early, let

me still live, let me experience this moment! Oh heart, my heart, do not beat so furiously, you, my heart, have patience!]

Other factors indicate his status as a Romantic artist, such as his intense relationship to art. He treats his works as his 'children', as he states to Anita in Scene 2 when she is about to leave to sing in his opera: 'Was bin ich auf mein eigenes Kind eifersüchtig! Ihm zu dienen, läßt du mich allein! Mein eigenes Werk raubt dich mir!... Ich leide so um dich, und doch fährst du weg' ('How I am jealous of my own child! To serve it, you leave me alone! My own work robs me of you!... I suffer because of you, yet still you go away'). The work of art is treated in a way typical of nineteenth-century aesthetics: it is given a special status as autonomous, having an existence independent of the composer who created it.

The source of Max's inspiration is also conventionally Romantic. Initially, he is inspired by nature, and this partakes of a familiar nineteenth-century topos of artistic provenance. His conversation with the glacier in Scene 7 is the ultimate communion with the natural world: Max is not merely close to nature, but in tune with it to such an extent that he can communicate with it on a semantic level. A second common idea for the origination of inspiration may also be seen, namely the construction of women as muses to the male creative artist. The muse idea is found in Romanticism in two related manifestations, both of which are present in *Jonny spielt auf.* The muse may be wholly fictional, with the source of inspiration personified in a female figure; in *Jonny,* the glacier is personified in this way, speaking to Max with a female voice. Alternatively, a real woman within the artist's life may assume the status of a muse; the role which would otherwise be given to the fictional muse is projected onto the actual woman in the artist's life. Anita begins to assume the role of a muse for Max as they become more involved with each other. Although it is not made explicit in the text that Anita provides the inspiration for Max's music, it is found implicitly during the scenes between them. Firstly, Max has written an opera for her, part of which we hear them rehearse in Scene 2; secondly, in Scene 5, Max awaits Anita's return, and as he is counting the minutes by, he sits down at the piano to try to work. However, he fails because he is lacking in inspiration, showing how he cannot compose without her; all we hear

instead is an echo of 'Als ich damals', the song he has written for her. The overall effect of both manifestations of the Romantic muse idea is the same: in both cases the woman, whether real or fictional, is imbued with qualities in the mind of the artist which in reality she does not possess.[18]

The portrayal of Max as an isolated, Romantic artist figure is complicated by another possible reading of Max's character as an artist. In this interpretation, Max is a modernist composer, as is argued by Cook in *Opera for a New Republic.* She points out how Max clearly parodies specific composers; for example, in the very first line of the opera he exclaims 'Du schöner Berg!' ('You beautiful mountain!'). This allusion to perhaps the most modernist of modern composers is repeated elsewhere in the opera. The first line of Max's song 'Als ich damals am Strand des Meeres stand', for instance, alludes to Schoenberg's 1909 song, 'Am Strand'.[19] According to Cook, the text of 'Als ich damals' not only 'characterizes Max's personality as an individual uncomfortable with reality', but also 'parodies expressionist texts with their other-worldly sentiments.'[20] The allusions to modernist composers continue: the mountain image may be seen as a satire on the solitary intellectual, who has his metaphorical 'head in the clouds'. One of Schoenberg's circle, Webern, had a great interest in mountains, and, Cook comments, is described in the Moldenhauers' biography as needing to seek the 'rarified air of the heights'.[21] The image is particularly apposite for the time in which the opera was written, when mountaineering was popular amongst intellectuals. The mountain peaks were understood as symbolising the superiority of the educated elite over more ordinary people. Siegfried Kracauer writes that in

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[18] A number of actual nineteenth-century composers may be seen to have endowed muse-like qualities on real women: Christine Brantner has argued that Clara Schumann functioned in this role for her husband Robert *(Robert Schumann und das Tonkünstler-Bild der Romantiker).* We may also cite Berlioz's infatuation with Harriet Smithson.

[19] Cook states that Krenek referred to Scene 4 *(recte* Scene 5), as 'Max in Erwartung', although this is not in the score, and she gives no reference *(Opera for a New Republic,* 85). Max does say in Scene 6 that in his dream at the end of that night, 'alles war voll Erwartungen' ('all was full of expectation'), but this is the only use of this word in this section of the opera. Rogge does not take a position on whether Max is a parody of a Romantic or modernist figure.

[20] Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 101.

[21] H. & R. Moldenhauer, *Anton von Webern* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 158, quoted in Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 85. Also see the references to Webern's relationship to mountains in Kathryn Bailey, ed., *Webern Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 18, 62 & 277.

the early years of the century, intellectuals and students climbed mountains 'full of Promethean promptings... and with infinite pride [would] look down on what they called "valley-pigs" - those plebeian crowds who never made an effort to elevate themselves to lofty heights.' Such attitudes were reflected in a spate of mountaineering films made by the director Arnold Fanck in the twenties and thirties, which portrayed the sport as symbolic of the human struggle against destiny.[22]

Cook argues that these allusions to the composers of the Second Viennese School situate Max as a modernist composer stylistically. She says that the instance we hear of Max's own music, 'Als ich damals', 'parodies chromatic, atonal writing', although this is not supplemented in her writing by any musical analysis.[23] Cook's view would seem to challenge the portrayal of Max I have already outlined, in which he exemplifies a Romantic composer. However, this apparent contradiction is resolvable, because of an important distinction between aesthetics and musical style which Cook does not draw. As Peter Franklin points out in his article 'Audiences, Critics and the Depurification of Music: Reflections on a 1920s Controversy', aesthetic 'idealism' was common to both stylistically traditionalist composers such as Pfitzner, and modernist ones like Schoenberg or Berg. Franklin comments that Berg's 1920 attack on Pfitzner's 'Die neue Ästhetik', entitled 'Die musikalische Impotenz Hans Pfitzners neuer Ästhetik', takes issue only with Pfitzner's allegedly faulty analysis, and that Pfitzner's 'idealism', his belief in music as transcendent, is not dissimilar to Berg's own philosophy.[24] The aesthetics of the Second Viennese School in particular 'tended no less than Pfitzner's towards the supreme validation of a cherished artistic style or goal as being bound up with Nature'.[25] David Neumeyer writes that 'modernism, paraded about as truly revolutionary doctrine, was fundamentally an

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[22] Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 111. The mountaineering film was popular in the Third Reich; see ibid., 112 & 257 ff.

[23] Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 101.

[24] Franklin, 'Audiences, Critics and the Depurification of Music: Reflections on a 1920s Controversy', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 114 (1989), 81 & 85.

[25] Ibid., 86.

extreme extension of postures of the nineteenth-century romantics'.[26] If we understand modernist aesthetics as being an extension of Romanticism, rather than a departure from it, as I have discussed in Chapter 1, then Pfitzner and Schoenberg were closer in aesthetic outlook than their musical styles would suggest. Max can therefore hint in both directions, functioning as a Romantic and as a modernist artist, and the references to both contexts within the opera suggest the ambiguity of Max's position in this regard.

The ambiguity of Max's position is only partly solved by looking at his own music. Cook's assertion that Max's music is a parody of atonality presumably rests upon the fact that the song includes some dissonance and extended tonality. The song possesses little strong harmonic direction, and often no clearly established tonal centre. Nevertheless it still refers to a number of tonal centres: it opens with an implication of C, which is also referred to in b.381-385, and definitely closes in C at the end. The song also unambiguously cadences on F in b.380 and moves from a cadence on F to C in b.412-416, while also hinting at A in b.394-395. The harmonic style of the song combines conventionally tonal chords, extended chords with the addition of sevenths and added sixths, and some dissonant chords which cannot be explained with reference to conventional tonality. Many of these seemingly dissonant chords, though, can be explained in terms of suspensions and anticipations. An example of this is shown in ex.7, a harmonic reduction of the first part of 'Als ich damals', where the black notes indicate pitches which act as suspensions onto more conventional chords, shown as white notes. The non-harmonic notes of the voice part may often be explained in terms of passing and auxiliary notes, although there are also passages in which the voice part does not fit with the harmony implied in the piano, such as in b.391-392, and particularly b.400-403. It may be argued that the song in fact straddles the Romantic-modern divide, as it is less explicitly atonal than written in a kind of late-Romantic, expanded tonality such as may be found, for instance, in early Berg.

Despite his initially unproblematic position outside society, a gradual heightening of tension between Max and the world outside him is brought about as

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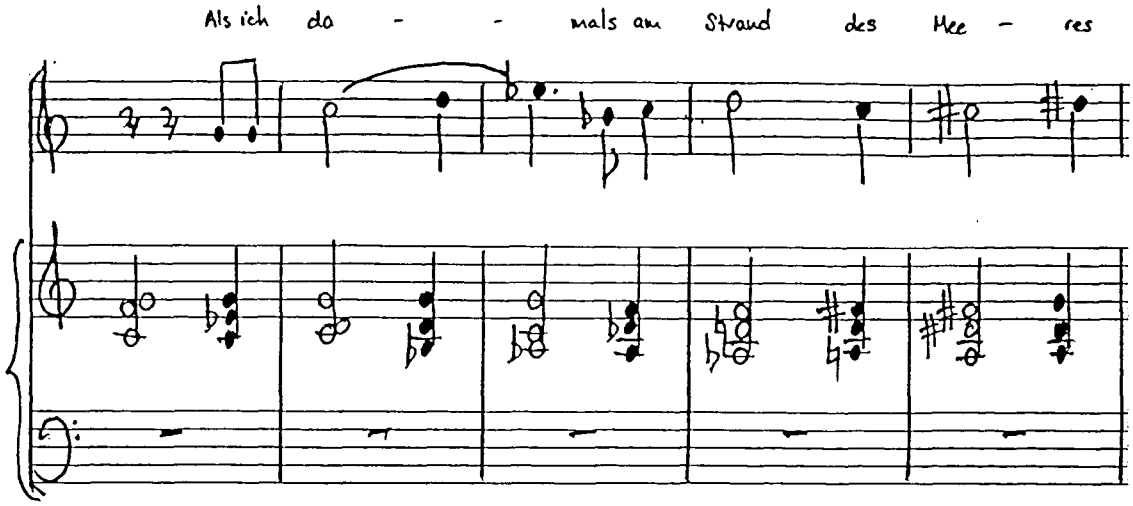
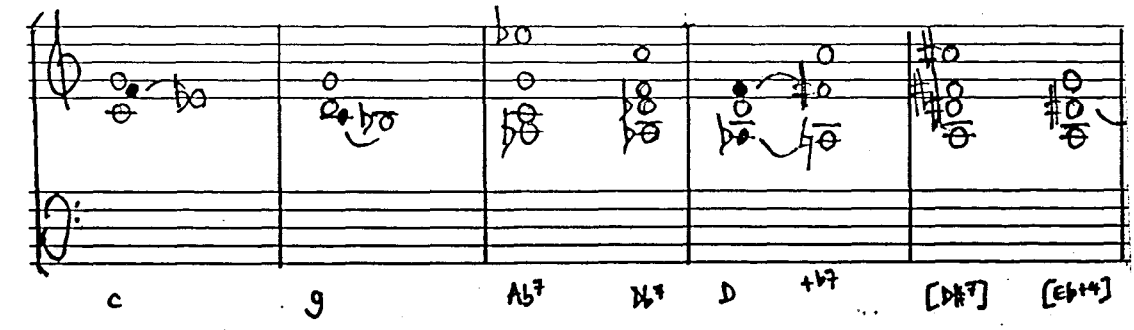
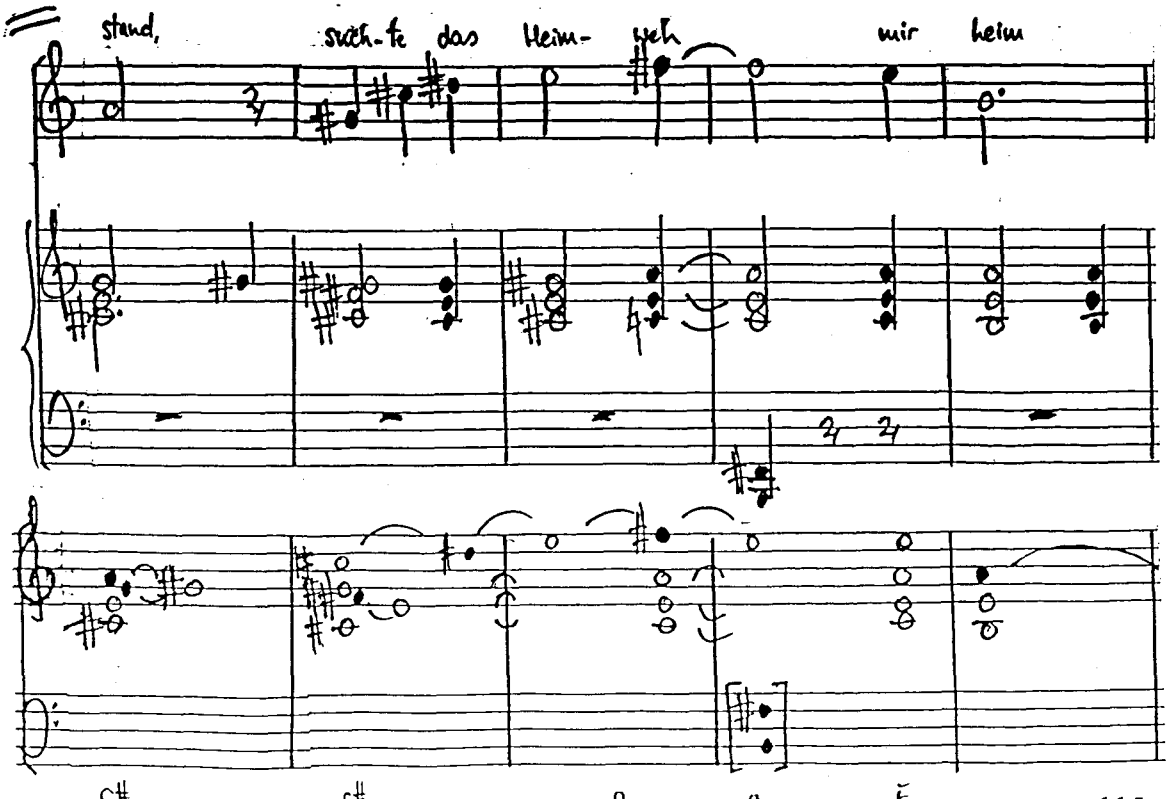
[26] *The Music of Paul Hindemith* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1986), 8.

Ex.7 - Harmonic reduction of 'Als ich damals am Strand des Meeres stand', b.363-380

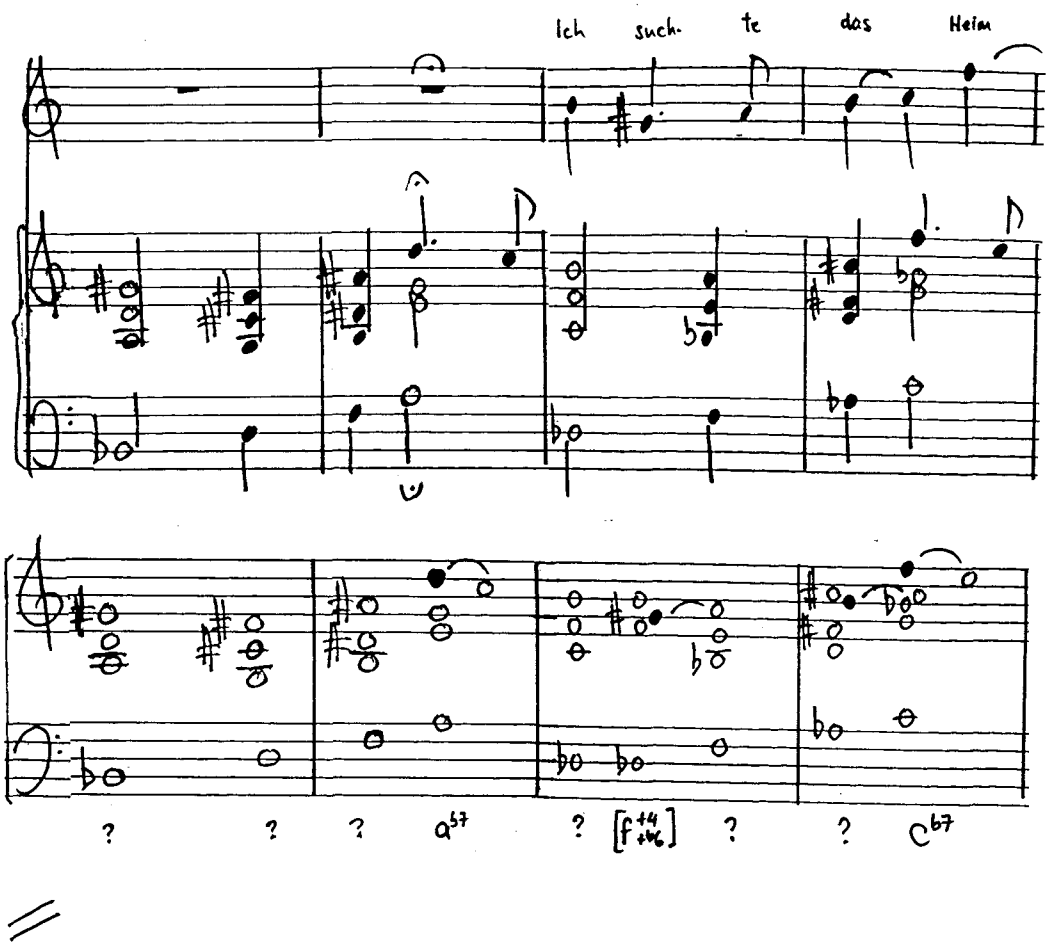


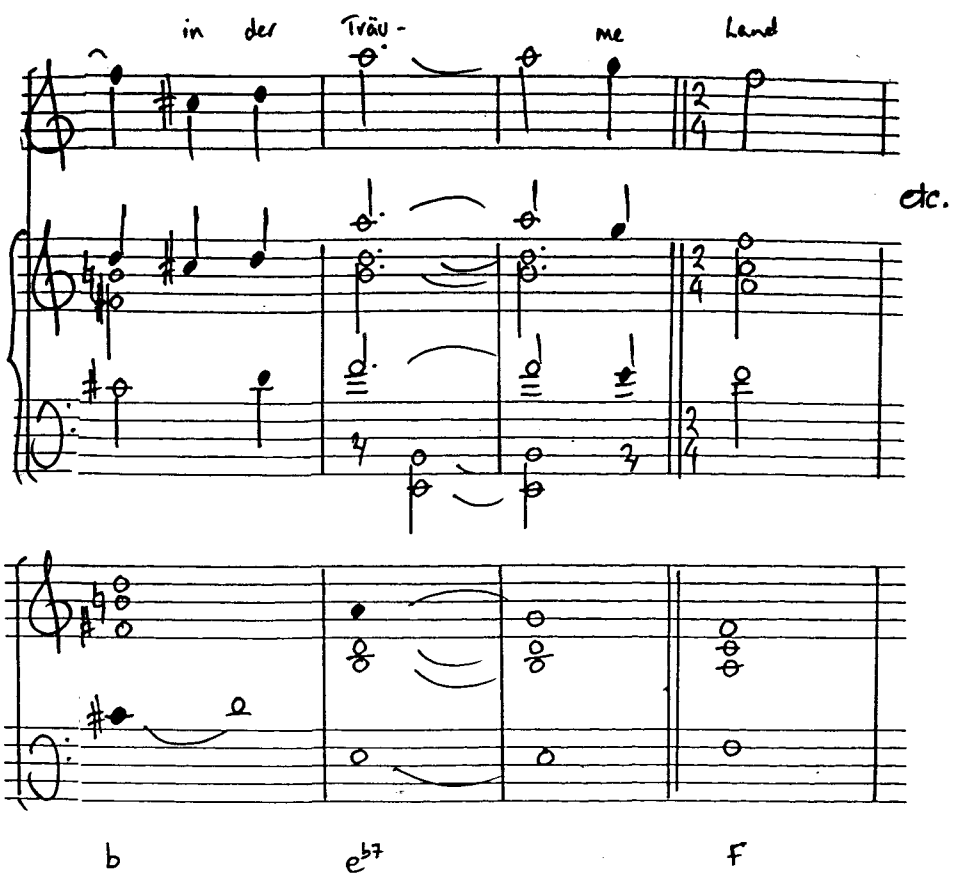
Reduction:





Ex.7 continued





the opera progresses, through the agency of Anita, a singer. Anita mediates between the two environments: she is part of the society which Max has rejected, and when he falls in love with her, the society to which she belongs begins to exert a pull on him, and simultaneously, he loses his ability to compose (as is shown in the scene, already discussed, when he cannot work while waiting for Anita to return). Anita is herself a singer, an artist, and therefore has one foot in Max's artistic world; however, as a performer and in communication with audiences, she also belongs to society. Consistently with her mediating role, Anita first appears in Max's mountain environment, climbing the glacier herself where she meets the composer. Yet she is also to be found in Jonny's world, in the hotel where the jazz musician first appears in Scene 3, and in the railway station. While Max stays in one place, their home, Anita moves between there and her singing engagements. Anita's function as an intermediary is shown by her resistance to the role into which Max tries to cast her. She refuses Max's attempts to place her on a pedestal, and becomes exasperated with the way he pours out his Romantic longing for her. Anita tells him that he must reconcile himself to modern life and that the strength he thought he had on the mountain was only an illusion:

> Das Leben, das du nicht verstehst, es ist Bewegung, and darin ist es Glück. Darin du selbst sein, das ist alles. In jedem Augenblick du selbst sein, in jedem Augenblick es ganz sein, und jeden Augenblick leben, als ob kein andrer käme, weder vorher noch nachher, und sich doch nicht verlieren.

[Life, which you cannot understand, is movement, and therein lies happiness. To be yourself in the midst of life, that is everything. To be yourself at every moment, to live it to the full at every moment, and to live each moment as though it were the only one, nothing before nor after, and yet not lose yourself.]

The musical language of 'Als ich damals' demonstrates the tension which comes to exist between Max and society. Anita acts as an intermediary here too, because of the way that she expresses Max's feelings through the persona of the song. The song sets up a separate musical world for Max, in the same manner that Palestrina is characterised by particular leitmotifs which are set in contrast to the 'modern' music of the Council. In *Jonny spielt auf,* Max's own music serves the

same purpose, and his musical world may be compared to the music elsewhere in the opera. The music of *Jonny* divides into sharply differentiated styles: Max's post-Romantic style is contrasted both with a similar but more atonal style which forms the bulk of the non-diegetic music, and with strongly tonal and rhythmic music, influenced by contemporary popular music. This tonal music is associated with Jonny, and the everyday world to which he belongs. (I shall discuss this further below.) The association of tonality with everyday society means that the tonal moments within 'Als ich damals' do not remain semiotically neutral; tonality is used in the opera as a marker to the world associated with Jonny, and its employment by Max symbolises his pull towards that society. The tension in 'Als ich damals' between tonality and atonality can be interpreted as symbolising Max's position on the edge of society, neither able to be assimilated into it nor able to altogether escape it.

Max's relationship to the mountain begins to change after he has met Anita, and become her lover. Max is now aware of his isolation, and uneasy with it; the glacier's previous role as a means of escape from the trials of society is no longer effective for him. In Scene 7, on the glacier, Max shows how Anita has made him aware of his seclusion by using words which allude to her: 'Ich habe Angst. Waren das nicht ihre Worte?' ('I am afraid. Were those not her words?'). Unlike previously, he is now afraid of the mountains. This scene further depicts Max's problematic position towards society and comments on the sterility, or even death, of the composer who is distanced from the world through the image of the glacier. This representation is achieved in two ways, through the text and the music. The textual element is constructed in opposition to the opening scene of the opera; here, when Anita said that she was afraid on the glacier because it suggested to her 'limitless... unending death' ('grenzenloser... unendlicher Tod'), Max had contradicted her: 'Er lebt doch!... In seiner Starrheit welches Leben!... Er ist mir Symbol... des gefaßten Lebens' ('But it is alive!... What life is in its austerity... To me, it is a symbol of tranquil life'). However, in his moment of crisis in Scene 7, his opinion has changed: not only is he afraid, he now says that 'die Einsamkeit wölbt sich wie eine Totenglocke über mich. Der große Tod kommt zu mir' ('Loneliness forms a vault over me like a death knell. Death itself

comes to me'). Max is also constructed as distanced from society and compositionally sterile through musical means. The aridness of Max's musical world is built from a texture which is characterised by comparative emptiness, with slow-moving harmonic progressions and tempi. His isolation is strikingly indicated during the most immobile passage of the scene, beginning in b.1284. Here, Max is at his most wretched. The Glacier has refused to help him, and has ordered him back to life, saying 'du [bist] ein Mensch. Du mußt leben, du mußt leiden!' ('You are human. You must live, you must suffer!'). The music becomes less and less active until it seems it will stop altogether. Max's lines reflect his despair; they are progressively contracted, so that the wide-ranging melodic lines which he sang previously, encompassing an octave or more within one phrase (see b. 1226, for instance, as well as other scenes), are reduced to chromatic phrases within the C-G fifth in the section from b.1284. Max's voice eventually divests itself of melody altogether, until he repeats a monotone in speech rhythm, to the words 'Die Einsamkeit wölbt sich wie eine Totenglocke über mich' ('Loneliness forms a vault over me like a death knell'). This suggests Max's depressed state of mind, his compositional emptiness and his distance from society. The accompaniment to Max's singing is even more notable. For about fifty bars (almost two minutes' worth of music), it is made up principally of a sustained harmonium open fifth on C and G, a sustained low C in the double basses, and the Glacier-Voice repeating its leitmotif, eighteen times in all (b.1284-1334). In addition, there is a repeated G in the violins, and from b.1299, a slowly descending scale from C to C in the basses, the downward movement of which can be seen as a conventional semiotic marker for Max's dejection. The orchestral voice depicts here the death-knell-like vault to which Max's words refer: the high harmonium notes with the low bass ones form a 'frame' into which Max's lines fit, which may suggest a vault-like space, while the open fifth's ringing in the harmonium approximates a bell.[27] As this musical vault encloses Max, the contracted nature of his lines give the impression that he is no longer able to break out, either spiritually or musically - he is musically and emotionally bereft, as expressed in his monotone. Although he

[27] In the score, Krenek specifies that the harmonium should be supplemented whenever possible by a glass harmonica, and this adds to the bell-like effect. (The Decca recording of *Jonny* includes the glass harmonica *(Entartete Musik* series, Decca 436 631-2).)

may have gained strength and inspiration from the glacier in the past, the reverse is true by this scene.

The unease which becomes apparent in Max's life with the arrival of Anita is fundamental to the reappraisal he makes of his place in society. Max states to the absent Anita in Scene 5 that when he met her, his ice began to melt: 'Als du damals am Rand des Gletschers zu mir tratest, schmolzest du hin das Eis meiner Seele. Jetzt leb ich und leide. Mein Leben ist ganz in deiner Hand' ('When you came to me then at the edge of the glacier, you melted away the ice of my soul. Now I live and suffer. My life is completely in your hands'). He is forced to question his previous existence, which completely ignored a world outside art, and consequently he undergoes a fundamental reorientation of his way of life. Max's longing to be assimilated into society is suggested by the persona of 'Als ich damals', who is 'homesick'. As I shall explore in due course, his position within society is shown to alter fundamentally, although how this change of direction affects his art is only implicit within the opera.

Jonny's World

The jazz musician Jonny appears to be the diametric opposite to Max, and is completely comfortable being part of the world around him. Jonny is portrayed in a number of situations which may be easily contrasted to the presentation of Max. For instance, Jonny is involved in a wholly separate plot to that of Max and his struggles with his art. This plot, which revolves around Jonny's theft of Daniello's violin, is action-driven and dramatically exciting, rather than reflective as Max's is. Instead of agonising about his life, Jonny lurches from one situation to the next, driving events rather than removing himself from them. It is only at the end of the opera that Max's fate becomes similarly exciting, as he rushes to catch the train to America.[28] A number of consequences arise from the style of Jonny's plot: for instance, he works in close interaction with other characters, especially compared

[28] Jonny's adventures help to explain both the opera's success, and why it has often been understood as being about Jonny more than about Max.

to Max. Because he sets trains of events in motion rather than merely reacting to outside circumstances, the other characters circulate around him. Jonny might be seen as a more superficial character than Max because of the way he reacts more quickly to life; he has none of the heart-searching monologues which Max has but is more happy-go-lucky. Nevertheless, it is Jonny who triumphs, with no sense of irony.[29] Max's soul-searching may be 'deeper', but it sets him apart from the ordinary people around him, because no-one can understand him.

Jonny's down-to-earth quality, which makes him closer to the other characters, illustrates his participation within society, rather than retreat from it. This interaction parallels his relationship to art, just as it does with Max: for Jonny, music is expendable, more current and not treated as an autonomous art-object. In contrast to Anita's role for Max as a muse, Jonny's relationship to women exemplifies his different sensibility to art: he has a blasé attitude towards them which is the opposite of Max's idealisation of Anita. Instead of exalting one particular woman, Jonny indicates his ability to move through a variety of them: 'Wechselt das Hotel, gibt es neue Mädchen, und das ganze war wieder eine Saison' ('When I change hotels, there are new girls, but the whole thing is just another season').[30] As Rogge comments, music and women are both an expression of Jonny's vitality: 'music becomes for him an object of his passion, in the same way as women.'[31]

Jonny is seen making music far more often than Max. While Max only writes and performs one piece of music and then ceases composing, Jonny plays in no fewer than six different pieces. Three of these are played by Jonny off-stage in conjunction with his band ('Shimmy', 'Tango' and 'Jazz'), and one is sung by Jonny on-stage, accompanied by his band off-stage ('Leb wohl, mein Schatz'). The other two ('Auf wiedersehen' and 'Jetzt ist die Geige mein') are sung by Jonny alone on-stage. It is never explicitly stated whether these pieces are actually

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[29] I therefore disagree with Rogge's statement that Jonny's triumph is ironic *(Ernst Kreneks Opern,* 66).

[30] Also see Scene 4, where the Hotel Director says to Jonny, 'Wollen Sie noch mehr Weiber?' ('Do you want even more women?').

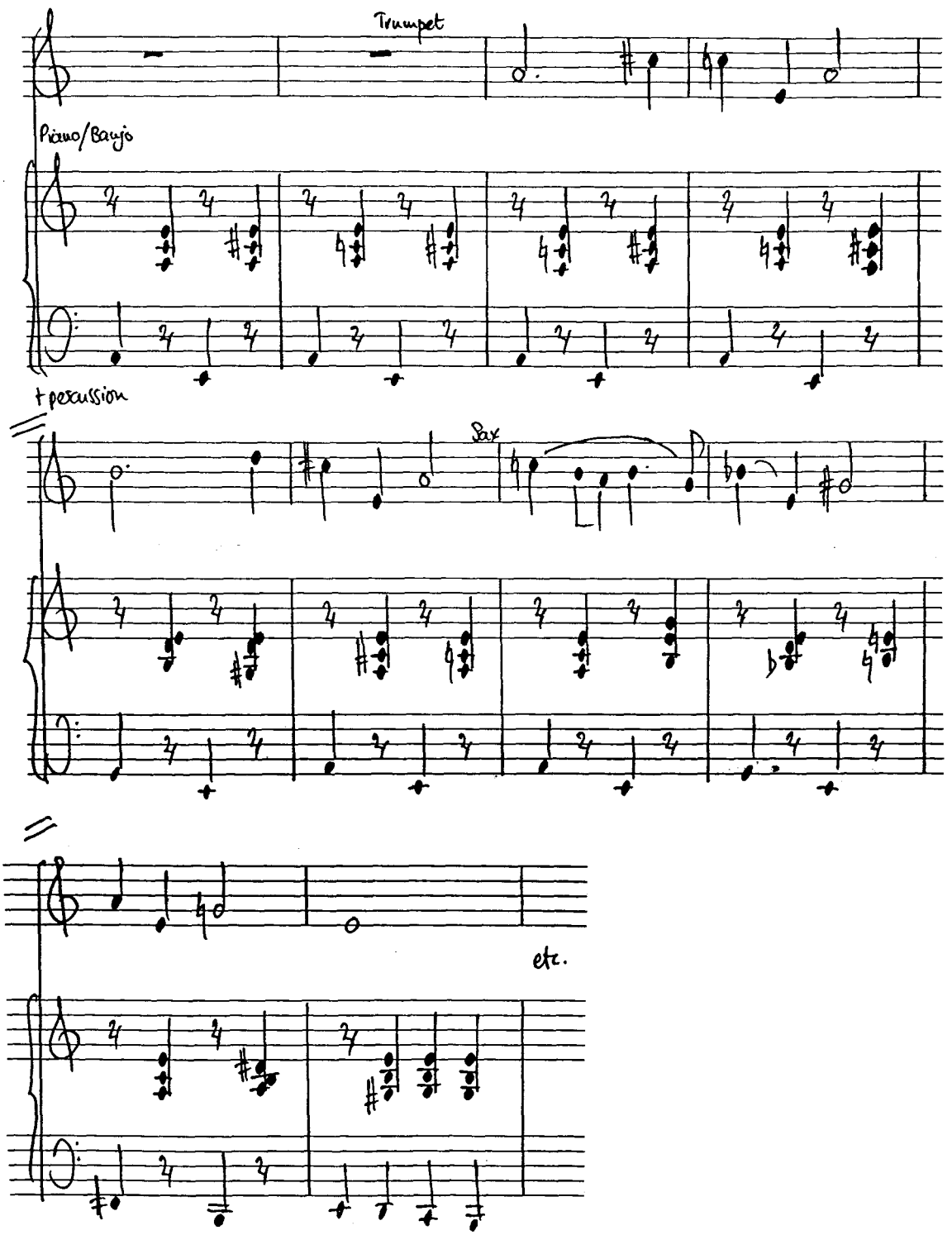
[31] Ibid., 59.

composed by Jonny or just played by him, but they are clearly associated with him; when we read them as being written by him, they demonstrate his compositional fluency, in contrast to Max's sterility. It is also made clear that Jonny is a versatile all-round musician, when he sings 'Wenn ich hier die Geige spiele, Banjo zupfe, Saxophon, Posaune blase...' ('When I play the violin, strum the banjo, blow the saxophone and trombone...'). Jonny's music is clearly tonal, and often has prominent blues thirds and rhythmic syncopation, in a style borrowed from contemporary dance music. (Ex.8 shows some typical examples of this style.) In contrast to Max's isolation, Jonny's 'accessible' popular music exhibits the way in which he is integrated with the society in which he lives. The preference for Jonny's music amongst the other characters is suggested throughout the opera, and sometimes becomes particularly obvious, for instance at the end of Scene 7, when the jazz musician's music is directly contrasted with Max's. Here, Anita's voice is broadcast on the radio, singing 'Als ich damals', to which the reaction of the listeners on stage is: 'Hören Sie die Stimme an! Sie klingt so göttlich schön! Schade, daß sie so gern moderne Musik singt! Und doch, wie sie's singt, meint man fast, es wäre Musik' ('Listen to that voice! It sounds so divine! It's a pity she likes singing modern music so much. And yet, when she sings it, one could almost believe it to be music'). When the radio is re-tuned to Jonny's band, there are exclamations of 'Gott sei Dank!' ('Thank the Lord!'), before everyone starts dancing happily. The contrast in the public's reactions to the two types of music vividly illustrates the problem, according to Krenek, of the art composer in the modern world; the difference between the negative picture of Max as an out-of-touch aesthete and Jonny's vibrancy could hardly be more explicit. To paraphrase Pfitzner, the old aesthetic is shown to be musically impotent.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Jonny's music, and where it contrasts most strongly with Max, is its status within the opera as a whole. John Stewart states that Krenek employs jazz 'mostly for characterization and for evoking the atmosphere of smart resorts', and that only at the end does it become thematically important 'in exalting "the new world" that "overpowers old Europe through the

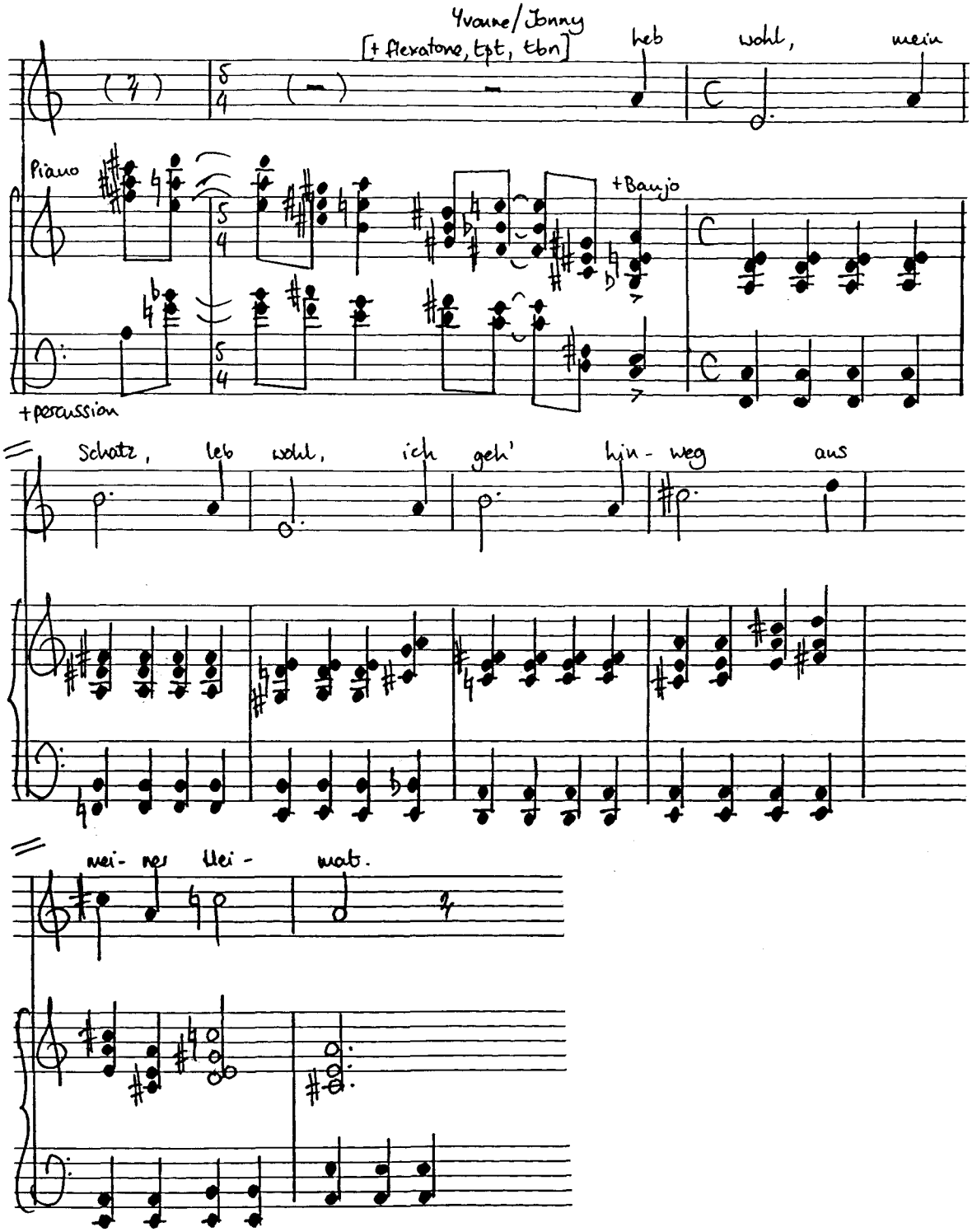
Ex.8 - Jonny's music

a) Shimmy (I/583)



Ex.8 continued

b) Blues ('Leb wohl, mein Schatz') (I/959)



dance"'.[32] However, one may argue that the jazz elements have a much wider signifying role. The jazz not only situates the work within its cultural environment, but within the opera it also signifies the New World, which is contrasted to the 'old world' of Max. Jonny's music takes up a large section of the music of the entire work, especially when compared to Max's, showing the integration of his style of music with the world of the opera. Both Max's and Jonny's musics appear diegetically; Jonny's is either sung by him on stage or played by the off-stage band. Significantly, though, Jonny's diegetic music reappears within a non-diegetic context, sung by other characters or by Jonny himself. (A summary of the instances of diegetic music, as well as where it recurs non-diegetically, is given in Table 1. Italics in this table indicate music which is functioning diegetically, but nevertheless uses words pertaining directly to the plot. Square brackets indicate sections which are non-diegetic but which employ music which functions diegetically elsewhere (or simultaneously). Capitals indicate that music heard before is re-heard with different words.) The way in which Max's music remains wholly diegetic, while Jonny's music is taken up by all of the characters and incorporated into the musical language of the whole, illustrates the relative positions of the two artists towards society. The music of Jonny's band is unashamedly 'popular'; it is so much a part of everyday life for the characters in the opera that, in contrast to the full-stop of 'Als ich damals', this music is employed by the characters on stage in a non-diegetic way. The song 'Leb wohl mein Schatz', first played by Jonny's band, is particularly significant in this respect, being taken up by the characters on numerous occasions as part of the plot. The 'negro-spiritual' first sung by Jonny with the words 'Jetzt ist die Geige mein' has a similarly important role.[33] Jonny's style becomes, in part, the musical language of the opera *per se,* and assimilated with the everyday world, illustrating the position of Jonny's music as a part of society rather than distinct from it.

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[32] Stewart, *Ernst Krenek,* 85.

[33] We hear it first pertaining to the plot before we hear it as an instrumental number, but it nevertheless functions in the same way.

Table 1

Bar	**Title / Words**	**Performers**	**Status**	**Location**
b.I/363	'Als ich damals'	Anita & Max	diegetic	on-stage
b.I/585	'Shimmy'	Jonny's band	diegetic	off-stage
b.I/941	'Blues' ('Leb wohl')	Jonny's band [+ Jonny & Yvonne]	diegetic [+ non-diegetic]	band off-stage [Jonny & Yvonne on-stage]
b.I/1138	'Tango' ('O rêverie')	Jonny's band	diegetic	off-stage
b.I/1289, b.I/1740	*'Niggerlied' ('Auf Wiedersehen')*	*Jonny*	*diegetic*	*on-stage*
b.I/1762	['Blues' ('Leb wohl')]	[Soloists' ensemble]	[non-diegetic]	[on-stage]
b.II/884	*'Neger-Spirituel' ('Jetzt ist die Geige mein')*	*Jonny*	*diegetic*	*on-stage*
b.II/1335	'Als ich damals'	Anita	diegetic	off-stage
b.II/1411	'Jazz'	Jonny's band	diegetic	off-stage
b.II/1523	'Jetzt ist die Geige mein'	Jonny's band	diegetic	off-stage
b.II/2183	['DIE STUNDE SCHLÄGT' ('LEB WOHL')]	[CHORUS]	[NON-DIEGETIC]	[ON-STAGE]
b.II/2323	['ES KOMMT DIE NEUE WELT' ('JETZT IST DIE GEIGE MEIN')]	[CHORUS AND SOLOISTS]	[NON-DIEGETIC]	[ON-STAGE]

Because of its popular character, Jonny's music is stylistically posited to be the music of the everyday world outside the opera house. The employment of stylistically 'popular' music not only suggests the assimilation of Jonny and his music into the society of the opera, but also serves symbolically to bridge the gap between the fantasy world on stage and the reality which the audience ordinarily inhabits, helping to 'normalise' the operatic characters which use this music, and bringing them into line with the audience's everyday experience.[34] This occurs to a much greater degree than would be the case if the opera were written in a conventionally 'classical' style, in which the music has a limited existence outside the confines of its own performance in the opera house. This is especially true for the time of *Jonny spielt auf*'s composition, when the newest art music was usually little heard by the general public. *Jonny spielt auf* is not simply 'art music', but partakes in a different musical discourse, distinct from the usual realm for opera, because of its frequent use of a popular style. This popular music is stylistically identical with that found in the wider cultural environment of the opera, and would later become literally identical when the popular numbers of *Jonny spielt auf* became hits in their own right.

The nationalities of the two composers - Jonny is American, Max an unspecified middle-European - is of primary importance to the moral of the story, and the conclusion of the opera focuses this moral in no uncertain terms. After believing the violin to be lost to him, Jonny eventually succeeds in obtaining it after Daniello, its owner, falls to his death beneath a train. Jonny is shown triumphant, playing the violin on top of a turning globe. The triumph of America over Europe, and of new music over the old, is central to the opera. Daniello's violin symbolises the old order, and its eventually successful theft by Jonny indicates the triumph of the New World; the classical violin is stolen by a jazz musician, and pressed into the service of a new style of music. Jonny expresses this

[34] A split similar to that between the diegetic and non-diegetic music is that between on-stage and off-stage music: much of Jonny's music is performed by the off-stage band, indicating a literal mediation between the fantasy world of the opera and the world outside which parallels that of musical style. Max's music, 'Als ich damals', is originally heard in an on-stage setting, but also partly shifts when it is heard on the radio in Scene 7, indicating the composer's gradual transformation.

idea earlier in the opera, in the song which he sings when he retrieves the violin from its hiding place in Anita's house. His supremacy over the old order is emphasised, as he sings that 'mir gehört alles, was gut ist in der Welt. Die alte Welt hat es erzeugt, sie weiß damit nichts mehr zu tun' ('All that is good in the world belongs to me. The old world created it, but doesn't know what to do with it any more'). The chorus voices this sentiment again at the conclusion of the opera:

> Die Stunde schlägt der alten Zeit, die neue Zeit bricht jetzt an. Versäumt den Anschluß nicht, die Überfahrt beginnt ins unbekannte Land der Freiheit.... Es kommt die neue Welt übers Meer gefahren mit Glanz und erbt das alte Europa durch den Tanz!

[Time is up for the old ways, the new time is at hand. Don't miss your connection, the journey is beginning into the unknown land of freedom.... The glittering new world comes across the sea and inherits old Europe through the dance!]

Max's Transformation

The significance of the separation of Jonny's world from Max's becomes apparent when we examine what happens to Max during the course of the story, and how he solves his problematic seclusion by deciding to leave the world of isolated artistry for integration with society. Although Jonny and Max never meet, apart from briefly in Scene 7, and their worlds are kept musically distinct, there is an important shift in the music accompanying Max during the course of the work. The change takes place after Max's decision to go with Anita to America (although it is anticipated before then); Anita's character as an intermediary between the two types of world is again apparent at the point of Max's change of heart. It is she who, after having made Max aware of his isolation, brings him into the world of Jonny, through one crucial moment in Scene 7 where Max decides to 'return to life'. Here, Max's conversation with the glacier has ended in failure, the glacier telling him that 'Du mußt zurück ins Leben!' ('You must return to life!'). As he remains alone and pitying his fate, he hears Anita's voice singing 'Als ich damals', which is being carried from the loudspeaker on the hotel terrace at the foot of the

mountain. Hearing this song has a profound effect on Max; it makes him decide not to kill himself, but to 'return to life' as the mountain commanded and go back to the world. Anita's voice on the radio effects Max's transition away from the realm of solitude and towards his assimilation into the modern world of Jonny. Max starts singing music comprised of 'Als ich damals' in places, suggesting how he is beginning to regain his compositional ability. In contrast to the comparative lack of music which accompanied his most despairing moments, the music hints here that he can now compose again, even if this is only indicated so far by the music he has already written. Max descends from the mountain with renewed optimism, and sets out for the station where Anita is to catch the train which will take her to America.

The catalyst for Max's conversion is when he hears Anita singing 'Als ich damals', but an inconsistency is created by his hearing this song. Max is moved to return to life by hearing his own music, and does not hear what replaces the song on the radio: jazz music, played by Jonny. As Max is returning to life and to society at large, we might expect him to hear instead the music which represents it, rather than what he has written himself. However, the composer's decision on the glacier is only the first of two important moments. After his descent from the mountain, and his subsequent arrest for the supposed theft of Daniello's violin, Max begins to return to his old ways, becoming his old-fashioned and dejected self when he is driven away by the police and a disguised Jonny in Scene 10. Max sings 'Jetzt ist alles aus, zu Ende ist nun das Spiel. Das Leben hat gesiegt über mich' ('Now everything is over, the game is at an end. Life has triumphed over me'). However, a second moment of conversion comes during this scene which more decisively throws him back towards Anita; it is accompanied by a corresponding, and significant, re-evaluation of the musical language. While in Scene 7, Max left the mountain before hearing the jazz on the radio, in this scene, his final decision is illustrated precisely through the use of popular music. At the beginning of his monologue in Scene 10, when he is still downcast, his music is comprised of tonally undirected chromatic lines in the woodwind and in his own lines, with an accompaniment of tonally ambiguous string chords. However, the music becomes more and more tonal as the monologue progresses, with a snatch of tonality in b.2115-2117, and anchoring pedal-notes from b.2118. At the very

point where Max makes his decision that the time has come for him to take control of his life ('Jetzt ist der Moment gekommen' ('Now the moment has come')) and orders the driver back to the station, the atonal style gives way to explicitly jazz-influenced music for a few bars (ex.9).[35] The anomaly set up in Scene 7, when Max did not hear the jazz music on the radio, is thus resolved; his conversion to society is now illustrated through the music which represents it.

This is not the only instance where the music signifies Max's change of direction; his decision to embrace the modern world entails a broader change in some of the musical material accompanying him. Before his revelation on the mountain, we see intimations in Max's accompaniment of the style of Jonny's music. For instance, a descent of a perfect fourth is employed with a dissonant harmonisation to refer to Max, for instance in Scene 4, where Anita tells Daniello about her connection with the composer (b.I/1442).[36] (This is related through inversion to the glacier leitmotif). The same descending perfect fourth is found at the opening of 'Leb wohl, mein Schatz' (see ex.8). Other sections of 'Leb wohl' are used by Max, such as the cadence at the end of the first phrase, and the cadence in the final few bars of the song, both with the characteristic feature of a 'blue' minor third. The appearances of this cadence in Max's music are all related through the text to the role Anita plays in converting Max. The first instance appears at the very end of their first duet in Scene 1 (b.I/202 ff), providing a hint of the future direction their relationship will take, while the next appears in Max's monologue in Scene 5, at the significant words, 'Als du damals am Rand des Gletschers zu mir tratest, schmolzest du hin das Eis meiner Seele' ('When you came to me then on the edge of the glacier, you melted away the ice of my soul') (II/327 ff). (These correspondences are shown in ex.10.)

These hints in the musical accompaniment flower in the music after Max's conversion, with what was previously only an implication becoming more explicit. In the eight scenes in which Max appears, references to Jonny's style of music are

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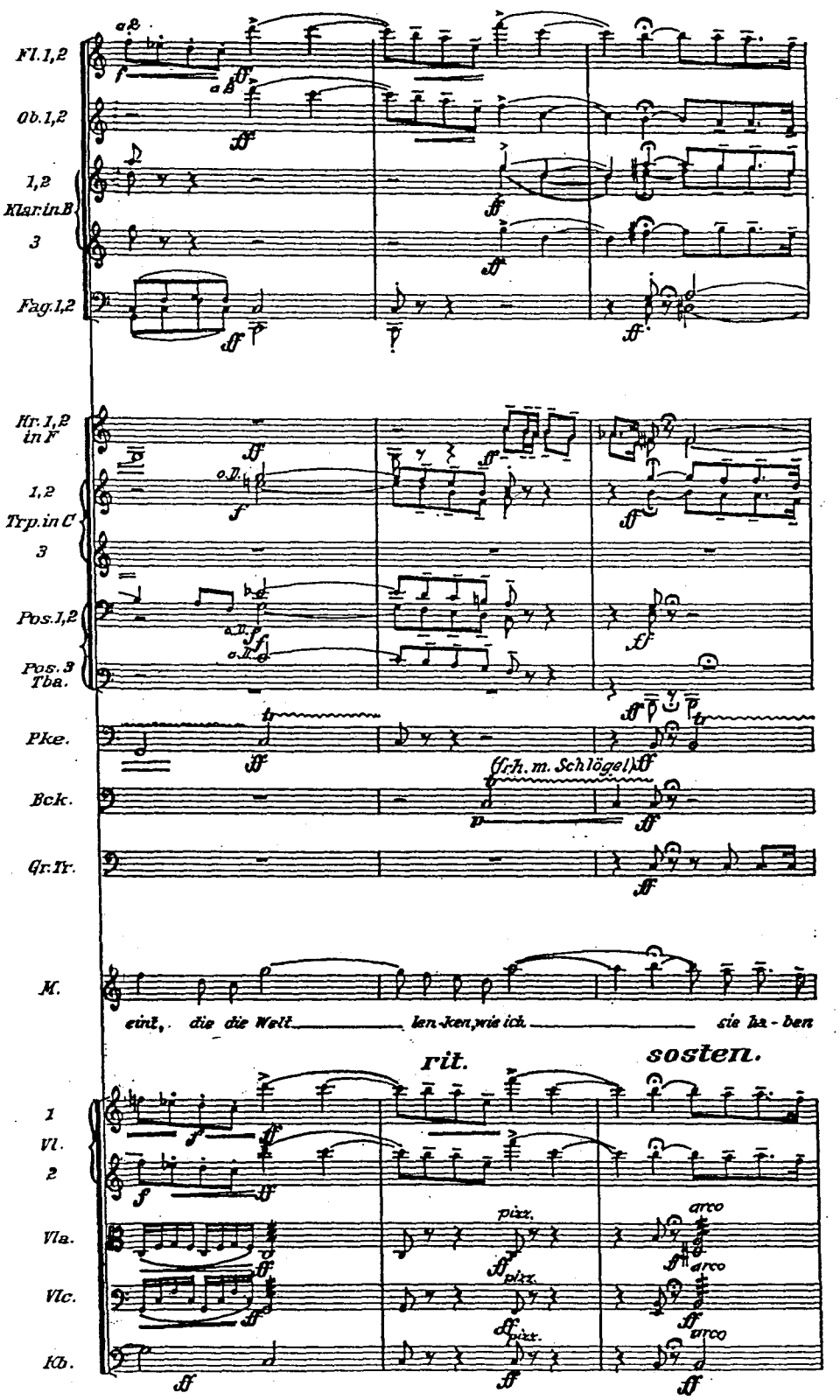
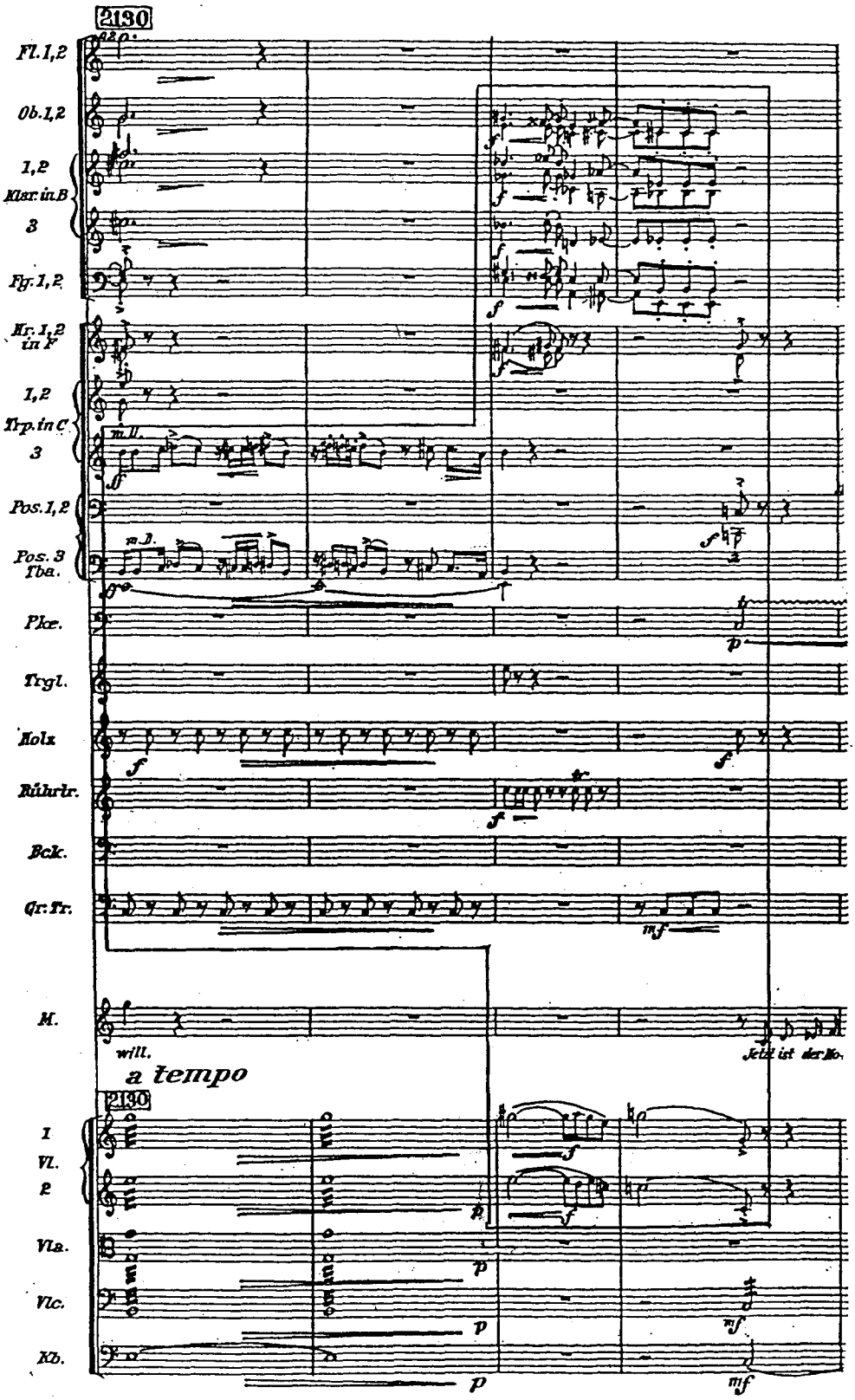
[35] It also hints at the music of the final chorus at the cadence of b.2132 (at 'unbekannte Land der Freiheit').

[36] The same chords are also used in connection with Daniello. Because Daniello is a performer rather than a creative artist, he has a tendency to use music associated with other people.

Ex.9 - b.2127-2133

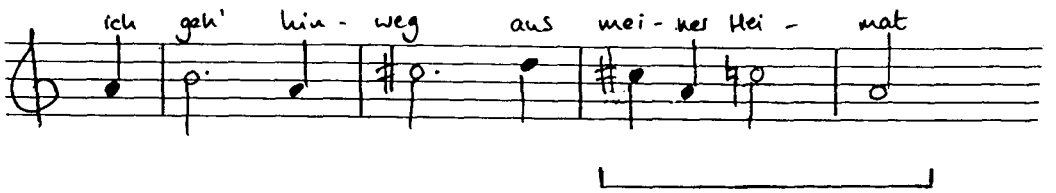


Ex.9 continued

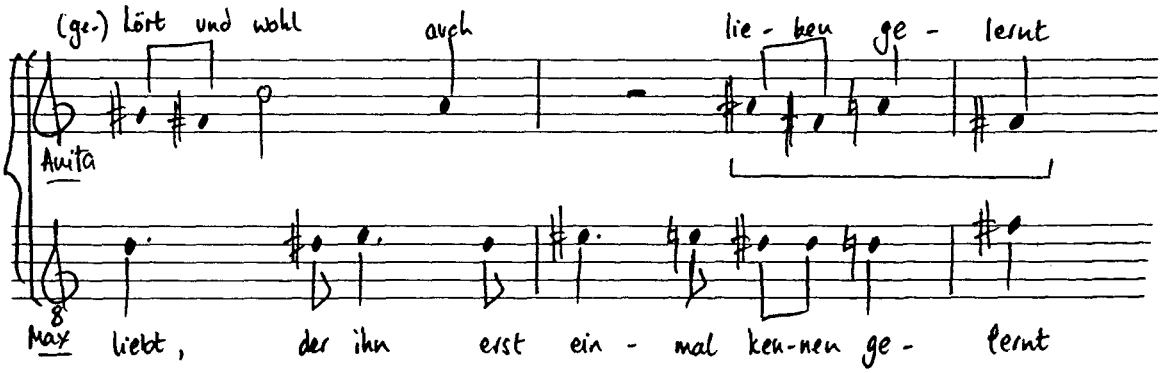


Ex.10 - Employment of elements of 'Leb wohl, mein Schatz' in Max's music, pre-Scene 7

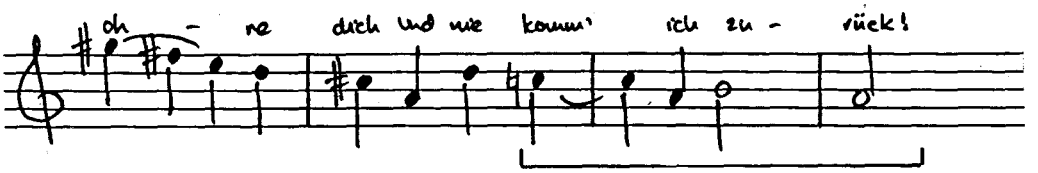
a) 'Leb wohl, mein Schatz', end of first phrase (I/963)



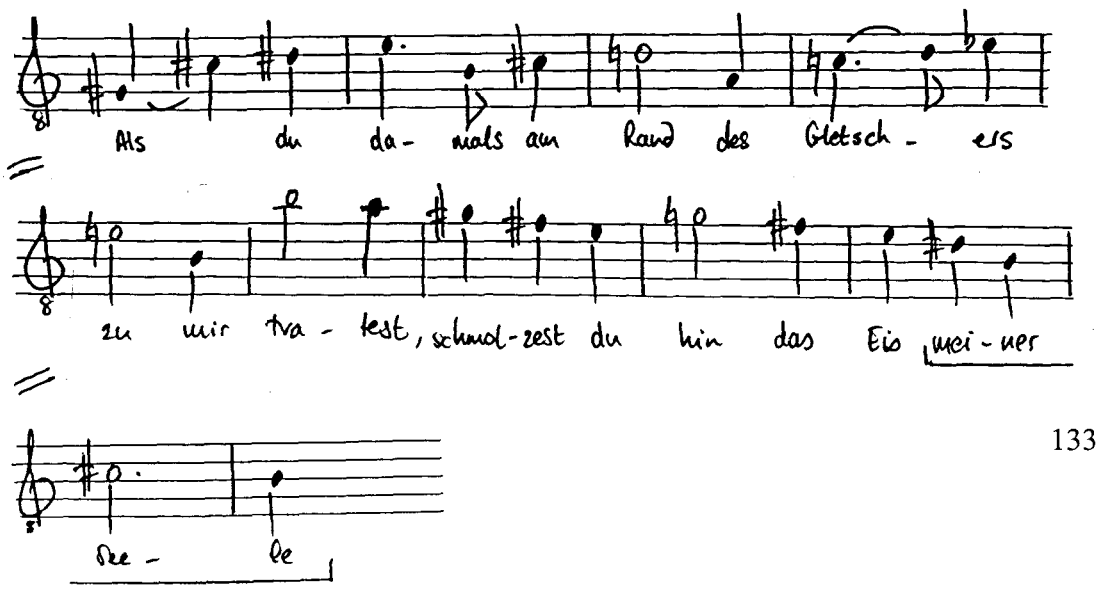
Anita & Max duet, Scene 1 (I/202)



b) 'Leb wohl, mein Schatz', final cadence (I/971)



Max's monologue, Scene 5 (II/327)

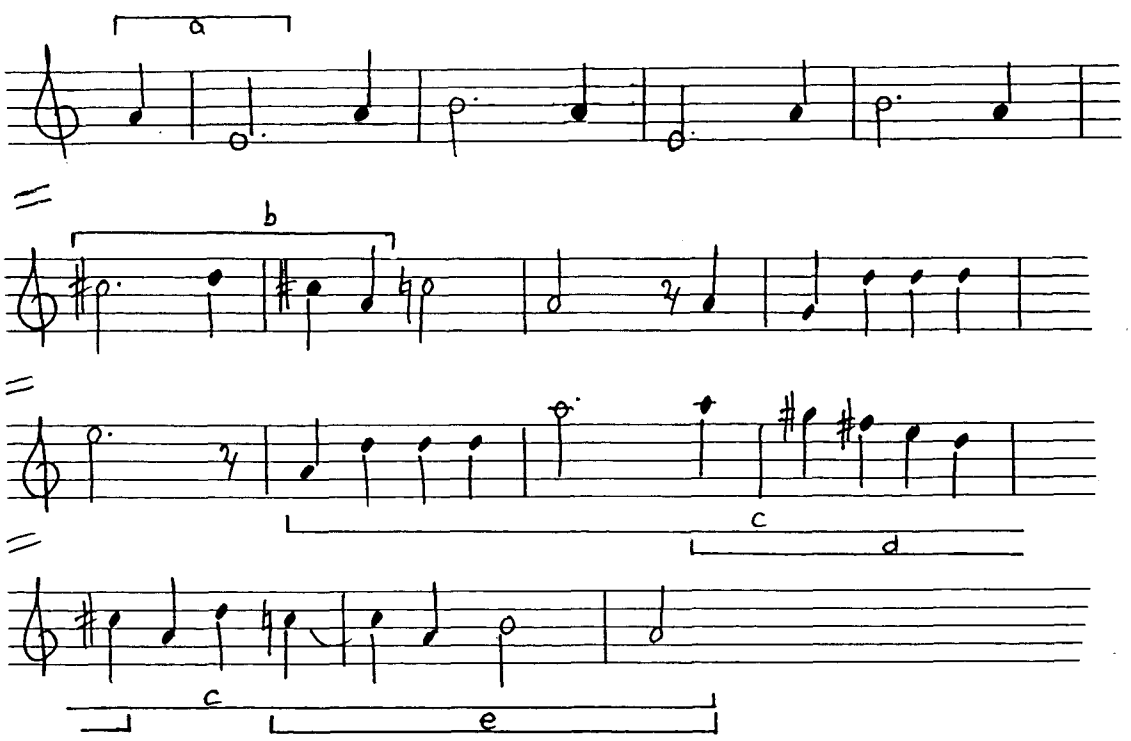


few in those preceding Scene 7. However, these references increase noticeably in the Glacier Scene; while the scene is still predominantly without jazz elements, and remains more atonal than tonal, there are nevertheless significantly more allusions to the popular style than have been found before. The Glacier-Voice's first statement, 'Wer ruft?' ('Who calls?'), is a reharmonised form of the descending fourth motif of the beginning of 'Leb wohl'. The Glacier Scene also uses a number of other elements from 'Leb wohl', sometimes the blue third cadence, and sometimes melodic lines from the song (see ex.11). After Scene 7, appearances of the blues third in Max's music recur in Scene 9, and are again connected to Anita, as he sings firstly 'Ich soll sie wiedersehen! Wird's mein Herz ertragen?' ('I must see her again! Will my heart bear it?') (II/1731 ff) and 'Wo, wo bist du, Geliebte?' ('Where, where are you, beloved?') (II/1795 ff); this is followed shortly after by the 'Leb wohl' cadence in the orchestra (II/1809). The final appearance of the blues third in this context comes as Anita is waiting for Max, 'Warum kommt er nicht?' ('Why doesn't he come?') (II/1854); this section forms the basis for the music later in the scene (see ex.12).

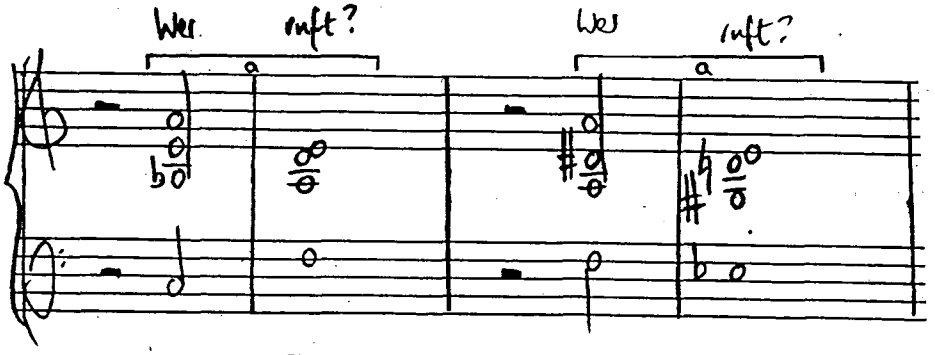
While these examples are all instances of Jonny's music being used in scenes about Max, at other points Max's own music is transformed into the style of Jonny's. For instance, the glacier leitmotif associated with Max is 'jazzed-up' in the interlude between Scenes 1 and 2, its rhythms changed so that they become more syncopated, and the melody merged into the cadence of 'Leb wohl' at the end. In this way, the orchestral voice anticipates the association of Jonny's music and the glacier which is spelt out in Scene 7, and hints at the transformation that Max will undergo. What these changes in musical style signify is not difficult to guess: the employment of elements of Jonny's music to accompany Max suggests how the classical composer becomes converted to the ways of the modern world. Jonny's music begins to encroach upon Max's world, and the distance between the two diminishes. At the end of the opera, Max is fully assimilated into the soloists' chorus, singing music based on 'Leb wohl' and 'Jetzt ist die Geige mein', which demonstrates how he has now become integrated with modern society.

Ex.11 - Employment of 'Leb wohl, mein Schatz' during Scene 7

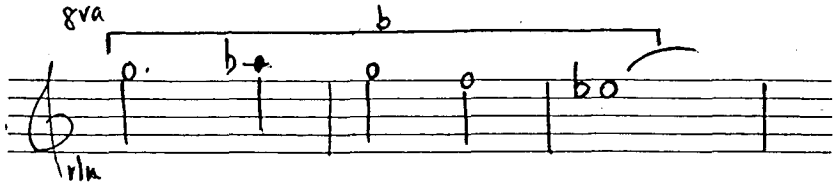
'Leb wohl, mein Schatz'



Scene 7, b.1113

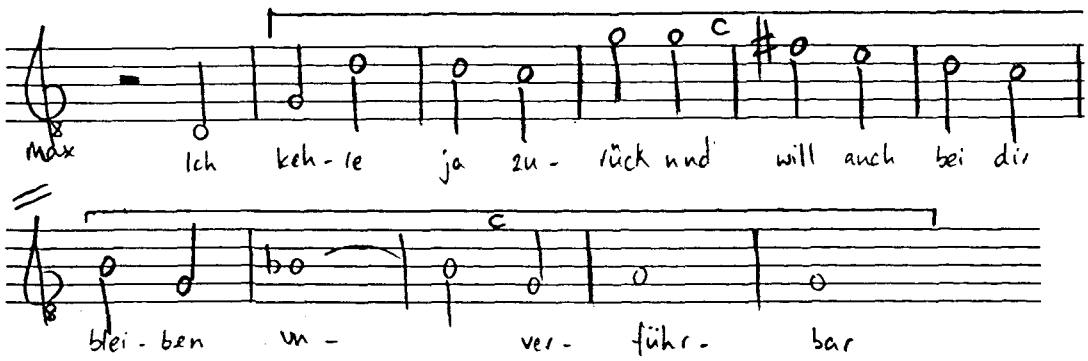


Scene 7, b.996

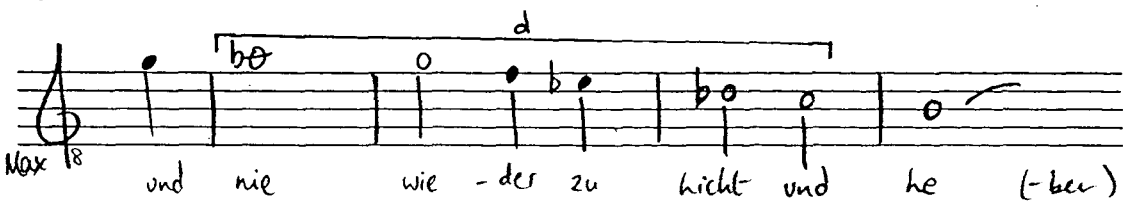


Ex.11 continued

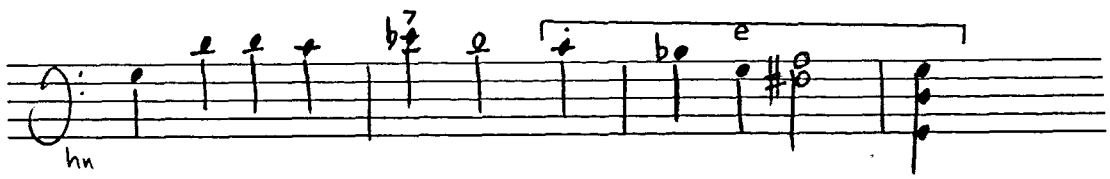
Scene 7, b.1091



Scene 7, b.1178

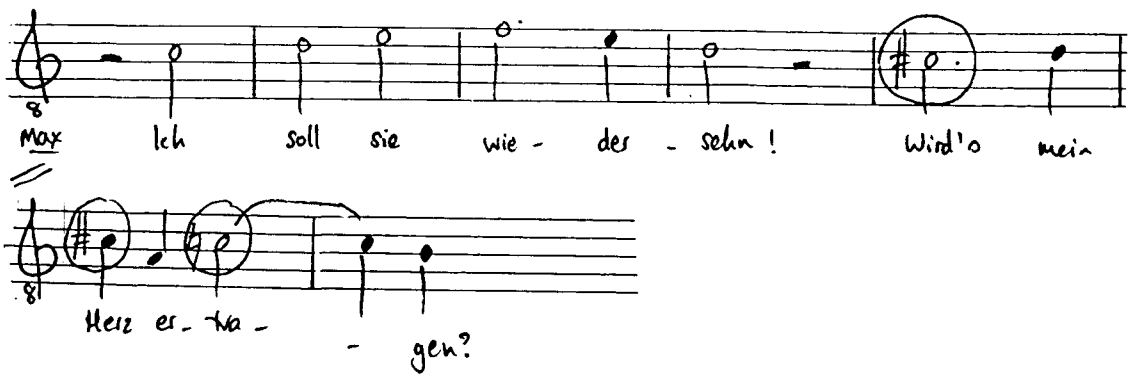


Scene 7, b.1058

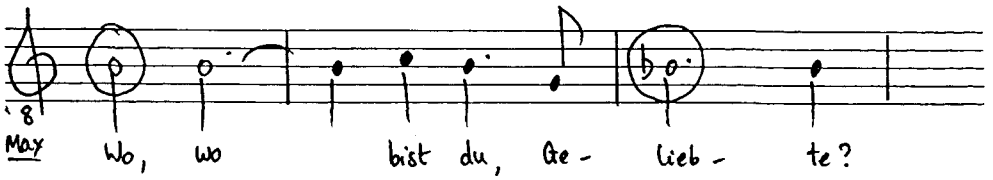


Ex.12 - Employment of blues thirds during Scene 9

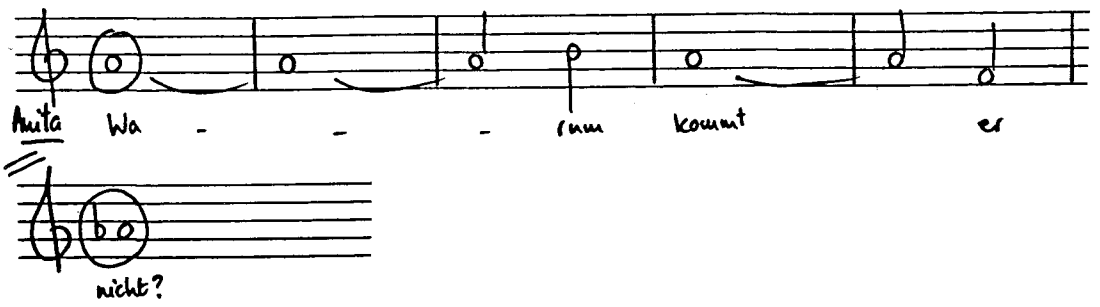
Scene 9, b.1731



Scene 9, b.1795



Scene 9, b.1854



Jonny spielt auf and the Weimar Republic

Jonny spielt auf has been termed a *Zeitoper* since the time of its first performance. According to Cook, in her overview of contemporary definitions of the term, a *Zeitoper* was 'an attempt to mirror or depict the age, to infuse opera with the tempo of modern culture, and to bring to the fore aspects of everyday life, all of which came about through the conscious effort of composers to find inspiration from the time in order to create a new relationship with their audience.'[37] A *Zeitoper*'s emphasis on contemporaneity means that its participation in cultural trends may be read with direct reference to the interaction of these cultural movements with contemporary political ones, and the deliberate situation of the *Zeitoper* within contemporary life in itself offers a statement on society. In their review of Weimar culture, the writers Jost Hermand and Frank Trommler criticise *Zeitopern,* saying that most are banal and shallow; they comment that they were 'rarely really [socially] committed' and that the genre 'merely wanted to reflect back its time, instead of holding a critical mirror up in front of it'.[38] Only the works of Kurt Weill are valuable, in their estimation, because of their more explicit social criticism. However, the *Zeitoper* is not only a 'mirror' of the twenties (as the title of Rogge's book also terms it), but, necessarily, a comment upon it; rather than merely reflecting society, as Hermand and Trommler accuse it of doing, the *Zeitoper*'s depiction of society cannot fail to have an ideological content. After all, what a composer chooses to reflect, along with the way in which he or she reflects it, is necessarily the presentation of a particular ideological viewpoint, and the manner in which this is done may be further interrogated.

The most obvious way in which *Jonny spielt auf* engages with the issue of the place of art in society is through its use of popular music, which itself makes it part of the contemporary discourse of 'Americanism'. Not only was the music derived from popular dances understood at the time as 'American', but also other up-to-date elements in the opera, such as telephones, cars, trains and loudspeakers.

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[37] Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 4.

[38] Hermand & Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik* (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1978), 317. Similarly, Dietrich holds of *Jonny spielt auf* that it 'contains no socio-critical tendencies of any kind' ('Auf den Spuren zu Jonnys Erfolg', 120).

'Americanism' has been seen as one of the most important cultural movements of the mid-twenties, particularly in Germany. The term is used to describe the craze for all things perceived as 'American', and supposedly 'modern', which took place at this time, such as skyscrapers, city life, industrialisation, sport, film and jazz. The historian Detlev Peukert observes that '"Americanism" became a catchword for untrammelled modernity'.[39] America was seen as the epitome of the modern, and synonymous with progress and freedom. It gained an aura of the land of unlimited opportunity, thanks to its economic and financial strength, its lead in mass production and consumption, and its perceived efficiency and innovation.[40] All of these things formed an ideal to which many people aspired. America's perceived prosperity contrasted with the poverty and economic instability which Germany had recently suffered, and its supposed *joie-de-vivre* offered a way of recovering from the misery of the war and post-war years. According to Hermand and Trommler, the largely negative attitudes towards the US after Germany's defeat in the first World War were turned around, so that by the mid-1920s, 'the USA became... the decisive ideal of the Weimar Coalition as regards the boosting and stabilisation of economic activity'. Economically, the USA was seen as 'a land of pragmatism, of the worship of the factual *(Tatsachenkult),* of objective labour relations, that is, as a soberly planned, thoroughly rationalised society based on industry and performance, whose standard of living was considered superior by all other countries in the world.'[41] At the same time, paradoxically, it was also the land of freedom, liveliness, and a lack of inhibitions, where anything was permitted and anything possible.

The enthusiasm for what was seen as American meant that the supposedly quintessentially American music, jazz, also became highly popular. Jazz and America became synonymous with one another: the music became emblematic of the country, and vice versa. Albrecht Dümling writes that American popular music in Europe was 'a symbol for America's prosperous advances and expanding

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[39] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic,* 178.
[40] Ibid., 179.
[41] Hermand & Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik,* 49-50.

capitalism, [a] symbol for the "land of unlimited opportunities"'.[42] He observes that the positive characteristics with which Europeans associated the US, such as 'vitality, freshness, naturalness, liveliness, [and] pleasure-seeking', were also seen as attributes of jazz, and vice versa.[43] In the editorial to a 1925 issue of the journal *Anbruch* dedicated entirely to jazz, Paul Stefan expanded on these positive qualities:

> For us, jazz means: a rebellion of the people's dulled instincts against a music without rhythm. A reflection of the times: chaos, machines, noise, the highest peak of intensity. The triumph of irony, of frivolity, the wrath of those who want to preserve good times. The overcoming of Biedermeier hypocrisy... thus freedom from 'comfortableness'. Richness, happiness, the idea of a lighter music.[44]

While 'Americanism' as a musical phenomenon, particularly jazz, has received some coverage amongst writers on the era, these are rarely the same authors as those who discuss *Jonny spielt auf.* Cook is the only writer on the opera who pays any attention to Americanism, saying that the 'interest in jazz was just a part of [the] larger, consuming passion for America'; however, her discussion of the 'Americanism' phenomenon is brief, encompassing only a few paragraphs. She says only that American things were popular, instead of exploring the significance of this popularity. Cook also analyses some of the musical features of popular music known in early twentieth-century Europe, before analysing specific pieces of 'art' music by a variety of composers to show how they used such music in their own works.[45] Other writers, such as Hermand and Trommler, and Horst H. Lange in his in-depth study, *Jazz in Deutschland,* provide more or less thorough historical surveys of popular music in Europe, based on the appearance in Germany of American bands and recordings.[46] Hermand and Trommler's writing on the subject

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[42] Dümling, 'Symbol des Fortschritts, der Dekadenz und der Unterdrückung. Zum Bedeutungswandel des Jazz in den zwanziger Jahren', in Dietrich Stern, ed., *Angewandte Musik 20er Jahre: Exemplarische Versuche gesellschaftsbezogener musikalischer Arbeit für Theater, Film, Radio, Massenveranstaltung* (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1977), 83.

[43] Ibid., 84.

[44] *Anbruch,* April 1925. Quoted in ibid., 84.

[45] Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 42 ff.

[46] Lange, *Jazz in Deutschland: Die deutsche Jazz-Chronik 1900-1960* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1966).

maintains an upbeat mood through its regard only for positive appraisals of jazz, which gives a one-sided picture of the contemporary situation.[47] Other largely historical surveys of jazz in Germany include articles by Fred Ritzel, Bernd Hoffmann and Michael H. Kater, all of which are factual accounts of the dissemination of American music in Germany and its reception.[48] J. Bradford Robinson's essay 'Jazz Reception in Weimar Germany: In Search of a Shimmy Figure' compares music written at the time to contemporary printed sources in order to trace the influence of popular music on composers in the twenties. He points in particular to the possible influence of Alfred Baresel's introduction to writing what was termed 'jazz', his *Jazz-Buch* (1925), a 'compendium of Weimar jazz', and the comparable *Arranging for the Modern Dance Orchestra* (1926), by the American Arthur Lange. Robinson restricts his discussion of technical features of this music to the 'shimmy' rhythm of his title.[49] None of these writers, on the whole, join their comments to any larger investigation of ideological questions.

Dümling's essay, 'Symbol des Fortschritts, der Dekadenz und der Unterdrückung. Zum Bedeutungswandel des Jazz in den zwanziger Jahren', does consider broader ideological issues. He examines jazz as representative of a new way of life, stating how traditional orders of society, such as the monarchy, had been overthrown and 'created room for a... new beginning', which Americanism stepped in to fill.[50] Dümling argues that the same thing happened artistically, with

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[47] Hermand & Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik,* 313 ff.

[48] Ritzel's essay ('"Hätte der Kaiser Jazz getanzt...". US-Tanzmusik in Deutschland vor und nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg', in Schutte, ed., *Ich will aber gerade vom Leben singen,* 265-293) is a history of American dance music in Germany from before World War I, and is largely factual, describing the influence of popular dances on German dance-music composers through sheet music. Hoffmann discusses the incorporation of jazz into the repertoire and musical sensibility of German musicians, and where their influences originated ('Alptraum der Freiheit oder: Die Zeitfrage "Jazz"', in Helmut Rösing, ed., *'Es liegt in der Luft was Idiotisches...': Populäre Musik zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik* (Baden-Baden: Coda, 1995), 69-81). He describes the history of jazz in Germany through statistics, and quotes comments by contemporary writers and critics, such as Paul Bernhard and H.H. Stuckenschmidt. Kater is similarly stolidly factual; again, he writes primarily about jazz rather than about Americanism ('The Jazz Experience in Weimar Germany', *German History* 6 (1988), 145-158). He is largely dismissive of the use of jazz by classical composers; he writes that works such as *Jonny spielt auf* and *Die Dreigroschenoper* were 'the best that was to be expected from the marriage of jazz with the classics... not enough attention was being paid to [jazz's] intrinsic value as a totally new art form entitled to a life of its own' (ibid., 150). Kater's argument rests mostly on statements made by contemporary critics, with no examination of the music itself from first hand.

[49] Robinson, in Gilliam, ed., *Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic,* 124-125.

[50] Dümling, 'Symbol des Fortschritts', 81.

jazz replacing outdated techniques. Jazz had an extra-musical function, symbolising new concepts of value *(Wertvorstellungen);* it became 'the symbol of a "new world", in which modern capitalism, along with republican forms of government, replaced an outdated monarchical idea of the state'.[51] Much of Dümling's article is an examination of the adoption of jazz by specific art composers (Stravinsky, in his 'Ragtime for 11 instruments' and 'Piano-Rag-Music', and Berg's 'Ragtime' music in *Lulu);* he does not mention *Jonny spielt auf* except in passing. Nevertheless, his article is useful to the present discussion as an overview of jazz and Americanism, with some consideration of the part played by cultural, and particularly economic, factors.

History and Myth-making

Most of these writers do not consider one fundamental point about Americanism, namely that it was constructed not on a view of the real America, but on a myth. Americanism was essentially idealism: it perceived only positive attributes about the country and overlooked the negative ones, therefore basing its idea of the country more on fantasy than on fact. Some contemporary critics were aware of this disparity between the real America and the country lauded by Americanism: the writer Rudolf Kayser asked 'Are these phenomena [of Americanism] not much more than the external and revealed symptoms of a more secret, spiritual, soulful essence? Is Americanism not a new orientation to being, grown out of and formed in our European destiny?... In fact, Americanism is a new European method. The extent to which this method was itself influenced by America seems to me quite unimportant.'[52] But why did this mythical version of America come into being? The answer lies in the impact of a host of historical events and the psychological effects they had upon the population as a whole. The incidents which took place in Germany from the end of World War I had

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[51] Ibid., 85.

[52] 'Amerikanismus', *Vössische Zeitung* no.458 (27.9.25) in Kaes et al, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook,* 395.

ramifications in subsequent years, and it is therefore expedient to outline these events.

The unrest on the political landscape around the time of the first World War, which had led to the reactionary outbursts by figures such as Mann and Pfitzner, escalated at the end of the war. The Allies would not agree to an armistice unless Germany became a democratic state, a proposal resisted by the Kaiser, Wilhelm II, and his government. As a compromise, the government instead implemented a parliamentary monarchy in October 1918, which partly fulfilled armistice demands, although the Kaiser was still in place. However, in tandem with the Allies' stipulations, discontent amongst the populace spread, spurred on by the war's hardships and defeat, so that, as William Carr puts it, 'by the end of October a revolutionary situation existed in Germany'.[53] More and more voices within Germany began to call for the Kaiser's abdication, while President Wilson's insistence on his removal helped to maintain the pressure from outside by making it plain that the emperor was an obstacle to peace. On the 29th October, a group of German sailors in Kiel, discontented with the continuing war, mutinied and precipitated civil unrest which spread across the country.[54] The SPD, who were by now a significant force within the Reichstag, dealt with the growing crisis by withdrawing their support from the government on the 8th November, after their demands for the Kaiser's abdication, and for the Socialists to be given greater representation in the cabinet, were not met. Tapping into the mood of the country at large, they, along with other left-wing political groups, called for a general strike, which began on 9th November. Faced with this pressure from both home and abroad, the Kaiser was forced to abdicate. On hearing the news of the abdication, the SPD was quick to pronounce a republic, with the minister Phillipp Scheidemann making the announcement to the crowds from a Berlin balcony; the SPD leader Ebert became Chancellor on same day.[55] A new government was formed from the SPD and the Independent Socialists, before the first general election of the Weimar Republic was held on the 19th January 1919. The Socialists

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[53] Carr, *A History of Germany,* 247-248.
[54] Ibid., 249 ff, and Peukert, *The Weimar Republic,* 21 ff.
[55] Carr, *A History of Germany,* 252.

did not achieve the overall majority for which they had hoped, winning 37.9% of the vote; nevertheless, they were still the largest party, and formed a coalition with the Centre Party and German Democratic Party.[56]

Although there was not an outright victory for the Socialists in the January 1919 election, the new constitution of the Weimar Republic, which was drawn up shortly afterwards, enshrined significant changes in social outlook. It provided universal suffrage for all above the age of 20, equality before the law, the right to assembly, freedom of thought, and the right to form political parties and independent trade unions.[57] State censorship was abolished, while men and women, at least in theory, were to be treated equally and had the same 'fundamental civil rights and duties'.[58] The desire for greater equality is indicative of a shift that can be identified in the Weimar Republic away from the old conservatism of the pre-war years. The constitution was a child of the liberal and socialist thinkers of the era rather than of conservatives of the ilk of Mann or Pfitzner, who would never have countenanced such progressive measures. It was 'intended to produce a society based on tolerance, mutual respect, openness, and democracy, where the social, political, and economic conditions that had given rise to the carnage of the First World War would be banished once and for all.'[59] The constitution also ensured the provision of free primary and secondary education for all on the basis of 'ability and inclination, not the social and economic status or religion of the parents', and was intended to promote 'the spirit of German nationhood *and* international reconciliation'.[60]

These changes in the political landscape were accompanied by economic phenomena, to some extent linked to each other. Elections were influenced, as always, by the economic events of the Weimar Republic, with the more extreme parties gaining ground in times of hardship and the more liberal and centre parties in periods of prosperity. The fifteen years of the Republic began with a period of

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[56] Ibid., 266, and Peukert, *The Weimar Republic,* 33.
[57] Lamb & Phelan, 'Weimar Culture', 57.
[58] See extracts from the Constitution in Kaes et al, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook,* 46-51.
[59] Lamb & Phelan, 'Weimar Culture', 57.
[60] Ibid., 59.

economic crisis, when the poor state of the German economy, badly damaged by the war, was exacerbated by the conditions imposed upon Germany by the Allies in the Versailles peace settlement. Germany was forced to pay millions of Marks' worth of reparations, in sums that the country was unable to afford.[61] In the immediate aftermath of the war, and into the early years of the 1920s, the economy was extremely weak, reaching a crisis point in 1923-4, when hyperinflation made the currency all but worthless and left many people in penury. However, in November 1924, a 'new' currency, the Rentenmark, was introduced, and the economy began to stabilise. The period of increased economic stability and prosperity, from the introduction of the Rentenmark until the Wall Street Crash in 1929, has come to be known as the 'Golden Twenties', years taken as synonymous with the idea of the decadent Weimar Republic. As Cook says, 'the stable years of 1924 to 1929 brought with them a general feeling of prosperity, a renewed hope for the future of the Republic, [and] optimism about modern life.'[62] Such optimism found expression in 'Americanism'. The reasons for the advent of Americanism were therefore as much economic and political as cultural. The blockades against Germany, which had been in place since the war, were ended, and the Mark was stabilised; as a consequence, there was an influx of American goods. America could be noticed, and it could begin to have an influence on ordinary life in a way it could not do when the weakness of the German economy discouraged foreign investment.[63]

The idea of German identity current before 1914 found itself challenged by the large changes in society which Germany experienced following the defeat of World War I. While the conservatives saw this as a threat, and attempted to reclaim the old image, the idea of what it meant to be German could also be reinterpreted. Americanism may be read as such an attempt at redefinition. By fabricating an image of 'America' which could be copied at will, an identity of a 'New German' could be constructed, a person whose views were more progressive, liberal and up-

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[61] For further details of the economic situation, see Peukert, *The Weimar Republic,* 107 ff and passim.

[62] Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 5-6.

[63] Dümling, 'Symbol des Fortschritts', 83. Also see Kater, 'The Jazz Experience in Weimar Germany', 145.

to-date than the attitudes which characterised the older, pre-War generation. Aspects of modernity which such Germans wanted for themselves were projected onto the idea of America, and then reassimilated. The construction of an image of America was, therefore, German society's attempt to carve out a niche for itself in the modern world, and to find a collective identity. Peukert writes that 'the public debate about "America" was really a debate about German society itself and the challenge that modernity posed to it. What was at issue was the value to be placed on a "rationalized" form of life emptied of all the ballast of tradition.'[64] The more or less wholly affirmative image of America within the discourse of 'Americanism' constructed a model of a better society, a kind of Utopia, through which the citizens of Weimar Germany attempted to assimilate into their own culture the ideals of a more democratic and more modern nation.

The prevalence of the American myth helps to explain one important fact about *Jonny spielt auf;* namely that despite its designation at the time as a 'jazz-opera', the music within it is not influenced by the improvised jazz which was performed in the USA by such musicians as Armstrong and Ellington (which was not widely known in Germany until many years later), but by popular dance-band music. The reason for the misnomer is explained by a common misconception. A number of dance bands, originating both from Europe and from the USA, appeared in Germany in these years which called themselves 'jazz bands', although they in fact played American dance music; therefore the public came to assume that what they played was jazz.[65] The music which was designated as 'jazz' at this time is discussed by Robinson; he says that 'jazz to Weimar Germany was an all-embracing cultural label attached to any music from the American side of the Atlantic, or indeed to anything new and exciting'.[66] This widespread misconception of 'jazz' meant that *Jonny spielt auf* could gain its credentials as a 'jazz-opera' despite the fact that it contains not what is now understood as jazz, but instead is based on dance music. The American critic of the New York première of *Jonny spielt auf* in 1929, Herbert Peyser, wrote dismissively that 'the supposedly

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[64] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic,* 178.
[65] Lange, *Jazz in Deutschland,* 13; Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 61.
[66] Robinson, 'Jazz Reception in Weimar Germany', 113.

American features... are about as American as a *Konditorei* on the *Kurfürstendamm.*'[67] The misnomer of dance-band music as 'jazz' helped to perpetuate, and was itself perpetuated by, the myth of America. It indicates the constructed nature of the American image and the way in which it was based upon convenient factors which helped to create the desired ideal; significantly, we never actually reach America within the opera. The popular music which was then known as 'jazz' served the purposes of the myth, as it sounded new, lively and sufficiently different from the pre-existing European music to be useful in establishing a new cultural identity in contrast to the old. The fact that it was not improvised jazz was neither here nor there; any music which could claim the same qualities would have sufficed.

Americanism and Politics

At least as it appeared within Americanism, American culture had an implicit political meaning within the context of 1920s Germany. It was characterised by the phenomenon of mass culture, which, by definition, is destined for the majority of the population and opposed to the culture of a privileged elite. Mass culture went hand in hand with people's increasing leisure time and greater prosperity in the years after 1924; according to Peukert, the Weimar Republic established a 'framework of leisure' for wage-earners through its introduction of the forty-hour week and the first negotiated agreements covering holidays. Consequently, by the end of the twenties, people from all over the social scale were able to share the same cultural and leisure-time activities.[68] 'Pleasures that had previously been reserved for the middle classes were now, potentially at least, available for all.' Peukert comments that mass consumption and the new 'culture of leisure' led to 'a certain amount of cultural assimilation', in which, by the end of

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[67] 'Jonny over there', *Modern Music* 6 (Jan-Feb, 1929), 32-34. Quoted in Robinson, 'Jazz Reception in Weimar Germany', 109. Krenek saw the famous 'Chocolate Kiddies' review, with music performed by Sam Wooding's orchestra, in early 1926, as well as the Paul Whiteman orchestra at about the same time. He had also heard recordings of Gershwin, Berlin and Youmans (Stewart, *Ernst Krenek,* 31, 81 & 85; Krenek, *Im Atem der Zeit: Erinnerungen an die Moderne,* trans. Friedrich Saathen & Sabine Schutte (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe Verlag, 1998), 587).

[68] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic,* 175-176.

the decade, people of all social classes listened to the same songs and radio programmes.[69] According to many writers, the influence of mass culture was interpreted by some at the time as pointing to democratisation. The new culture was believed to be egalitarian because it reached all sections of society. The champions of this culture saw that new media such as radio, film, and recording were more readily obtainable by the masses, and through these means, 'they wanted to finally bring art, which formerly had been only at the disposal of the upper ten thousand, into the sphere of the general public, and change it into a democratic art in the widest sense of the word.'[70] In 1930, Albert Einstein lauded radio as 'the herald of "true democracy"' because of its ability to disseminate ideas and art to a wide public.[71] The fact that German radio was owned and run by the government further characterised it as belonging to the whole population, rather than to a monied elite.

'Jazz' had an important position within this new order of mass culture. For composers, such popular music not only formed a way out of the perceived impasse of atonality, but also bridged the problematic gap between composer and audience - a point only tangentially acknowledged by writers such as Cook and Rogge. The gap between artist and audience could be diminished by embracing the new popular culture, and assimilating 'high' and 'low' art; if composers used popular music in their work, then they would instantly communicate with a vast number of people, of all social classes, who would welcome them as speaking 'their' language. Previous types of popular music had been limited by class; thus the middle class, who could afford to go to dance halls and hear dance bands, heard a different kind of music from the working class, who did not have access to such music.[72] Jazz, however, transcended such divides; it became 'a fashion which embraced all classes and levels of society', and a way of 'breaking down the

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[69] Ibid., 176.

[70] Hermand & Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik,* 70.

[71] Einstein in E. Kurt Fische, ed., *Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Rundfunks und Fernsehens* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1957). Quoted in Hailey, 'Rethinking Sound', 14.

[72] Ritzel, '"Hätte der Kaiser Jazz getanzt..."', 287-288.

boundaries between "higher" and "lower" art, between art music and entertainment music'.[73]

America was associated not only with popular culture which could reach a mass audience, but also, more generally, with the political ideals of the left wing. America's perceived regard for democracy and equality was that now espoused in the young Weimar constitution, and many thought America to be some kind of 'classless' society that was far removed from the stratified Germany of the Wilhelmine years. According to the myth, the USA appeared to have transcended class divisions: 'everyone already owned the same houses, the same cars, had the same individual mobility, the same freedom... [and] the same chances in society'.[74] Such egalitarianism was appealing to many of a progressive persuasion; according to Hermand and Trommler, newspapers, magazines and books from the mid-twenties depicted the US as 'better, more developed, more modern', where 'a socialisation of technology and with it a democratisation of society had already been achieved'. Julius Hirsch's book, *Das amerikanische Wirtschaftswunder (The American Economic Miracle)* of 1926, was typical, presenting the US as a place 'where a true social democracy, under the slogan "Prosperity for All", had been created.'[75] All of the artifacts associated with America, including jazz, therefore became caught up in the representation of this democratic ideal.

This image of America, on a par with many of the aspirations of the more progressive sections of Weimar society, is by modern standards positioned in the centre of the political spectrum. However, to understand the impact of such ideas in 1920s Germany, we must remember that, in comparison to the state of political affairs which had been in place before World War I, the espousal of democracy in the country was a significant step towards the left. Seen against the background of the prevalent conservative climate discussed in the previous chapter, the Weimar Republic was a radical move, and Americanism embodied its values and ideals. In its presentation of the virtues of the modern American jazz-musician Jonny against

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[73] Dümling, 'Symbol des Fortschritts', 84 & 95.
[74] Hermand & Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik,* 50. Also see Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 4.
[75] Hermand & Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik,* 55-56.

the old-fashioned artist Max, *Jonny spielt auf* quintessentially embodies the ideological and political concerns of its time. Democracy challenged the existing status quo, and was therefore perceived by conservatives as threatening and to be resisted, as we have seen in Chapter 2. Similarly, artistic innovations such as jazz challenged established norms. As Weiner puts it, jazz functioned as 'an acoustical sign of national, social, racial, and sexual difference', opposed to the inherited German culture. It acted as an 'icon of non-German forces', and became an 'acoustical screen for the projection of fears and/or hopes regarding rapid and violent political and social change'.[76] The antipathy towards jazz operated on a number of interrelating levels: musically, it was against the grain of 'real' music; ideologically, it was seen to embody sexual licentiousness and was associated with a supposedly 'inferior' race, negroes, who had been identified as inferior by biological 'science' across Europe since the previous century. The occupation of parts of Western Germany after the war by black French Senegalese soldiers exacerbated the hatred felt by conservative Germans.[77] 'American jazz became the acoustical sign of the transplanted black, and thus could refer both to America as the foreign and victorious New World divorced from European traditions, and at the same time to Africa as the purportedly uncivilized Dark Continent from which the feared black was seen to challenge Europe's racial and national hegemony.'[78] Conveniently, jazz could also be perceived as a product of another race regarded with suspicion, the Jews, as the American art composer, Henry Cowell, pointed out:

> The foundations of jazz are the syncopation and rhythmic accents of the Negroes; their modernisation and contemporary form is the work of Jews, mostly New York Tin Pan Alley Jews. Jazz is negro music, seen through the eyes of these Jews.[79]

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[76] Weiner, *Undertones of Insurrection,* 121.

[77] Kater, 'The Jazz Experience in Weimar Germany', 155.

[78] Weiner, *Undertones of Insurrection,* 123. The fact that Jonny is a black American is not significant for the present reading, however.

[79] Cowell, 'Bericht aus Amerika', in *Melos,* 1930, 363 ff. Quoted in Dümling, 'Symbol des Fortschritts', 84.

The supposed Jewish dominance of trade meant that Jews were also identified as marketing and supplying the 'inferior' jazz music.[80] Thus two racially 'inferior' groups could be demonised in the same music, and held up as challenging the existing status quo.

Opposition to jazz came from the political right, and the 'educated upper bourgeoisie', two groups that were by and large the same people, as Michael Kater discusses. Such people were 'fiercely loyal to the monarchy... after the shameful armistice of November 1918, they were chiefly inspired by xenophobia and racial bigotry, frequently mixed in with conservative religion.'[81] According to Kater, their attacks on jazz were frequent and widespread. He explains how 'spokesmen of distinguished university fraternities' attacked jazz as the 'outgrowth of Americanism, even Bolshevism, and as diametrically opposed to military discipline.'[82] As we have seen in the previous chapter, Pfitzner was at the forefront of the attack on jazz. Writing in 1926 (shortly before the first performances of *Jonny spielt auf),* he declared that the 'soulless' American 'jazz-foxtrot-culture' had triumphed over European civilisation.[83] Pfitzner saw the move from 'real' German music to 'degenerate' jazz as an indication of the diseased state of the nation, of which democracy was another symptom.[84] He equated jazz not only with Americanism and democracy but with everything else seen as politically suspicious: bolshevism, internationalism, Judaism, and pacifism. Pfitzner's belief indicates how Americanism came to be associated with other left-wing tendencies in the conservative mind. Other conservative musicians joined in Pfitzner's attacks, for example, the editor of the *Zeitschrift für Musik,* Alfred Heuss. In an article

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[80] Kater, 'The Jazz Experience in Weimar Germany', 154.

[81] Ibid., 153. An interesting divergence can be seen between the attitudes of traditional conservatives and the radical right-wing to 1920s popular culture. Most conservatives viewed the new cultural innovations with suspicion, seeing them as symbolising a left-wing and pro-democratic ideology; the National Socialists' official line on jazz was identical. However, many individual National Socialists (often from a younger generation than the conservatives) secretly enjoyed jazz music; see Michael H. Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[82] Kater, 'The Jazz Experience in Weimar Germany', 154.

[83] Pfitzner, 'Die neue Ästhetik', 115-116.

[84] Ibid., 230 & 244. He also refers to 'the international loss of soul, the pseudo- or anational Americanism' (ibid., 113); this is an interesting phrase, as it indicates that Pfitzner sees Americanism not as American *per se* but as anational.

called 'The Foxtrot in the Concert Hall' (1923), Heuss called such music the 'most wicked and most frivolous... music one can think of'.[85] Georg Göhler, a critic and composer, voiced his antipathy to 'trash' in the same periodical, in terms showing that he associated it with those who had perpetrated the revolution:

> The purchasers of trash are to be found in those circles which have come up in the world through the revolution... If we go even deeper... we find that typically, the tarts and gigolos *(Lebeweiber und -männer)* who go mad about jazz and foxtrots are also enthusiastic admirers of 'Salome' and 'Mona Lisa' and that the intoxication with pleasure of these revolutionary Germans is very closely connected with the moral inferiority of the fashionable works in our opera houses and theatres![86]

The antipathy towards jazz expressed in such comments demonstrates the threat under which the conservatives felt themselves. Jazz, as a symbol for America, encapsulated not only a change in artistic direction, but a far-reaching political ideology. The strength of the attacks upon it demonstrates jazz's potency at this time as a signifier for the liberal Weimar Republic's ideals.

The creation of two distinctive societies in *Jonny spielt auf* operates, in a parallel fashion to *Palestrina,* by allegorising the preferred position for the artist in modern society, and more broadly, constructs a Utopian vision of what society should be. In diametric contrast to Pfitzner's opera, though, *Jonny* holds up an image of a progressive modern society with which the artist should be totally engaged. This picture was highly relevant to some of the political aspirations of its time. The ideal of a society created in *Jonny* partook of the contemporary fashion of Americanism, which itself was the creation of a myth; *Jonny spielt auf* both shared in this myth and helped to perpetuate it within Weimar society. Against this background of Utopian myth-making, we may now consider the second strand of the work, assessing how far Krenek himself may have identified with either of the

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[85] Quoted in Ritzel, '"Hätte der Kaiser Jazz getanzt..."', 265.

[86] 'Das "Versagen des Musikverlags" und das "Anwachsen der Schundmusik"', *Zeitschrift für Musik* 9 (1921), 226. Quoted in Ritzel, '"Hätte der Kaiser Jazz getanzt..."', 289-290. *Mona Lisa* (1915) is an opera by Max von Schillings (Rogge, *Ernst Kreneks Opern,* 64).

two artist characters in the work and how his own political position interacted with that which the opera acquired in contemporary life.

Krenek and *Jonny spielt auf*

Many years after the composition of *Jonny spielt auf,* Krenek confessed that in Max, he had created a character who had some affinity with his own life. He said that what happens to 'the introvert, problem-ridden composer' was 'not without autobiographical implications,' and that he identified with the 'repressed inhabitant of the glacier world, the introverted middle-European.'[87] He said that 'personal experiences were worked in [to the opera] to some extent', although he does not enlarge on what these experiences were.[88] Not surprisingly given such admissions, writers on Krenek have also pointed to the autobiographical qualities of Max, although none develop the idea beyond pointing out the composer's own comments.[89] While his statement would seem to leave us with a fairly straightforward situation when it comes to assessing the opera's status as representing Krenek's own views on art and society, things are not as simple as they first appear; the presence of Jonny as a second artist figure complicates matters. The interplay between the two characters creates a dialectic which may be compared to the circumstances of Krenek's life and career. A further spanner in the works is provided by Krenek's own changing opinion towards his opera in the years after its composition; because of the wider implications of this question, however, I shall return to it in Chapter 5. Here, I will explore Krenek's beliefs on the relationship of composer and society as they stood in the mid- to late-1920s, and their bearing on his presentation of both Max and Jonny.

The moral of *Jonny spielt auf* as regards the relationship of composer to society is an obvious one: Max gives up his isolated position and becomes part of

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[87] Krenek, *Horizons Circled: Reflections on My Music,* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1974), 38. He says the same thing in 'Self-Analysis', *New Mexico Quarterly* 23 (1953), 16.

[88] Krenek, 'Jonny erinnert sich', *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 4/5 (1980), 187.

[89] Rogge, 'Oper als Quadratur des Kreises', 454, and *Ernst Kreneks Opern,* 54; Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 84; Stewart, *Ernst Krenek,* 82.

the modern world. To examine how far this message was shared by Krenek himself, we must take into consideration the hues of Krenek's own career up until the time of *Jonny*'s composition. When he wrote *Jonny spielt auf,* Krenek was only 26. His career up until that point had been successful amongst art-music circles, with his compositions attracting attention from the advocates of modern music.[90] Stylistically, his music had been atonal and dissonant; his opera of 1923, *Orpheus und Eurydike,* is a good example of this style. The opera is based on an expressionist play by Oskar Kokoschka, and its surreality of plot verges on the incomprehensible. Its music is similarly expressionist - Rogge says that it is characterised by 'dissonances which increase without concession'[91] - although Krenek said in his programme notes to the first performance that 'an attempt is made to unite an entire scene from time to time by simple, easily recognizable harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, and coloristic elements'.[92] Krenek later said that he wrote atonal music early in his career because he wanted to be radical, but 'from a technical viewpoint I was dissatisfied with the disorder and lack of organisation which seemed to reign [in atonal music]'.[93]

The seeming change of direction towards the popular which *Jonny* represented (although it later proved not to be) was anticipated in some of the works preceding it which were also influenced by popular music, albeit to a lesser extent. The influence of the popular may be seen in Krenek's *Tanzstudie* (1922), which contains a 'Foxtrott' movement, and in the last movement, also a 'Foxtrott', of op.13a, *Eine kleine Suite von Stücken über denselbigen Choral verschiedenen Charakters* (1922). Susan Cook says of this op.13a movement that its 'oom-pah oom-pah bass line and dotted, swingable melody shows Krenek's sure understanding of the dance's character, which he combined with his dissonant

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[90] Unfortunately, there is to date no discussion of these early works; the existing writing on Krenek does not examine them in any detail.

[91] Rogge, *Ernst Kreneks Opern,* 35.

[92] Quoted in Stewart, *Ernst Krenek,* 78. Stewart says of *Orpheus* that 'although [Krenek] ranged from absolute atonality to the most straightforward triadic tonality, he maintained a more or less conventional musical syntax' *(Ernst Krenek,* 78). However, this comment is highly questionable, if by a 'more or less conventional musical syntax' Stewart means the work is more or less tonal.

[93] Krenek, *Music Here and Now,* trans. Barthold Fles (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), 86.

harmonic idiom.'[94] The opera *Der Sprung über den Schatten* (1923) (which precedes the dissonant *Orpheus)* contains sections influenced by contemporary popular music. One chorus, 'Im freien Land Amerika', is designated a 'Foxtrot', and uses syncopated rhythms and popular-style melodies, with gestures towards blue thirds; other sections use tango rhythms and syncopated melodic lines.[95] Stewart says of the musical style of the opera in general that it 'entertains by mixing mildly provocative dissonance with ingratiating tonality', while Cook comments that it 'combines his early dissonant, complex style with elements borrowed from American popular music'.[96] *Der Sprung* also turns towards the popular, *Zeitoper* style of the later opera in its lighter subject matter and 'up to date' references; Stewart writes that Krenek 'created a farrago of operetta stereotypes and clichés, currently fashionable fads, topical satire, and bedroom farce.'[97] The concerns which Krenek addressed in *Der Sprung über den Schatten* are those which would resurface in *Jonny;* the use of American popular music to signify the 'free land of America' relies on 'the sociological symbolism of American dance'.[98] However, despite its popular elements, *Der Sprung* did not attain the popular success of *Jonny.*

Krenek's Aesthetics c.1926: The Influence of Paul Bekker

Krenek's writings from the mid-1920s explain the reasons for the shift in his oeuvre from the earlier atonal works to the works influenced by popular music. At this time, he began talking about the necessity for the gap between composer and audience to be closed. Modern music must pay attention to its audience, he says, because the idea 'that an artist creates because he must, and therefore doesn't

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[94] Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 78.

[95] See Stewart, *Ernst Krenek,* 71, Rogge, *Ernst Kreneks Opern,* 17 ff and Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 80. Rogge talks little about the jazz elements in the work beyond observing their presence; his analysis is mostly on the level of plot description, although he does see the jazz as operating parodistically. He also makes the interesting comment that 'the jump over the shadow' could be interpreted as 'a jump into the Republic' *(Ernst Kreneks Opern,* 23).

[96] Stewart, *Ernst Krenek,* 72; Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 80.

[97] Stewart, 71.

[98] Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 80.

have to concern himself with whether he'll find an ear that wants to listen to him, is so stupid and feeble, that it's hardly worth repeating it. Certainly he creates that which he must, but it will only be living if he feels himself grounded in his home soil'.[99] In a programme note to *Jonny spielt auf,* he wrote that he had begun 'to understand that a living relationship between art and the public was not only possible, but also... desirable, in contrast to an autocratic, abstract radicalism, which refused this relationship from the start'.[100] Krenek believed that 'the widest possible comprehensibility of the musical substance' is possible if the composer attempts to 'reach out for the "popular nature" *(Volkstümlichkeit)* of the time'; this 'popular nature' in the modern age lies in popular music.[101]

Krenek believed that a closer relationship between artist and public could be achieved through the simplification of musical language; music must be 'kept as simple as possible if it is to be effective', as he says in his 1925 essay, 'Music of Today'. The artist will 'have to rediscover perceptually and reshape the universal means of musical expression to one which all are capable of understanding.'[102] This 'universal means of musical expression' is, he implies, dance music; 'it doesn't do us any good... to close our eyes to a phenomenon of the times'.[103] In this essay, Krenek does not state explicitly that a composer should use popular music to reach his or her audience, saying only that 'it will be a matter of reexperiencing the relationship between the tonic and the dominant within the diatonic scale'. In an essay of two years later, though, entitled '"Materialbestimmtheit" der Oper', he writes that if a composer wants to realise a scene by using the conventions of the present, then he will be led to contemporary dance forms. 'They open an unusually large range of suggestions of a purely musical nature to the musician. Now and then, we hear a rhythmic and harmonic diversity and complexity in the pieces of American bands which thoroughly equals,

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[99] Krenek, 'Jonny spielt auf', 18.
[100] Krenek, 'Ernst Krenek über sich und sein Werk', *Blätter der Staatsoper und der Städtische Oper* 8/4 (Oktober 1927), 3.
[101] Krenek, 'Jonny spielt auf', 26.
[102] Krenek, 'Music of Today', in Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 201-202.
[103] Ibid., 199.

in purely material terms, the sound structures *(Klanggebilden)* won from the disintegration of the heritage of Romantic harmony.... The difference is that... [American dance music] is grown in the soil of a living *Gebrauchsmusik,* and despite its apparent complexity is still understood and consumed.'[104] 'Music of Today' ends with words which show a sentiment that would find clear expression in *Jonny spielt auf:*

> art is not as important as we would all like to believe. Whoever places art at the beginning of his credo will, in my modest opinion, get nowhere. *Vivere necesse est, artem facere non,* is what I say. We want to live, look life in the face and say yes to it with a passionate heart. Then we will suddenly have art and not know how it happened. It should never serve to express our lack of this thing or that, but should always flow out of the abundance of life; then it will be right and above all our muddlings.[105]

Krenek frequently returned to this theme in these years, pointing out in his essays the necessity for music to be grounded in contemporary life. Only this, he says, can make an art which is capable of transcending its time. Mozart wrote music based on contemporary dances which 'still lives today, although no-one dances gavottes and minuets any more.'[106] He continues that this music 'is living beyond its time because it was created from its time'. Jazz, therefore, is 'immensely useful' and 'topical' to the 'needs of modern people'.[107]

Krenek's call for the bridging of the composer-audience gap is expressed not only in aesthetic terms but also in political ones; indeed, his political and aesthetic views in the years around *Jonny spielt auf* coalesce. He argues the case for composers to be closer to their audience, and by doing so, he suggests, they will

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[104] Krenek, '"Materialbestimmtheit" der Oper', in *Zur Sprache gebracht: Essays über Musik* (Munich: Albert Langen / Georg Müller, 1958), 27.

[105] Krenek, 'Music of Today', 203.

[106] Krenek, 'Jonny spielt auf', 29.

[107] Ibid., 30. Also see his comments in later essays; for instance, in 'Zur heutigen Situation der "Neuen" Musik' (1931), he says that the introduction of elements of jazz into art music was 'one of the last attempts... to produce a satisfying relationship between art and its audience' *(Im Zweifelsfalle,* 244). He also wrote that the attempt by himself and other composers to use jazz elements in their music was 'prompted by the... desire to establish music as a vehicle of widely intelligible communication' ('A Composer's Influences', *Perspectives of New Music* 3/1 (Fall-Winter 1964), 38).

achieve a political aim. Important in this respect is '"Materialbestimmtheit" der Oper', written in the year in which *Jonny* was premiered. Here, Krenek says that the use of modern dance-music by art composers is not just a ploy for popularity; rather, it is employed because it has *gesellschaftbildende Macht,* 'socially constructive' or 'socially forming power'.[108] Krenek's expression *gesellschaftbildende Macht* is one which had previously been used in a number of writings by the critic Paul Bekker. Krenek was Bekker's general assistant at the Kassel State Opera from 1925, where Bekker was *Intendant,* and the two men had known each other for several years beforehand.[109] Krenek certainly knew Bekker's writings before he took the Kassel job, and was highly influenced by them; according to Cook, Bekker was Krenek's 'mentor'.[110] Stewart says that in 1923, Krenek had referred to Bekker in a letter, citing the critic's ideas on the 'social role that music had once had' and wondering 'how music would be able to return, as he put it, "to life".'[111]

Bekker's understanding of the place of music within society was in many ways far ahead of its time. Cook explains that Bekker 'asserted that a new society... required correspondingly new forms of artistic expression which would be "the truly productive, direct incarnation of the new state."'[112] In *Das deutsche Musikleben,* of 1916, he 'expressed his belief in the engendering power of the musical community', while in his *Kritische Zeitbilder* he claimed that art should not belong to the elite, but should 'reflect all of society'.[113] Bekker's concept of

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108 '"Materialbestimmtheit" der Oper', 27.

109 Stewart, *Ernst Krenek,* 60.

110 Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 14. Also on Krenek's opinion of Bekker, see Krenek, *Im Atem der Zeit,* 379 ff & 612-613.

111 Stewart, *Ernst Krenek,* 60. Despite being one of the few writers to mention the connection between the two men, Stewart does not mention Bekker's idea of *gesellschaftbildende Macht* in music specifically, nor Krenek's adoption of it, although he does refer to the same issues in passing. His discussion of Krenek's writings from this period focuses on aesthetic issues, particularly the composer's thoughts on opera as drama, rather than on the broader sociological issues which were also apparent at this time and were strongly influenced by Bekker (ibid., 63).

112 Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 11-12, quoting Bekker, *Kritische Zeitbilder* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1921), 217.

113 Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 11; Bekker, *Das deutsche Musikleben* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1919); *Kritische Zeitbilder.* Also see Franklin, 'Audiences, Critics'. For a detailed discussion, and philosophical critique, of Bekker's aesthetic ideas, which goes into areas beyond the scope of the present chapter, see Giselher Schubert, 'Aspekte der Bekkerschen Musiksoziologie', *International Review of Music Aesthetics and Sociology* 1/2 (1970), 179-186.

gesellschaftbildende Macht is neatly expressed in his 1918 book, *Die Sinfonie von Beethoven bis Mahler,* in which he says that the 'need to speak to a *mass public'* is the reason why composers write symphonies.[114] He argues that the performance of a symphony of genius does not merely present a clever collection of themes and melodies, but creates a communal feeling in the audience, an 'experience of community', a *Gemeinschaftserlebnis* or *Volksversammlung.*[115] 'The criterion of the greatest symphonic art... is the specific character and the extent of the power with which this work of art is able to form communities of feeling *(Gefühlsgemeinschaften),* thus its ability... to create a single, definite, individualised being out of the chaotic mass of the public... Thus I call this ability *to create communities (gesellschaftbildende Fähigkeit)* the highest quality of the symphonic work of art.'[116] The idea that music can 'create communities', especially in the context of the 1920s, may be seen as a left-wing position, with its concern for the mass public's relationship to music over the individual's. According to Bekker's model, music rises above the concerns of the individual to create a communal structure in which, it seems, all listeners are equal. In addition, Bekker's belief that an innovating composer is one who 'adopts a critical position towards his society' is indicative of a progressive attitude which, in contrast to conservatism, wishes to move away from the status quo.[117] In *Die Sinfonie von Beethoven bis Mahler,* this hint becomes explicit in Bekker's discussion of Beethoven. In his symphonies, Bekker argues, Beethoven 'created the artistic symbol of a new, ideal consciousness of community *(Gemeinschaftsbewußtsein)';* the audience for whom he was writing, and who he helped to create, was 'a continuation of the mighty democratic movement, which led from the French Revolution to the German wars for independence'.[118] Bekker's explicit evocation of the 'mighty democratic movement' here points to the ideological implications of

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[114] Bekker, *Die Sinfonie von Beethoven bis Mahler* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1918), 12.
[115] Ibid., 14 & 16.
[116] Ibid., 17. Bekker's emphasis. Translation based partly on that in Weiner, *Undertones of Insurrection,* 53. Bekker uses *gemeinschaftbildend* and *gesellschaftbildend* interchangeably, and does not appear to differentiate between the two, although the latter appears more frequently.
[117] Franklin, 'Audiences, Critics', 83.
[118] Bekker, *Die Sinfonie von Beethoven bis Mahler,* 22 & 16.

his own argument; his emphasis is on community and collective experience, and by his own admission this is democratic, not elitist.

Bekker's ideas came under attack from conservative musical circles, and particularly from Pfitzner in his 'Die neue Ästhetik der musikalischen Impotenz'. Pfitzner objected to the idea that music could be *gesellschaftbildend,* as, in his view, 'if nothing more depends on the music itself, but only on the "poetic idea", the "programme", the power to "form communities", then it is easy to compose.' One does not need any musical talent to write such music, he believes; Bekker's aesthetic therefore 'must delight all musical quacks and dolts; they are protected by it, it justifies them'.[119] According to Pfitzner, Bekker's view that the power to form communities is 'the highest criterion' of a symphonic work of art means that the value of the work comes from something outside the work itself; in his estimation, this could result in the objectionable situation in which the musical material itself could be banal and unoriginal, but where the work may still be valued as *gesellschaftbildend.*[120] One of Pfitzner's quarrels with Bekker is because of what Pfitzner takes to be the latter's censure of Beethoven in *Die Sinfonie von Beethoven bis Mahler*, in Pfitzner's opinion the most 'German' of musicians.[121] Bekker's criticism of the 'pantheon of German music' leads to a diatribe from Pfitzner which is explicitly political: 'In the shame and outrage of the revolution, we experience with sorrow that German works, German people, have let themselves be led by Russian-Jewish criminals and have shown an enthusiasm which they begrudged their German heroes and benefactors. In art, we experience that a German man from the people, of such a sharp understanding and deep knowledge as Herr Bekker... leads the international-Jewish movement in art.'[122] Pfitzner's invective

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[119] Pfitzner, 'Die neue Ästhetik', 155. Translation based on Weiner, *Undertones of Insurrection,* 54. Also for discussion of Pfitzner's opinion of Bekker, see Carner, 'Pfitzner v. Berg', 379, Adamy, *Hans Pfitzner,* 102 ff and Ermen, *Musik als Einfall,* 129 ff.

[120] Pfitzner, 'Die neue Ästhetik', 241.

[121] Ibid., 243. How far Bekker's comments on Beethoven are in fact a real criticism is debatable; he suggests that Beethoven's themes are not necessarily particularly original.

[122] Ibid., 244.

against the 'new, international, *gesellschaftsbildende Kraftkunst'* is therefore explicitly aimed at Bekker and his aesthetic concepts.[123]

The altercation between Bekker and Pfitzner, while ostensibly about music, couched two opposed political positions in aesthetic terms.[124] Bekker's belief in music which can appeal to all indicates a conception of an ideal society radically different to Pfitzner's, in which music remains the privilege of the elite. For Pfitzner, music of genius cannot be *gesellschaftbildend,* only transcendent of the concerns of the world, whereas Bekker argued that the work of art is of genius if it can be easily comprehended and community-forming. The two men are radically different figures both aesthetically and politically, and characterise both the political divide of the Weimar Republic and the contemporary debate about music: one is in favour of modernism and democracy, the other fiercely traditional in both music and politics. This contrast is summed up at the end of *Die Sinfonie von Beethoven bis Mahler,* where Bekker contrasts the backward-looking art of Pfitzner with what Bekker believes is the forward-looking one of Mahler. 'With [Mahler] the chapter of the Romantic symphony closes; it does not close, as with Pfitzner's Palestrina, in sombre flight from the world, out of grief for one's own fate, but it closes while letting one's own fate be forgotten... with the announcement of the message of all-encompassing love. Therefore it does not belong to the *past* from which we turn away, but to it belongs the *future* towards which we strive.'[125]

Bekker's concept of *gesellschaftbildende Macht* influenced many young composers of the time. As well as Krenek, Kurt Weill uses the same terminology in his writings, and his use of popular music may be seen as an attempt to develop Bekker's aesthetic. Christopher Hailey says that the 'search for a so-called *gesellschaftsbildende...* role for new music' is a recurrent theme for Weill.[126] In his

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[123] Ibid., 251. Attinello's translation of the last word of this phrase as 'power-art', while literally correct, therefore misses out on the allusion of Pfitzner's original ('Pfitzner, *Palestrina,* Nazis, Conservatives', 31). Pfitzner includes an 's' in this term *(gesellschaftsbildende)* (as does Weill, see below) which Bekker omits *(gesellschaftbildende).*

[124] Weiner, *Undertones of Insurrection,* 53.

[125] Bekker, *Die Sinfonie von Beethoven bis Mahler,* 60-61.

[126] Hailey, 'Creating a Public, Addressing a Market: Kurt Weill and Universal Edition', in Kim H. Kowalke, ed., *A New Orpheus: Essays on Kurt Weill* (New Haven & London: Yale University

writings from the 1920s, Weill frequently contrasts the old, *gesellschaftlich* or 'socially exclusive' arts with *gemeinschaftsbildend* art; Kim Kowalke explains that 'Weill uses the term *"gesellschaftlichen"* to describe an aristocratic art limited in its appeal to a small group of connoisseurs. He prefers a *"gemeinschaftsbildenden"* art which strives for a more democratic basis in a broader community of listeners.'[127] Weill makes an explicit distinction (which Bekker does not) between *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft,* the latter indicating an inclusive community, the former 'society' with a possible hint of exclusivity. Weill argues for the necessity of a *gemeinschaftbildend* art; for instance, in his 1927 essay 'Verschiebungen in der musikalischen Produktion', he recognises that the *gesellschaftlich* arts are 'losing more and more ground', and argues instead for 'a community-engendering *(gemeinschaftsbildenden)* or community-advancing art', which in Weill's opinion is possible particularly through musical theatre.[128] The influence of Bekker is apparent in such ideas, as it is when he says that 'there is a general human consciousness that springs from a social feeling of some kind and... this must determine the formation of an art work'.[129] Weill argues that a *gemeinschaftbildend* effect could be achieved by modern composers through the use of contemporary dance music. 'Unlike art music, dance music does not reflect the sense of towering personalities who stand above time, but rather it reflects the instinct of the masses.'[130] Hailey points to the change in Weill's aesthetic in the twenties, when he came to the conclusion that composers must adapt themselves to their audiences: he says that Weill's early works, such as his expressionistic First Symphony, 'seemed intent on achieving... [a] breakthrough to a new public, to a new humanity' but that these aspirations gave way to a more realistic stance. 'If the new humanity did not appear or failed to rally around the artists' work, then the

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Press, 1986), 27. Hailey says the idea also influenced the composers Eduard Erdmann and Heinz Tiessen, as well as Weill and Krenek.

[127] Editorial note to 'Shifts in Musical Composition', in Kim H. Kowalke, *Kurt Weill in Europe* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979), 480. Weill makes the same distinction in his 'Gesellschaftsbildende Oper', *Berliner Börsen-Courier,* 19.2.29, translated as 'Socially-Creative Opera', in Kowalke, *Kurt Weill in Europe,* 489.

[128] Weill, *Berliner Tageblatt,* 1.10.27, in Kowalke, *Kurt Weill in Europe,* 479-480.

[129] Weill, 'Shifts in Musical Composition', 478.

[130] Weill, 'Tanzmusik', *Der deutsche Rundfunk,* 14.3.26, translated as 'Dance Music' in Kowalke, *Kurt Weill in Europe,* 473.

artists had to go out in search of the audience - and it was an audience preoccupied with the social realities of the here and now'.[131]

The influence of Bekker's philosophy on Krenek is clear; the composer said in later years that at this time 'music, according to my new philosophy, had to fit the well-defined demands of the community for which it was written; it had to be useful, entertaining, practical'.[132] Like Weill, he saw contemporary popular music as being the means through which communities could be formed, as is shown in the essay '"Materialbestimmtheit" der Oper'. Krenek says that a composer will be led to use contemporary forms of dance if he feels the necessity for his music to be relevant: 'No-one will deny their *gesellschaftbildende Macht,* which we experience everyday. It touches us through its deeply exciting, irresistible, purely animal effectiveness on our nerves'.[133] The idea that music can have *gesellschaftbildende Macht* through popular music is expressed here, as well as in *Jonny spielt auf* itself. The story of the opera indicates the shift in Krenek's own compositional style, away from atonality towards a style influenced by popular dance-music, a shift arguably prompted by the influence of Bekker. At the beginning of the opera, Max may be seen as a persona for the young Krenek in his early career, both in his isolation from society and in his musical style. 'Als ich damals' can be seen as signifying Krenek's earlier music, although it is not as atonal as much of the real composer's early style. Max continues to represent Krenek in the way he decides to adapt himself to the modern world, and may also suggest him through Max's possible change in compositional style indicated through the inclusion of popular elements to accompany him as the opera progresses. Krenek underwent a parallel transformation to Max by writing *Jonny spielt auf,* as well as the previous works influenced by dance-music; this made him closer to the society in which he lived. However, this transformation begs another question. By the end of the opera, Max has become assimilated into Jonny's world, so who, therefore, is Krenek's persona at the opera's conclusion? Because Max adapts himself to Jonny's world, and because it is Jonny who the more thoroughly displays Krenek's own aesthetic, the

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[131] Hailey, 'Creating a Public', 27.
[132] Krenek, 'Self-Analysis', 14.
[133] Krenek, '"Materialbestimmtheit" der Oper', 27.

jazz musician as well as Max may be read as functioning as Krenek's projection of himself at the time of the opera's composition. While Max stands in for Krenek's life up to the composition of *Jonny spielt auf,* Jonny represents Krenek as he thought about music at the time of writing the work, at the end of his transformation.

Krenek's attitude towards Jonny was expressed by him some time after the opera was written. He spoke of his presentation of Jonny as representative of:

> the fullness of life, optimistic affirmation, freedom from futile speculation, and devotion to the happiness of the moment. He was the fulfillment of a wish dream, for I felt that all of these elements, which I admired so greatly and passionately desired to acquire for myself, were really foreign to my nature.[134]

But despite the composer's protestations, the wish-fulfilment not only takes place on a fictional level; by writing *Jonny spielt auf,* Krenek himself carries out those desires which are expressed through the figure of Jonny. Rather than them remaining fictional speculation, Krenek actually acts out his fantasies through his own change of compositional style, a style which brought him the success he sought, and bridged the composer-audience gap which had proved problematic for many art composers. The opera's musical style deliberately borrows from popular music, and in doing so, became a part of the everyday world, just as Jonny's music is part of the realm of the opera. Jonny forms a wish-fulfilment for Krenek in a similar way to Palestrina's status for Pfitzner, the difference being that Krenek went some way towards achieving this goal in his life, while Pfitzner's goal remained largely fictitious.

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[134] Krenek, 'Self-Analysis', 16. Also see *Horizons Circled,* 27.

Conclusion

Cook writes that Krenek's essay '"Materialbestimmtheit" der Oper' 'acts as an apology for and further explanation of the artistic reasoning behind *Jonny spielt auf*'.[135] Although Cook does not mention it, we can see on further investigation that this 'artistic reasoning' was his espousal of concepts such as *gesellschaftbildende Macht.* Both the essay and the opera illustrate a position towards the kind of music Krenek felt a modern composer should write, music comprehensible to many and able to create communities. Krenek's dualism in *Jonny spielt auf* of the traditional versus modern artists encapsulates many of the concerns held by composers in the early twentieth century about the function of art, while the opera's resolution in favour of the modern is an allegorisation of Krenek's own stance on music and its place in society at this time, a position which may be interpreted as left wing in its concern with reaching a mass audience. In later years, Krenek admitted his left-wing propensities: 'In my adolescence I had developed strong sympathies for left and far left causes, and I have retained them to this day.'[136] Moreover, when viewed against the context of Weimar Germany, the opera's appeal to the public, through its use of the paraphernalia of 'Americanism', taps into the contemporary discourse centred around the construction of a new and progressive identity for the Weimar Republic, the progressive elements of which would then have been understood as left wing. The contrast this made with the old order, embodied in such figures as Pfitzner, means that *Jonny spielt auf* may be seen as the locus for both progressive political thought of its time and opposition to it.

Jonny spielt auf's ability to signify the forces of 'modernity' in its many guises is encapsulated in the use of the image of Jonny, playing the saxophone and wearing the Star of David, to express the right wing's disgust at such 'degeneracy' in the 'Entartete Musik' exhibition of 1938.[137] Both Jonny the character and *Jonny*

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[135] Cook, *Opera for a New Republic,* 16

[136] Krenek, *Horizons Circled,* 39. Also see 'Self-Analysis', 26.

[137] This picture is reproduced in Albrecht Dümling & Peter Girth, *Banned by the Nazis: Entartete Musik* (Catalogue of 1988 exhibition of the same name) (Berlin: Department of Cultural Affairs, n.d.), 11.

the opera became powerful symbols for modern society, and resistance to it. In the years after the opera's success, the Weimar Republic's validity came increasingly into question, and its political ideals, as well as the artistic movements associated with them, became more and more suspect. With this development, questions began to resurface about what a true German art should be, and many composers, such as Hindemith, became caught up in this debate.

4. Painting and Politics in Hindemith's Mathis der Maler

Mathis der Maler, completed in 1935, was affected by the cultural and political conditions which surrounded it in a far more concrete way than either *Palestrina* or *Jonny spielt auf.* Hindemith encountered varying degrees of official disapproval from the authorities of the Third Reich, which hampered the possibility of a first performance of the opera in Germany. Although the *Symphony 'Mathis der Maler'* had been premiered in Berlin in 1934, the opera did not receive its first performance until 1938, in Zürich.[1] The fact that the National Socialists gave permission for the Symphony but not for the opera itself is symptomatic of Hindemith's problems with the Nazis, who could not decide if his work fitted within their categorisation of 'valid' art. The composer's supposed reaction to the situation in which he found himself has formed the basis for the predominant interpretation of the opera. His hero is read as retreating from the world around him in the same way as Hindemith supposedly remained in Germany in a state of 'inner emigration'. Thus the opera has been viewed as inherently autobiographical, and wedded to the political events which Hindemith experienced. In this chapter, I will question existing readings of the work to a greater extent than has been found in previous chapters, and will posit an alternative relationship between the opera, its composer, and their context. I will show how Hindemith constructed a persona for himself which presented his views about the place of artist in society, and will suggest that the opera does not demonstrate a retreat from the world, by either Mathis or his creator, but rather that elements of the opera resonate with contemporary political thought, particularly that of the National Socialists. After setting out the relationship of Mathis to his environment, my first section will compare Hindemith's own aesthetic beliefs to the portrayal of the artist Mathis. I will then trace how this presentation relates to elements of Nazi ideology, and will explore Hindemith's own relationship to contemporary political currents.

Mathis der Maler tells the story of a painter who abandons his art to go and fight with a group of peasants trying to free themselves from the tyranny of their

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[1] Giselher Schubert, *Paul Hindemith: Mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1981), 85 & 93.

rulers. After becoming disillusioned with war, Mathis sees visions of angels and of St. Paul, who tells him how his art may be socially useful; he then decides to return to his painting. The character of Mathis is based on the artist known as Matthias Grünewald (1455?-1528), painter of the Isenheim Altarpiece; Hindemith, who wrote his own libretto, bases much of Tableau 6, the vision scene, on parts of the Altarpiece. He also incorporates other contemporary figures into the opera: the historical Grünewald was court painter to the Archbishop of Mainz, Cardinal Albrecht, as Mathis is in the opera, while most of the other characters are also based on historical figures.[2] Little is known of Grünewald's life, and therefore Hindemith's portrayal of him is largely fictional, including his sojourn in the Peasants' War. Although this lasted from 1524-26, and was therefore contemporary with Grünewald's life, the Isenheim Alterpiece was probably completed in 1515, whereas in the opera it is painted subsequent to Mathis's involvement in the conflict.

Many writers on the opera, for instance Tim Ashley, Gudrun Breimann, Ian Kemp, James E. Paulding, Dieter Rexroth, and Geoffrey Skelton, argue that Mathis, after a failed attempt at social engagement, 'retreats' from the world around him into isolation.[3] Rexroth says that 'the close of *Mathis* is resignation', while Kemp writes that 'one of the lessons of *Mathis* is that the artist is *not* competent to dabble in politics.'[4] Breimann states that the hero of the opera is characterised as an 'outsider, whose attempts to come into contact with the people fail'; the only solution left to him, therefore, is to renounce the world altogether.[5] Ashley says that the opera is Hindemith's 'final vindication of the artist as an

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[2] For an outline of Grünewald's life, see Anne Tennant, 'Painter as Healer', in the programme book for the Royal Opera House production of *Mathis der Maler,* November-December 1995, 31-37.

[3] Ashley, 'An Act of Necessity', in the programme book for the Royal Opera House production, 22-27; Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler' und der 'Fall Hindemith': Studien zu Hindemiths Opernlibretto im Kontext der kulturgeschichtlichen und politischen Bedingungen der dreißiger Jahre* (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 1997); Kemp, *Hindemith* (Oxford Studies of Composers no.6. London: Oxford University Press, 1970); Paulding, 'Mathis der Maler: The Politics of Music', *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 5 (1976), 102-122; Rexroth, 'Von der moralischen Verantwortung des Künstlers. Zu den großen Opern von Paul Hindemith', *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 3 (1973), 63-79; Skelton, *Paul Hindemit:. The Man Behind the Music* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1975).

[4] Rexroth, 'Von der moralischen Verantwortung', 76; Kemp, *Hindemith,* 30.

[5] Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler',* 173.

isolated individual'.[6] Bokina, in other respects more critical towards the opera, says that Mathis starts as an 'apolitical aesthete' at the beginning of the work and returns to this state at the end.[7] The only writer who dissents from the prevailing interpretation of *Mathis der Maler* is Claudia Maurer Zenck, in her article 'Zwischen Boykott und Anpassung an den Charakter der Zeit. Über die Schwierigkeiten eines deutschen Komponist mit dem Dritten Reich'.[8] Zenck sees the central character as remaining part of a political discourse throughout the work, and argues that he does not 'retreat' but maintains a relationship to society through his art. The present chapter draws on and continues Zenck's approach. I will argue that the view that Mathis 'retreats' is a misreading, and that the artist does not completely renounce the world around him. Both the prevailing view of the opera, and Zenck's opinion, have implications for how Hindemith's own stance towards society is seen; I will return to this issue further below.

Artist and Society in *Mathis der Maler*

Unlike *Palestrina* or *Jonny spielt auf, Mathis der Maler* does not present a simple bipartite division between the artist and the world around him; the society presented in Hindemith's opera, and the artist's relationship to it, is altogether more complex. The world in which Mathis exists subdivides into two parts which are in opposition to each other: the bourgeois society of Mainz, and the sphere of the peasants. Mathis himself moves between these two domains. The people of the city of Mainz are comprised of the ruling class (the Church) and the mercantile class, with little distinction drawn between them. The merchants are, in fact, richer than the rulers. While Mathis's problems with finding a place in the world is the main focus of the opera, the subsidiary plot is centred around the desire of the Mainz citizens, particularly the Cardinal Albrecht, for money; this secondary plot intricately mixes religion, money and politics on a number of occasions. The Lutheran merchant Riedinger volunteers to lend Albrecht money, but only in order

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[6] Ashley, 'An Act of Necessity', 24.
[7] Bokina, 'Resignation, Retreat and Impotence', 169.
[8] *Hindemith Jahrbuch* 9 (1980), 65-129.

to secure his own ends: he asks for the planned burning of Lutheran literature by the Catholics to be stopped shortly after offering his loan, and it is implicit that his offer is dependent upon this request being met. Money and politics are also combined when Albrecht receives a letter from Luther, who suggests that Albrecht should marry. If he did so, he would transform the Bishopric into a secular state. The Lutherans wish to convert Albrecht, because they would then achieve a greater standing for their religion, and would wield more political power. Albrecht's advisors realise that such a reconciliation with Luther, through marriage to a rich Lutheran's daughter, would bring Albrecht both a new source of funds and new power. Capito comments that 'Am meisten drängt ihn Geldnot. Er nimmt nichts mehr ein, niemand leiht. Er ist gezwungen, neue Quellen aufzutun. Geht er die Ehe ein mit einer reichen Frau, ist er aller Schulden frei und lebt der Kunst. Das ist's wonach er strebt' ('Above all, he's forced by want of money. There's nothing coming in, no-one's lending. He's forced to open up new sources. If he marries a rich woman, he is free of debts and can live for art. That's what he's striving for'). Albrecht has until now maintained and demonstrated his power through his wealth; the desperation of his cohorts to hold on to this power now leads them to contemplate compromising their religion. Albrecht himself resists their plans, however: his wish to hold onto the reins of power on his own terms overrides his financial concerns: 'Wenn ich will, wird Luther springen nach meiner Musik, nicht umgekehrt' ('Luther will dance to my music when I want it, not the other way round').

Set in opposition to the society of Mainz is the band of peasants. The citizens of Mainz are completely separate from the peasants, and care little about them, oppressing them by taxing them heavily. The townspeople's lack of concern for the peasants is particularly obvious in the earlier scenes of the opera through the actions of Albrecht. Albrecht is prepared to inflict more taxes on his subjects, along with other financial hardships, in order to fund his extravagant lifestyle. His desire for money outweighs any consideration for the people who will be affected by his demands, and his lack of concern for their plight illustrates the moral apathy of this affluent society. The peasants relate how they are exploited in Tableau 4: 'Zins mußt du zahlen, Lasten tragen... für deinen Herrn. Wieviel du schaffst, was du

vollbringst, es endet all in seinem Sack' ('You must pay taxes and carry loads... for your master. However much you produce, whatever you achieve, it all ends up in his pocket'). When we first meet their leader, Schwalb, he introduces the peasants as heroes, fighting a worthy battle against the evil rulers who take their land and belongings. He tells Mathis: 'In Fron dient [der Bauer] Tag und Nacht. Man stampft sein Feld darnieder, sein Vieh nimmt man ihm, mit Steuern und Zoll wird er gepresst, geplagt ist er fürchterlich. Recht hat nur der Reiche. Den armen Hansen darf jeder schinden. Wenn er nur immer wieder den Fürsten und Pfaffen den Ranzen stopft, bis obenhin voll' ('[The peasant] labours in slavery night and day. His land is trampled under foot, his cattle are taken from him, he's squeezed by taxes and tolls, his suffering is terrible. Only the rich have rights. They're allowed to grind us poor blokes down. And all to fill the knapsacks of the princes and priests until they bulge'). When we finally meet the peasants themselves, though, a different picture emerges. Here, the peasants are not portrayed sympathetically: they kill the count they have captured in a meaningless act of revenge. Their actions towards the Countess are also brutish, as they force her to do menial tasks for them and then attempt to rape her. The peasants are portrayed more as a gang of delinquents than as a brave and noble band fighting for the good of the people. However, there remains some ambiguity about their true nature, and whether they are really cruel or whether this brutality is excusable because of their oppression. When Mathis criticises the peasants' behaviour, Schwalb pardons them: 'Die Verzweiflung Jahrzehnte lang hat sie mürbe gemacht' ('Decades of despair have worn them down'). Later, the peasants themselves turn against Mathis when he reproaches them, but even then, the painter is forgiving of them, and recognises their plight: 'Tod und Jammer müssen die Ärmsten leiden, damit die Reichen reicher werden' ('The poorest have to suffer death and sorrow so that the rich become richer').

Mathis's position towards the society of Mainz and the group of peasants is complex, and changes during the course of the work. As the opera opens, Mathis is employed by Albrecht, producing art to order. However, at the end of a year's leave, he questions the purpose of his art within the world. Mathis's realisation that art is useless in a world which is full of suffering precipitates his conflict with the

bourgeois world. He asks himself, 'Hast du erfüllt, was Gott dir auftrug? Ist, daß du schaffst und bildest, genug? Bist nicht nur eignen Nutzens voll?' ('Have you fulfilled the task that God imposed? It is enough that you create and paint? Or are you only being full of self-interest?'). Such doubts escalate when Schwalb pours scorn on Mathis's profession: on seeing Mathis's painting, he asks disbelievingly, 'Nein, ist das möglich? Man malt, das gibt es noch!' ('No, is that possible? People still paint!'). When Mathis tries to defend himself, Schwalb counters that art has no meaning for the average person, and throws back at Mathis the questions that he has already asked himself. This prompts Mathis to resign from his post and to go and help the peasants in their struggle.

Mathis's relationship to the ordinary people, whom he calls his 'brothers', is shown through his art and through his actions. He says to Schwalb in the first Tableau that he paints because 'Ich will ja nichts andres als helfen' ('All I want to do is help'). Mathis does not produce esoteric art which only a few can understand, but tries to communicate with ordinary people. He paints his characters in the guise of contemporary Germans to whom his audience can relate; we are told that he represents Christ as 'einen kranken Bettelmann' ('a sick beggar'), saints as 'Bauer[n]' (peasants) and Mary as a 'Weisenauer Kuhmagd' (a 'cowgirl from Weisenau'). We are shown 'the hero's sympathy for the plight of the common man as expressed in his choice of blatantly realistic models for Christ and the Virgin Mary'.[9] In another effort to help the peasants, he goes to experience their struggle at first hand, but becomes disillusioned with fighting. He is appalled by the boorish behaviour of the peasants, and his dreams of justice and a fair society are shattered as he realises that the band of peasants are as selfish and corrupt as the people they are fighting: 'Brüder, kämpft ihr nicht für das Recht? Ihr wollt die Macht stürzen, eigennützige Tat verhindern und seid selbst voll Eigennutz!' ('Brothers, aren't you fighting for justice? You want to overthrow power, prevent self-interested activities, but are yourselves full of self-interest!'). After the peasant band is annihilated in battle, Mathis reflects at the end of Tableau 4 that he was wrong to try 'der Vorsehung weisen Plan zu bessern' ('to improve on the wise plans of

[9] Weisstein, 'Die letzte Häutung', 206.

providence'). He is now disillusioned both with art and with what he thought was the solution to his discontent, although he is estranged only from the peasants' methods, not from their cause. Mathis says that he is 'ein unzufriedener Maler, ein mißratner Mensch' ('a discontented painter, a failure'). The only thing he can do now, he tells himself, is 'Gib auf. Schleiche dich wie ein nächtlicher Dieb vom Platz deiner Schande. Feuerbrände der Selbstqual, irres Rennen im Kreise. Zu Ende' ('Give up. Creep from the scene of your shame like a thief in the night. Firebrands of self-torment, running uselessly in circles. Enough').

The Temptation Scene in Tableau 6 illustrates Mathis's estrangement from both the peasants and the inhabitants of Mainz. Here, characters from the opera appear to Mathis in a vision as personified 'temptations'; Mathis himself is cast in the role of St. Anthony. The temptations which appear are 'Opulence' (portrayed by the Countess), a Merchant (Pommersfelden), a Beggar Woman, a Courtesan, and a Martyr (all played by Ursula), a Scholar (Capito), and a War Commander (Schwalb). These characters indicate Mathis's relationship to society in various ways. For example, the Beggar Woman tries to convince Mathis that he can never help to alleviate suffering ('Gibst du noch so viel, du stellst niemals den Mangel ab' ('However much you give, you'll never put an end to want')), an idea which he resists; this suggests how he feels he *can* help in some way. Mathis's opinion of the place of money in relation to art is apparent in his conversation with Opulence, who criticises Mathis for having 'squandered' his money, and points out that he could have had a life of 'mit höchster Kunst verbunden größter Reichtum' ('highest art bound to the greatest wealth'). He counters dismissively: 'Malen und zugleich die Münzen zählen; wer das könnte, wäre reich und tot der Arbeit' ('to paint and count coins at the same time; whoever could do that would be rich and dead to one's work'). The Merchant is another figure from bourgeois society, this time motivated by power as well as by money. He tells Mathis that through the wealth he could earn from his art, he could have command over others: 'Mit deinem Reichtum mußt du die Macht schaffen.... Benutze deine Mittel, um Andere zu unterdrücken' ('With your wealth you must create power.... Use your means to

oppress others').[10] The other society represented in the Temptation Scene is that of the War Commander, representing Schwalb; by extension, his peasant band are portrayed with him. The way in which Schwalb is personified as a soldier who torments Mathis is itself revealing: it suggests that to Mathis, the peasants have a negative connotation because they seek to gain power not through money, as the Mainz citizens do, but through violence. In doing so, they have lost sight of their true aims of seeking a better world for the down-trodden people.

One character who remains outside the Temptation Scene is Schwalb's young daughter, Regina. Regina may be read as showing the true nature of the ordinary people; she is untarnished by the peasants' oppression and consequent barbarity which, according to Schwalb, has blemished their real nature. A different, more positive, relationship exists between Mathis and the ordinary people when Regina is taken as their representative. Although Mathis becomes disillusioned with the peasants, he remains close to Regina. They are the only two survivors of the battle; they move on from the barbarity of the peasants, both literally and figuratively, leaving the scene together and thus illustrating how both are treading the same path. Mathis's relationship to Regina and to the common people is symbolised by a ribbon which was originally given to Mathis by his lover Ursula. Ursula is Riedinger's daughter, and is therefore part of the world of Mainz. She never leaves this environment; despite her wish to go with Mathis, he rejects her and her world by telling her she must stay behind. Ursula gave Mathis the ribbon before they had parted from each other, saying that 'Nichts soll uns trennen solange es bei dir ruht' ('Nothing will separate us, as long as you still have it'). However, Mathis gives the ribbon to Regina in the first scene as a present. The ribbon therefore functions as a symbol for Mathis's relationship to different kinds of society: while he was first metaphorically bound to Ursula and her middle-class world, he confirms his association with the ordinary people when he gives the ribbon to Regina.

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[10] Although the Merchant is played by Pommersfelden, he can easily be seen as a representation of Riedinger.

Regina's music underscores her presentation as representing the true nature of the people. It is based around quasi-folk-songs, the only appearances of such songs in the opera. The peasants, in contrast, never use such music. The spirit of the people is encapsulated in these folk-songs; it is 'their' music, not fashioned by one individual but reaching into the roots of the society itself and becoming their 'natural' expression. While the peasants have become distanced from their true nature through their violence and corruption, Regina has remained true to it. The first song Regina sings, 'Es wollt ein Maidlein waschen gehn', is about a maid who goes to do washing at a spring, and is the most representative of a folk-song idiom within *Mathis der Maler*. The text of the song plays out the relationship between Mathis and Regina on another level:

> Es wollt ein Maidlein waschen gehn bei einem kühlen Brunnen. Ein weißes Hemdlein hatt' sie an, wohl in der hellen Sonne.... Es kam ein Reuter hergeritten zum Maidlein an den Brunnen. 'Willst du, mein Lieb, nicht mit mir ziehen wohl in der hellen Sonne?'.... Der Reuter gab ihr ein seiden Band, bestickt mit Purpurrosen.

[A maiden went to wash by a cool spring. She wore a white blouse, all in the bright sunshine.... A knight rode up to the maiden at the spring. 'Won't you come with me, my love, all in the bright sunshine?'.... The knight gave her a silk ribbon, embroidered with crimson roses.]

The song is related to the actions of the actual characters of Regina and Mathis. Firstly, Regina herself is next to a spring as she sings; when she arrives at the verse about the ribbon, she wishes that she herself had one, and Mathis gives her his.[11] These two facts invite us to align the characters in the song with those on stage, Regina herself as the 'Maiden' and Mathis the 'Knight'. The knight's invitation to the maiden to go with him points to the way they will travel together later on, albeit in different circumstances to the one in the song.

Regina's other song, 'Es sungen drei Engeln ein süssen Gesang' is less clearly a folk-song, as it has a religious text. Nevertheless, the song's mediaeval

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[11] It is interesting to note in this regard that the ribbon does not feature in the original folk song, on which Hindemith bases the music of Regina's song. The original contains the meeting between a maiden who has gone washing and a knight, but the story then goes in another direction. Franz M.

origin and its folk-song style removes it from a religious discourse and places it, like folk-song, as part of an ancient, shared heritage. Hindemith's source for this song, as for 'Es wollt ein Maidlein waschen gehn', was a nineteenth-century collection of songs by Franz M. Böhme called the *Altdeutsches Liederbuch.*[12] Böhme himself says that not all spiritual songs were freely sung by ordinary people, but only a small number of them. However, when a spiritual song did have an existence 'in the mouth of the people', outside a church context, then 'one may accept it as a true spiritual folk-song'.[13] Some writers, such as Kemp, say that 'Es sungen' *is* a folk song, illustrating its ambiguity.[14]

Mathis's changing relationships to the societies with which he comes into contact are mirrored by another character, Albrecht, who alters his own relationship towards society and art. At the start of the opera, Albrecht is perhaps the most uncaring of the heedless Mainz citizens, as I have mentioned; he has no qualms about exploiting the peasants in order to fund his lifestyle. However, his position changes in Tableau 5, as a result of his meeting with Ursula when she goes to meet him as part of the plan to persuade him to marry. Albrecht is impressed by her religious fervour, and the way in which she is prepared to sacrifice her own wishes to her cause by marrying the man her father wants her to. Albrecht's financial difficulties are solved thanks to this encounter, although not because he agrees to marry Ursula as his advisors were expecting. Instead, the Cardinal decides to devote himself anew to a pious life: his existence will be 'mehr das eines Eremiten als eines Bischofs' ('more that of a hermit than of a bishop'). He will renounce excess, and will instead embrace a life of simplicity.

While Albrecht revises his place in society, one thing which remains consistent is his relationship to art. His sympathy for art makes him unusual amongst his fellow citizens in Mainz. In the opening tableaux of the opera, it is shown that most people do not understand culture. Albrecht, though, prides himself

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Böhme, *Altdeutsches Liederbuch: Volkslieder der Deutschen nach Wort und Weise aus dem 12. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966. Original edition: Leipzig, 1877), no. 60.

[12] Franz Wöhlke, *Mathis der Maler von Paul Hindemith* (Berlin: Robert Lienau, 1965), 16 ff.

[13] Böhme, *Altdeutsches Liederbuch,* xliii.

[14] Kemp, *Hindemith,* 31.

as a man who appreciates art, declaring 'Was unternähme ich nicht, [die Kunst] zu ehren!' ('What wouldn't I undertake to honour [art]!').[15] Nevertheless, at the beginnning of the opera, art functions for him as a symbol of wealth, and his purchase of art works have merely added to his financial problems. Albrecht wants art which will take people out of their daily concerns. When he brings a sacred relic to Mainz, he tells Mathis: 'Für das neue Heiligtum wird ein Schrein erstehen. Du nimmst alles, was an Stoffen herrlich und kostbar ist. Erfinde Unirdisches, daß die Seele des Andächtigen nicht weiß, ob ihr Erhebung auf des Heiligen geheiß, ob durch dein gnadenvolles Werk geschah' ('A shrine will be created for the new relic. Use everything that's fine and precious. Create something unearthly, so that the souls of the devout do not know whether their exaltation is the bidding of the saint, or the product of the grace within your work').

Albrecht's understanding of art helps to create a strong relationship between himself and Mathis. While most of the Mainz citizens have little time for Mathis or his art, Albrecht is more sympathetic towards the painter. He reacts with compassion when, near the beginning of the opera, Mathis voices his concerns about the plight of the people, replying quietly that 'Viele denken ebenso. Ließe mir mein Amt freie Wahl wie dir das deine, verfolgte ich oft bessere Ziele' ('Many think as you do. If my position left me free choice like yours does, I would often follow better goals'). When Mathis leaves, Albrecht tells those around him, 'Wollt ihr ihn richten, lernt ihn verstehen' ('If you would judge him, learn to understand him'). Nevertheless, at this point he still tries to persuade Mathis that such matters as the peasants' war are beyond his concern. Albrecht's understanding position towards Mathis forms the basis for the events of Tableau 6, which occurs after Albrecht's conversion to a life of simplicity and the renewal of his religious piety. During Mathis's vision in this scene, in which Mathis himself 'becomes' St. Anthony, Albrecht appears to him in the guise of St. Paul, and persuades the

[15] In a further demonstration of his relationship to culture, Albrecht is appalled by the idea of burning the Lutheran books; he nonetheless eventually agrees to it when his advisors point out that he may not disobey Rome.

painter to return to his art.[16] Of course, this is a wholly imaginary conversation - it is not the real Albrecht who is appearing to Mathis, but only Mathis's own psychological projection of him.[17] Nevertheless, we may read the scene as providing important indications of Mathis's relationship to his art, mediated through this projection.[18] The scene marks a turning point of the drama: while at the end of the previous scene Mathis was discontented both with art and with fighting, Albrecht persuades Mathis to return to painting, convincing him that combat is misguided when one is 'übermenschlich begabt' ('superhumanly talented') as Mathis is. Albrecht helps Mathis to find renewed joy in his art, and encourages him to believe once more in his ability to create. He achieves this conversion through reconciling what have been two opposing positions in Mathis up until this point - his wish to help his 'brothers', and the fact that he is an artist. Albrecht shows Mathis that he can accomplish his wish to help his fellows *through* his art; it is not a pointless solitary activity, producing only status symbols for the wealthy, but can be a way of reaching the people. By joining the people's fight, Mathis 'deprived' them, but if he returned to his art, he would become a part of them once more:

> Wenn du demütig dem Bruder dich bogst, ihm selbstlos dein Heiligstes zu bieten wagtest im eigensten Können, wirst du gebunden und frei, ein starker Baum im Mutterboden stehen. Stumm, groß, ein Teil des Volkes, Volk selbst.

[When you bow in humility before your brother, and selflessly risk offering all that is holy in your inner creativity, then you will stand, both bound and free, a strong tree in your native soil. Mute, great, a part of the people, the people itself.]

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[16] The two characters are designated in the score as St. Anthony and St. Paul. However, I shall use their normal names to refer to the characters in the following discussion, rather than their vision-names, as we tend to hear their voices as their real-life characters, and associate them accordingly.

[17] In the final scene of the opera, Mathis tells Albrecht that 'Ihr selbst mein Unrecht verstandet' ('only you understood my error'). Whether Mathis is referring to his vision scene, unaware that this was not the real Albrecht, or whether it refers to elsewhere in his life, or even that Albrecht in some way really was present in the vision scene, is open to interpretation.

[18] Weisstein comments in passing on these psychological projections ('Die letzte Häutung', 218). He also says that by the conclusion of the duet, the two singers are 'presumably transformed into their proper selves' (ibid., 224).

Art can therefore be a way for Mathis to serve his people, and be at one with them. The true place of art in society is indicated by the fact that Albrecht has now renounced wealth, as Mathis has, showing that the purpose of art is to serve the people, and that its position in Mainz society, where it functions as a symbol of wealth and privilege, is false.

Albrecht can be read at this point as a proxy for God, telling Mathis what God wishes him to do with his painting. Near the end of the scene, Mathis tells him that 'mich hat in dir Gott selbst berührt' ('God himself has touched me through you'), and by relinquishing his art, Albrecht says, Mathis was 'unfaithful and ungrateful' to God. God will be in Mathis's work, he continues, if he sacrifices what he creates to Him. Mathis can show his brothers a glimpse of a higher spiritual ideal with his works, which will be of more use to them than taking up arms. A reconciliation is therefore achieved between the worldly and the divine; this was shown earlier in the scene when Mathis has a vision of angels (in the so-called *Engelkonzert,* or 'angel-concert'), and the point is reinforced here through Albrecht. Mathis's deeds must be not only directed towards heaven, but must also be part of the world if they are to be worthwhile. The duet which the two men sing at the end of the Tableau states how Mathis's art should not exist in isolation: 'Dem Kreis, der uns geboren hat, können wir nicht entrinnen... Über uns zeigt sich ein weiterer Kreis: Die Kraft, die uns aufrecht erhält. Was wir auch beginnen: Sollen wir uns echt bewähren, muß unser Tun nach beiden Mitten weisen' ('We cannot escape the circle where we were born... Over us appears a wider circle: the power which holds us upright. If all that we begin is to be worthwhile, our deeds must be directed towards both centres').[19]

The relationship between the worldly and the divine is a theme which resurfaces at other points of the opera. It is often indicated that the only valid ruler of the peasants is God, rather than an earthly power; the peasants say in Tableau 4 that 'Wir wollen nur Christi eigen sein. Nicht Qual dulden von Rittern und Pfaffen'

[19] The same sentiment is expressed by Mathis and Schwalb at the end of Tableau 1: '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' ('Whatever deeds should blossom in you, they only flourish in God's sunlight if your absorbing roots reach deeply into the ground of your people').

('We will be Christ's alone, and not endure agony because of knights and priests').[20] The importance of God as the supreme source of power is hinted at near the beginning of the opera, as the monks' chorus sings to 'Rector potens, verax Deus, qui temperas rerum vices' ('Almighty ruler, true God, who governs the world's course'). Both of these groups, peasants and monks, are associated with Mathis. Rather than the divine being located above the world, as is the case in *Palestrina,* it is shown here that God will be able to move into the world through the mediation of Mathis's art. In this opera, God is involved with the world, in contrast to God in Pfitzner's opera where He helps the composer to remove himself from society.

As mentioned above, the predominant reading of Mathis's return to his art has been that, by doing so, he relinquishes any connection with the world and goes into a state of 'retreat'. This interpretation is based upon the last scene, in which Mathis has returned to his studio, in the company of only Ursula and Regina. I would contend that this reading of the final scenes is a misinterpretation, as such a view does not take into account the precise motivation of Mathis's decision to return to art as shown in Tableau 6. Writers who say that Mathis simply 'retreats' from the world focus only on the literal setting of the final Tableau. However, by taking up his painting again, Mathis is not retreating from society but seeking to engage with it, albeit in a different way. Albrecht says at the end of Tableau 6 that the painter will become 'a part of the *Volk,* the *Volk* itself' by serving his 'brothers' through his art; his art must be directed towards both heaven and earth. We may contrast Mathis's decision to return to painting with Palestrina's lack of engagement with the world. Mathis's return to art is a withdrawal from literal political involvement, i.e. fighting. However, he is still trying to serve ends which are 'narrowly' political, to use the definition I made in Chapter 1, because he is trying to do something for the ordinary people which will help their material existence. If their thoughts are turned towards God because of his art, this will have implications for how they lead their lives and order their society. Palestrina, in contrast, distances himself from the world both literally, in that he has nothing to

[20] They also say that 'Kein Herrscher gilt als der Kaiser' ('We recognise no ruler other than the Kaiser'), but this is probably legitimised by the fact that the Kaiser's position is God-given.

do with the Council, and in the 'narrow' sense, because he does not attempt to make any comment upon society and its organisation. Palestrina tries to be autonomous from society, whereas Mathis does not; Mathis is only manifesting his 'narrowly' political actions in a different, and more unconventional, way.[21]

The reconciliation of Mathis with his art is demonstrated musically in the scene between him and Albrecht as St. Anthony and St. Paul. The scene begins with Mathis trying to withstand Albrecht's endeavours to bring him back to art; when Albrecht reproaches him for leaving his calling, Mathis is resistant and defensive. Eventually, though, he is persuaded and the two men join together to praise heaven and earth. This course of events is constructed musically through the use of contrasting tonal centres. (The tonal plan of this scene is shown in Table 2.) The main tonal centre of the scene is D, and is associated with Albrecht. The scene begins in this centre, when Albrecht first appears to Mathis; he persistently returns to a D centre as he talks to the painter (in the first section of the scene also employing the same musical material), and the final peroration is similarly based on D. In contrast, Mathis's initial resistance to Albrecht's statements are organised around a continual pulling away from this central D. His first statement (from 'Die heiligen Männer') is in a D# centre, conflicting with the D in which Albrecht began. Mathis also contrasts with Albrecht's speech beginning at fig.84+7 ('In der Hut deine Arbeit'), which is principally on D, also moving to the pitch a minor third higher, F at the subsection beginning at fig.86+8, as well as passing through other centres. Mathis returns after this, singing in a centre of F# ('Ja, meinem Gott mich darzubieten'). Both his words and his music therefore contradict the D-F dyad set up by Albrecht. Although Albrecht later moves away from the D centre himself, this is in a section which is based around Db with hints of E, which themselves

[21] Even if Mathis's return to art were a 'retreat', the view of this as therefore being a removal from politics would itself be fallacious as a retreat must itself be a 'broadly' political act, as it is for Palestrina. A good example of such a viewpoint is demonstrated by Bokina: he never defines what he means by the term 'politics', but it is apparent that he defines it 'narrowly' rather than as a 'broad' set of beliefs, as shown in a comment such as 'the most striking political images occur in the fourth tableau'. Therefore Mathis's removal from the sphere of 'direct action' renders him 'apolitical' in Bokina's eyes ('Resignation, Retreat and Impotence', 179).

Table 2

form	figure	tonal centre	character	words
A	81-5	D	Albrecht	Mein Bruder, entreiße dich der höllentiefen Qual
B	82+7	D#	Mathis	Die heiligen Männer fand der Tod wie alle Menschen
A	85-6	D	Albrecht	In der Hut deiner Arbeit lebtest du
C	86+8	F	Albrecht	Dich berührte in Welschland fremder, süßer Kunst
A	89-1	D	Albrecht	Der Zeit Gebrechen mahnten dich
D	90-2	F#	Mathis	Ja, meinem Gott mich darzubieten
A	91-1	D	Albrecht	Dem Volke entzogst du dich
E	92+6	Db	Albrecht	Wenn du demütig dem Bruder dich bogst
F	98-3	D	both	Der Kreis, der uns geboren hat

together enclose D, in contrast to Mathis's D#-F# which moves away from it.[22] At the end of Albrecht's excursion into the area of Db, Mathis is finally convinced, and the music again endorses this shift in perspective. Albrecht's passage finishes resolutely in Db (at fig.97+1), and for the first time, Mathis does not attempt to shift the music into a different key, but remains in this Db tonality. The two men then both move together into D for the passage which ends the scene, both singing together, and moving between homophony and imitating one another in canon. Both this texture and the unanimous move to the same tonal area suggests Mathis's 'conversion' when Albrecht wins him over to his point of view, and signifies his reconciliation to the world of art.

By returning to his painting, Mathis creates art for the people, through which God can work. At the same time, though, he finds a degree of rapprochement with the middle-class society in which he now lives. He therefore joins together the two spheres which were previously separate: he is still painting for his people, but within the context of middle-class life, where, it seems, it is possible for him to work to his best ability. This reconciliation is again symbolised by the ribbon, which reappears in the last scene of the opera. As she dies, Regina gives the ribbon back to Ursula to give to Mathis; this suggests the way that Mathis eventually straddles the divide between the two societies. In the opera's final moments, as Mathis is packing away his belongings, the last thing he comes to is the ribbon, saying it is 'einen Hauch dessen... was ich liebte' ('a breath... of what I loved'). The opera thus ends with this symbol, which is now associated with both the ordinary people, through its association with Regina, and with the bourgeois world, because of its link with Ursula.

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[22] Both Mathis and Albrecht occasionally touch on tonal areas primarily associated with the other. Some of these seem insignificant, for instance, the section of Albrecht's speech in Db and E ('Wenn du demütig dem Bruder dich bogst') uses music passing through a D#, and later an F#, centre in two places (fig.93+2 and 95+3), but both of these are part of a downward progression, moving first diatonically and then chromatically, to Db in the first instance and to E in the second. Albrecht also passes through F# when referring to Mathis's art, for example at the words 'Meisterschaft' (fig.85+1), 'Kunst' (fig.89-2), and in the passage beginning 'Du bist zum Bilden übermenschlich begabt' (fig.90+3). Other excursions may be taken again as indicative of Mathis's resistance to Albrecht, or as Albrecht's attempts to persuade Mathis.

Hindemith and the Purpose of Art

Mathis der Maler may be seen as elucidating many of the concepts of Hindemith's own aesthetic theory; by examining these, we can see how the composer created a persona for himself in Mathis which manifests his ideas about artistry and its place in society. Hindemith's book of 1952, *A Composer's World,* is an important source for his aesthetics, and discusses many of his central beliefs. Music, he believes, has 'certain values' which are transcendent, unchangeable, and 'not subject to instability.' These values are not human-made, but 'are domiciled in the more esoteric realms of our musical nature. We have to turn to the immaterial, the spiritual aspects of music in order to find them.'[23] The 'veiled secrets of art dwell' in a 'region of visionary irrationality'. The composer cannot enter this region but can only 'be elected one of its messengers.'[24] The same metaphysical theory of music is also found in the composer's earlier composition manual of 1937, called *Unterweisung im Tonsatz,* which evokes the idea of the 'harmony of the spheres': 'we shall observe in the tiniest building unit of music the play of the same forces that rule the movements of the most distant nebulae. This world harmony... exists not only for the seeking and calculating knower of the stars; for the naive believer, too, it is a fact as real as it is inconceivable.'[25] According to Hindemith, the composer's task is not merely to entertain his audience. Rather, music should serve a moral purpose; it has the potential to transform the listener's soul. Music can be 'converted into moral power.... its sounds and forms... remain meaningless unless we include them in our own mental activity and use their fermenting quality to turn our soul towards everything noble, superhuman, and

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[23] Hindemith, *A Composer's World: Horizons and Limitations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952), 2.

[24] Ibid., 221. Also see Stephen 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), 111-112.

[25] Entitled in translation *The Craft of Musical Composition. Book 1: Theoretical Part,* trans. Arthur Mendel (Fourth Edition. New York: Associated Music Publishers, Inc. / London: Schott & Co., Ltd., 1945), 53-54. The 'harmony of the spheres' idea would later appear again in Hindemith's opera *Die Harmonie der Welt* of 1957.

ideal.'[26] The composer's objective should be to 'lift the consumer to a higher level', becoming his or her 'helper' or even 'spiritual leader'.[27]

Hindemith's belief in a realm of music beyond the worldly, as expressed in *A Composer's World,* draws on the Romantic heritage of musical aesthetics in which music is transcendent and mystical. He also draws upon the more historically distant theory of the 'harmony of the spheres', which although part of the aesthetic of an earlier era than Romanticism, places music in a parallel otherworldly realm. Such views of music as originating on a level above the worldly are similar to those found in Pfitzner and in *Palestrina,* as explored in Chapter 2. Hindemith's ideas are particularly reminiscent of the Schopenhauer quote used by Pfitzner for the preface of his score, which refers to the 'purely intellectual life of mankind' as 'like an ethereal adjunct,... [which] hovers above the bustle of the world, above the real life of the nations'. Both composers use angels to represent this idea of transcendence, in Hindemith's case probably consciously referring to the earlier opera. Other points of contact exist between Hindemith and Pfitzner: in his *A Composer's World,* the younger composer discusses *Einfälle* as providing inspiration for the artist, for example.[28] The attempt to link oneself to the past was a recurrent strategy amongst composers of the early twentieth century. Schoenberg, for instance, continually sought to clarify the links between his twelve-tone technique and his musical heritage, although at the same time acknowledging the importance of moving on. However, Hindemith's attempt to assert his relationship to his past is not only part of a general tendency amongst composers to situate themselves within a larger context, but carries with it distinct ideological implications, to which I shall return shortly.

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[26] Hindemith, *A Composer's World,* 5. Hindemith tries to combine this ideal, which he takes from a mediaeval treatise by St. Augustine, with that of Boethius, in which music 'impress[es] us with its ethic [sic] power' (ibid., 41). Thus, according to Augustine, music must be transformed into moral power by the listener, whereas for Boethius, music already inherently possesses this power. Hindemith argues that either may be at work when someone listens to music, depending on how they listen, although it is apparent from his text that he favours the Augustinian model.

[27] Ibid., 219.

[28] Hindemith differs from Pfitzner in that he believes that *Einfälle* are common to everyone, although the artist knows how to make use of them. He makes a further distinction between the artist and the non-artist by saying that the artist, especially of genius, has 'vision', a hazily defined term which in fact seems to serve the same purpose as *Einfälle* do for Pfitzner (ibid., 57 ff).

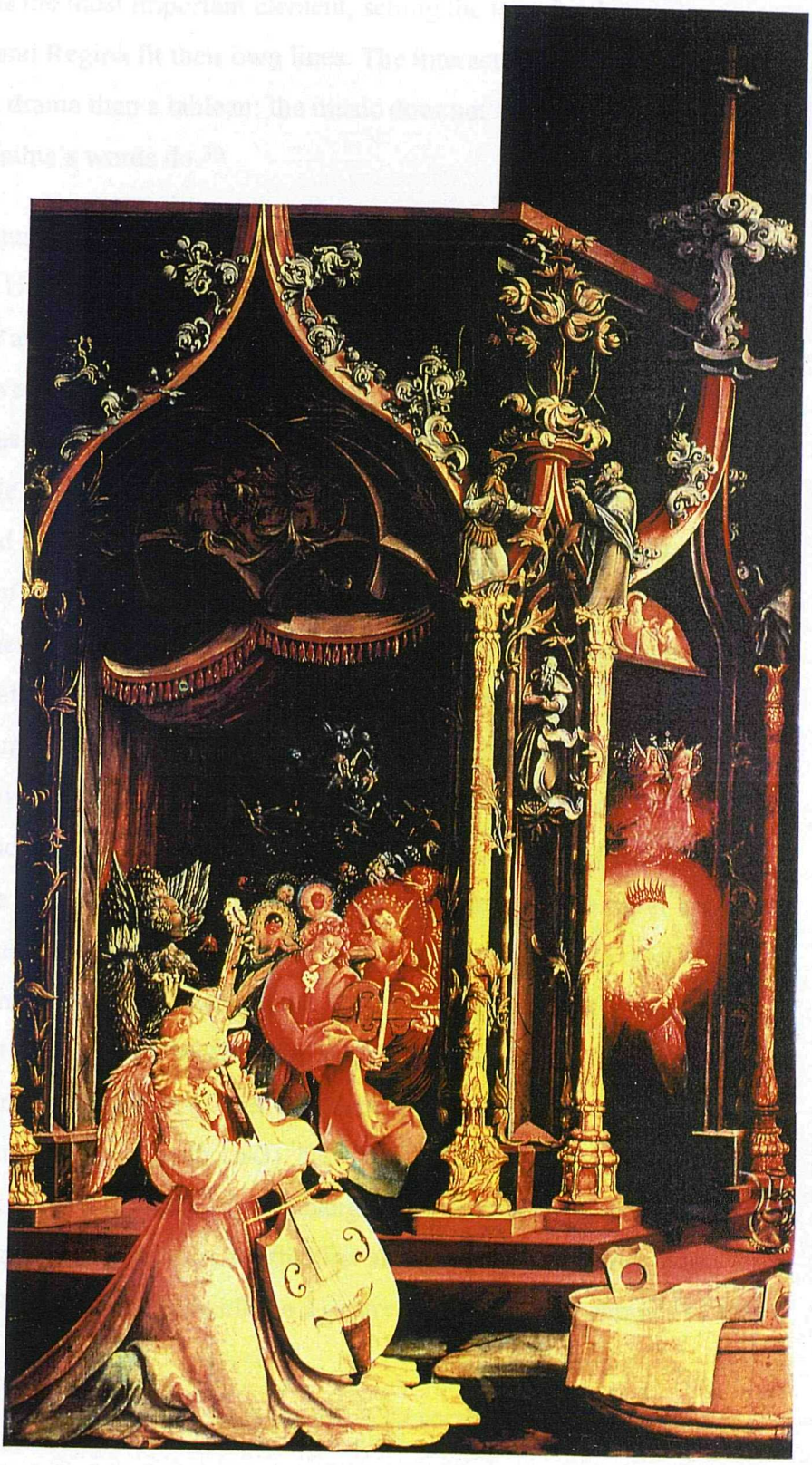
The views about the otherworldly provenance of music which Hindemith presents in *A Composer's World* can be compared to the *Engelkonzert*'s vision of angels. Here, Mathis tells Regina a fairy story, metaphorically painting a picture of angels. As his story continues, we begin to suspect that it is not just a story, but that, in a mystical vision, Mathis and Regina are really seeing the figures he describes. What is notable about the *Engelkonzert* is that Mathis, a painter, is so concerned with music and musicians. In an evocation of the 'harmony of the spheres', Mathis's vision suggests that heaven is filled with music, reminiscent of Hindemith's belief in a 'region of visionary irrationality', and seems not too distant from the angelic vision which Palestrina experiences. The voice of Hindemith speaks through the persona of Mathis, inhabiting the fictional artist's space on stage in order to expound his own philosophy. At the beginning of the *Engelkonzert,* Mathis says that music bears 'die Spur himmlischer Herkunft' ('the trace of heavenly origin'), and describes the angelic musicians as they play. (The painting on which the scene is based is shown in Fig.2, part of the Isenheim Altarpiece.) He then moves into a more metaphysical vein:

> im Zusammenklang viel bunter Lichterkreise wird aus kaum gehörtem Lied auf wunderbare Art sichtbares Formenleben... du weißt nicht: musizieren, die Gebete dichten, oder hörst du der Musikanten Beten. Ist so Musik Gebet geworden, hört lauschend zu Natur. Ein Rest des Schimmers solcher Sphären mög unser dunkles Tun verklären.

[from the song, which you can hardly hear, form becomes visible in the harmony of many coloured circles of light... you do not know, do those who pray make music, or do you hear the musicians' prayers? When music's turned to prayer, then nature hears intently. A vestige of the shimmer of these spheres could transfigure all our dark deeds.]

The portrayal of the angels as performing musicians creates a semantic affiliation between the text of the *Engelkonzert* and its music. The music of the section itself becomes the music of the angels; it is no longer merely accompanying background, but becomes, as it were, diegetic.[29] As Mathis describes the angels making music, we hear what they play, the accompanying orchestra of the opera sounding as the

[29] The fact that the angels are not real but imaginary does not make them conventionally 'diegetic'; they can nevertheless be understood as such as they are 'real' within the vision itself.



angels' instruments themselves. The orchestral voices here lead the musical argument, rather than being in a supporting, accompanimental role to the singers. The orchestra is the most important element, setting the tone for the scene, around which Mathis and Regina fit their own lines. The interaction of these musical voices is less a drama than a tableau: the music does not tell a story, but constructs a picture, as Mathis's words do.[30]

The picture which the *Engelkonzert* constructs of a place may be read as a metaphor for a Utopian society. If the orchestral voices are taken to be the angels' music, then the angels' harmonious music-making can be read, in a basic way, as symbolic of a well-functioning, peaceful society through the consonant sounding-together of notes. The structural organisation of the scene constructs the same idea on a more subtle level. Formally, the structure of the *Engelkonzert* comprises an 'exposition' and a 'development'; this has been discussed by David Neumeyer, in his *The Music of Paul Hindemith* on which I draw here.[31] The exposition comprises three distinct themes, and on one level, these themes do not tie up particularly closely with Mathis's words. Repetitions of a theme are not linked to words on precisely the same subject, and therefore they seem to have a primarily formal significance. However, on another level, we can extrapolate the three themes as musically characterising the three angels whom Mathis describes. (It is therefore relevant that the three themes only appear in the orchestra, and are never sung by Mathis or Regina.) The three themes and the words which appear in conjunction with them are shown in Ex.13 (italics indicate the appearances of the angels). The first angel is not described by Mathis until during the second theme, at the words 'Der eine geigt mit wundersam gesperrtem Arm' ('One plays the violin with a wonderful outstretched arm') (fig.16-3). Nevertheless, the first and second angels are separated from each other through a change in tonal area as the description of the second begins; the tonal centre for the first angel begins based on F#, and moves to C, before modulating briefly to a centre of A for the appearance of the

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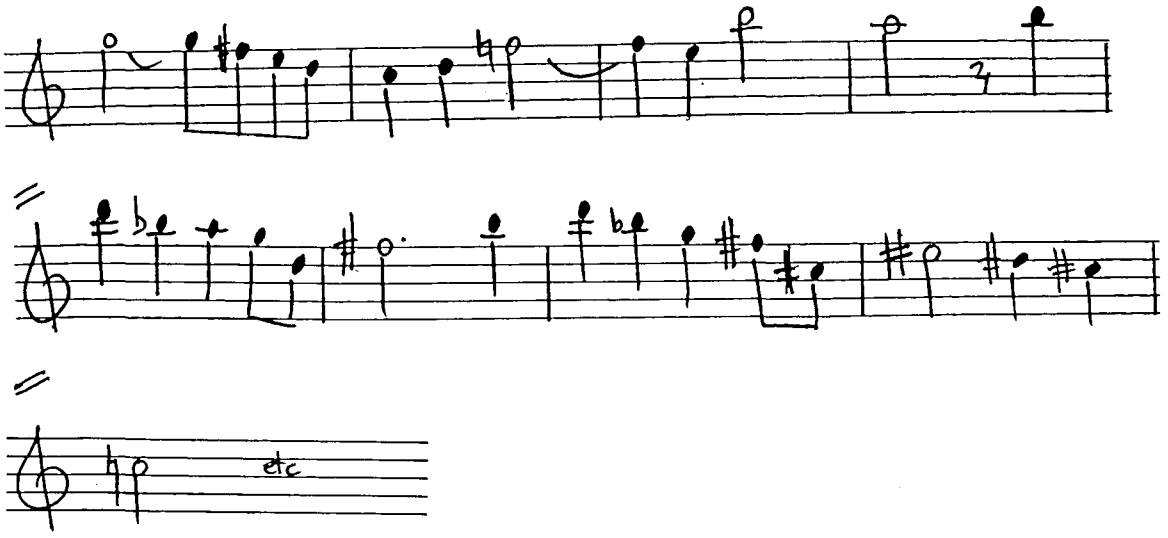
[30] The fact that the *Engelkonzert* is used as the prelude to the opera, with some alterations, illustrates how it may be divorced from the plot and reinforces its status as a tableau.

[31] Neumeyer's analysis is of the *Engelkonzert* movement of the *Mathis der Maler* Symphony, which is the same as the Prelude to the opera and essentially the same as the *Engelkonzert (The Music of Paul Hindemith,* 85 ff).

Ex.13 - Themes of *Engelkonzert*

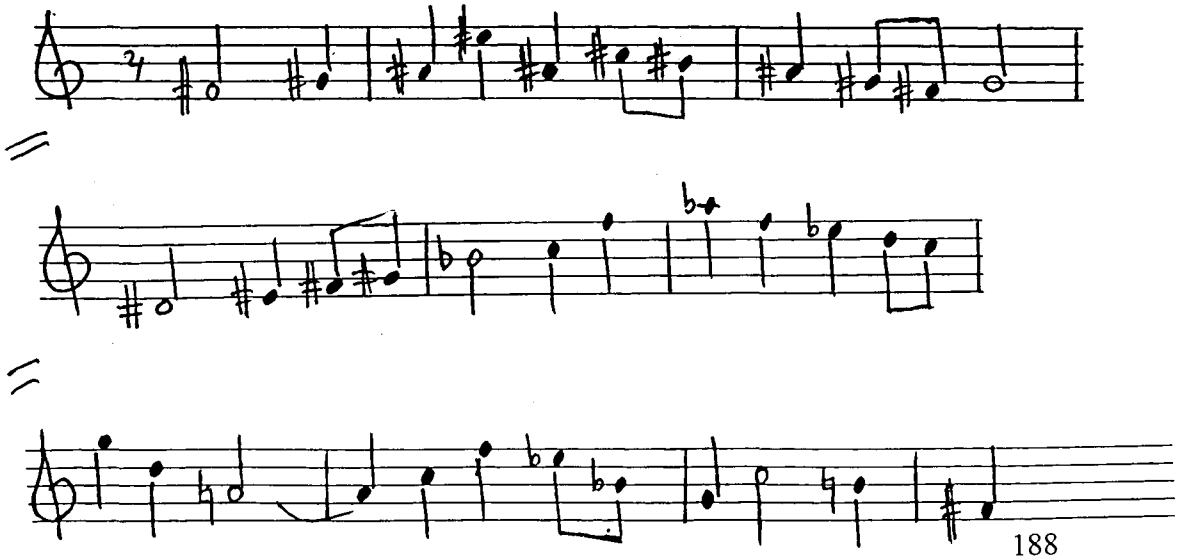
a) Exposition / Theme 1 (fig.11-8)



[Orchestral introduction]
[Mathis:] Alte Märchen woben uns fromme Bilder, die ein Widerscheinen des Höheren sind. Ihr Sinn ist dir fern, du kannst ihn nur erahnen. Und frömmer noch reden zu uns die Töne, wenn Musik, in Einfalt hier geboren, die Spur himmlischer Herkunft trägt.

[Old legends wove pious pictures, which reflect what is above us. Their meaning is remote, you can only guess at it. And sounds speak even more devoutly, for music, born here in simplicity, bears the trace of heavenly origin.]

b) Theme 2 (fig.15-4)

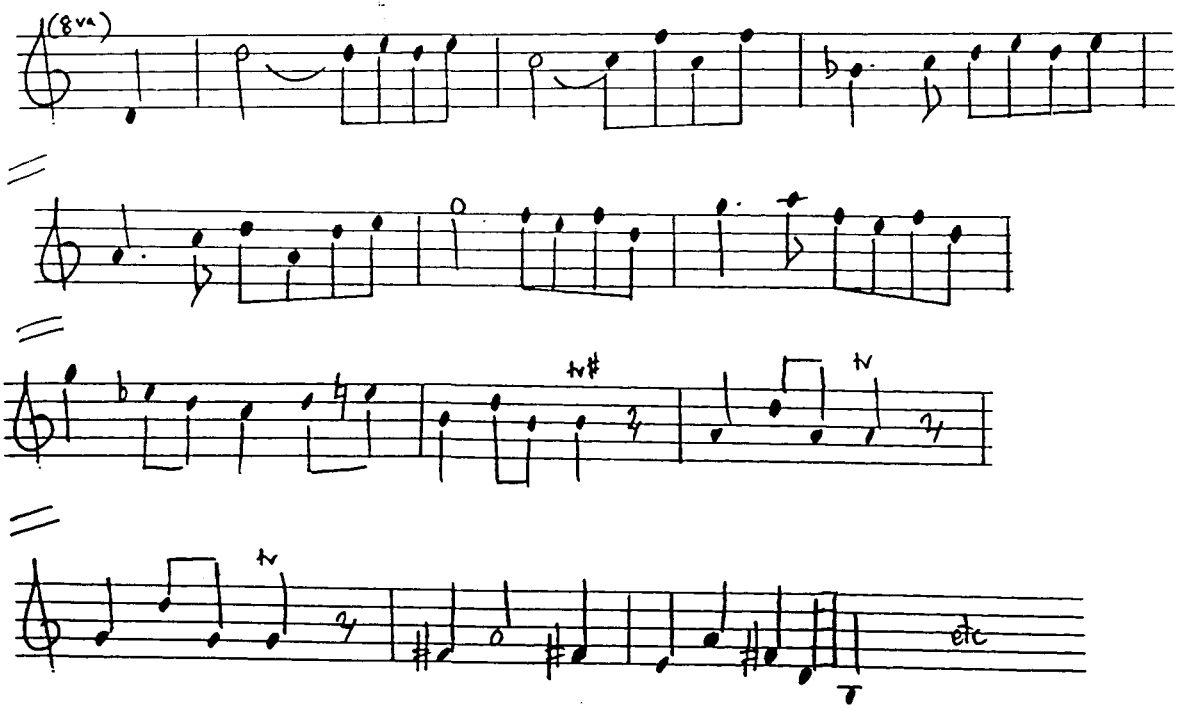


Ex.13 continued

Sieh, wie eine Schar von Engeln ewige Bahnen in irdischen Wegen abwandelt. Wie spürt man jeden versenkt in sein mildes Amt. *Der eine* geigt mit wundersam gesperrtem Arm, den Bogen wägt er zart, damit nicht eines wenigen Schattens Rauheit den linden Lauf trübe. *Ein andrer* streicht gehobnen Blicks aus Saiten seine Freude.

[See how a host of angels have changed their heavenly course for earthly paths. One feels how each of them is absorbed in his gentle task. One plays the fiddle with a wonderful outstretched arm, he poises the bow delicately, so that not the faintest shadow of roughness mars its gentle movement. Another strokes his joy from the strings with eyes raised upwards.]

c) Theme 3 (fig.18+1)



Verhaftet scheint *der dritte* dem fernen Geläute seiner Seele und achtet leicht des Spiels. Wie bereit er ist, zugleich zu hören und zu dienen.

[Regina:] Es sungen drei Engel ein süßen Gesang, der weit in den hohen Himmel erklang.

[The third is spellbound by the distant ringing of his soul and barely notices his playing. How ready he is to hear and to serve at once. / R: Three angels sang a sweet song that rang far off to heaven.]

second angel (at 'Ein andrer streicht gehobenen Blicks aus Saiten seine Freude' ('Another strokes his joy from the strings with his upwards glance')) (fig.17+2). (The music for the second angel later moves through F# again before modulating to a centre of Eb.) The third angel has both a separate tonal area (based on G) and a new theme, Theme 3 ('Verhaftet scheint der dritte dem fernen Geläute seiner Seele' ('The third seems spellbound by the distant ringing of his soul')) (fig.18+1). The development section (from fig.20-3) of the *Engelkonzert* replaces Theme 3 with the 'Es sungen drei Engeln' theme; these themes are then combined polyphonically, the 'Es sungen' theme interacting with Themes 1 and 2 (see ex.14). This takes place as Mathis stops describing the individual angels and instead describes them collectively, moving into the metaphysical description noted above as he says how their sounds interact with each other:

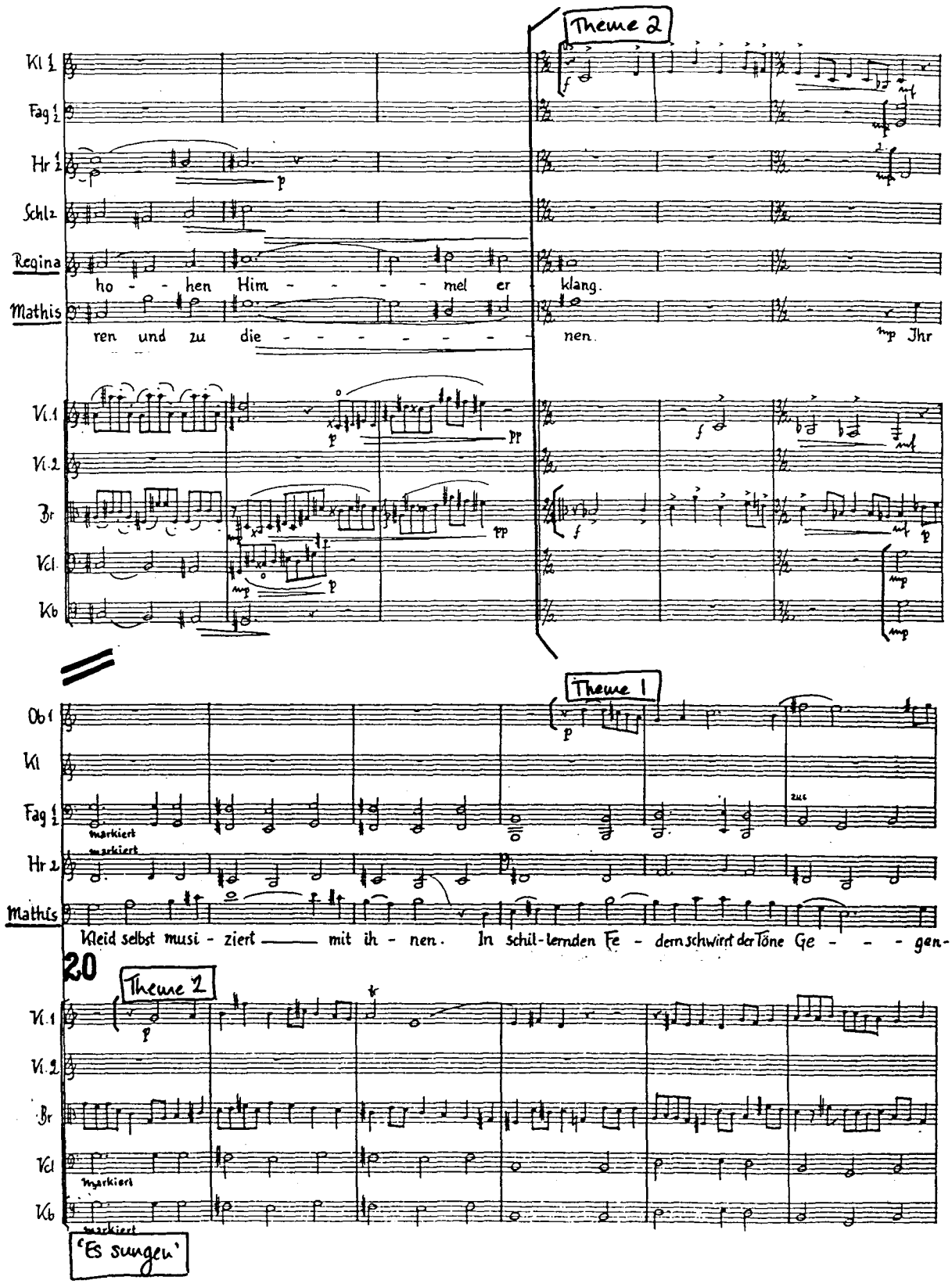
> Ihr Kleid selbst musiziert mit ihnen. In schillernden Federn schwirrt der Töne Gegenspiel. Ein leichter Panzer unirdischen Metalls erglüht, berührt vom Wogen des Klanges wie vom Beben bewegten Herzens. Und im Zusammenklang viel bunter Lichterkreise wird aus kaum gehörtem Lied auf wunderbare Art sichtbares Formenleben.

[Even their clothes make music with them. The interplay of sounds swirls in their shimmering feathers. Their light armour of unearthly metal glows, touched by the waves of sound as by the trembling of a suffering heart. And from the song, which you can hardly hear, form becomes visible in the harmony of many coloured circles of light.]

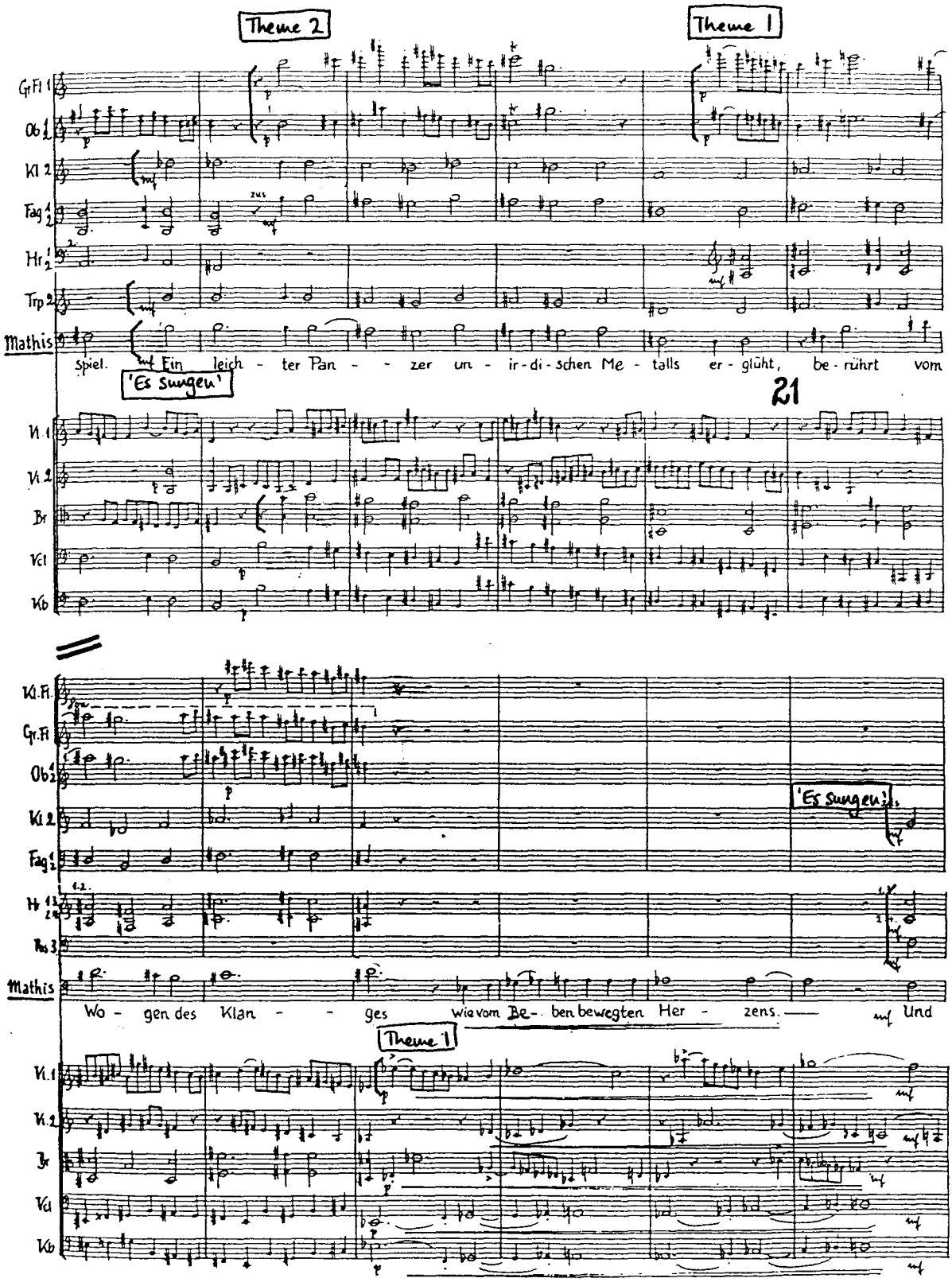
In this way, the polyphony of the *Engelkonzert* both functions as the music of the angels, and portrays their interaction as individuals within society.

Another important element of Hindemith's aesthetic which features prominently in *A Composer's World* is Hindemith's belief in the importance of listening to music. This follows logically from his idea of the 'moral power' of music: for music to have a moral effect, it must act on the listening individual. He explains that 'music... remains meaningless noise unless it touches a receiving mind. But the mere fact that it is heard is not enough: the receiving mind must be active in a certain way if a transmutation from a mere acoustical perception into a

Ex.14 - Beginning of development section of *Engelkonzert*



Ex.14 continued



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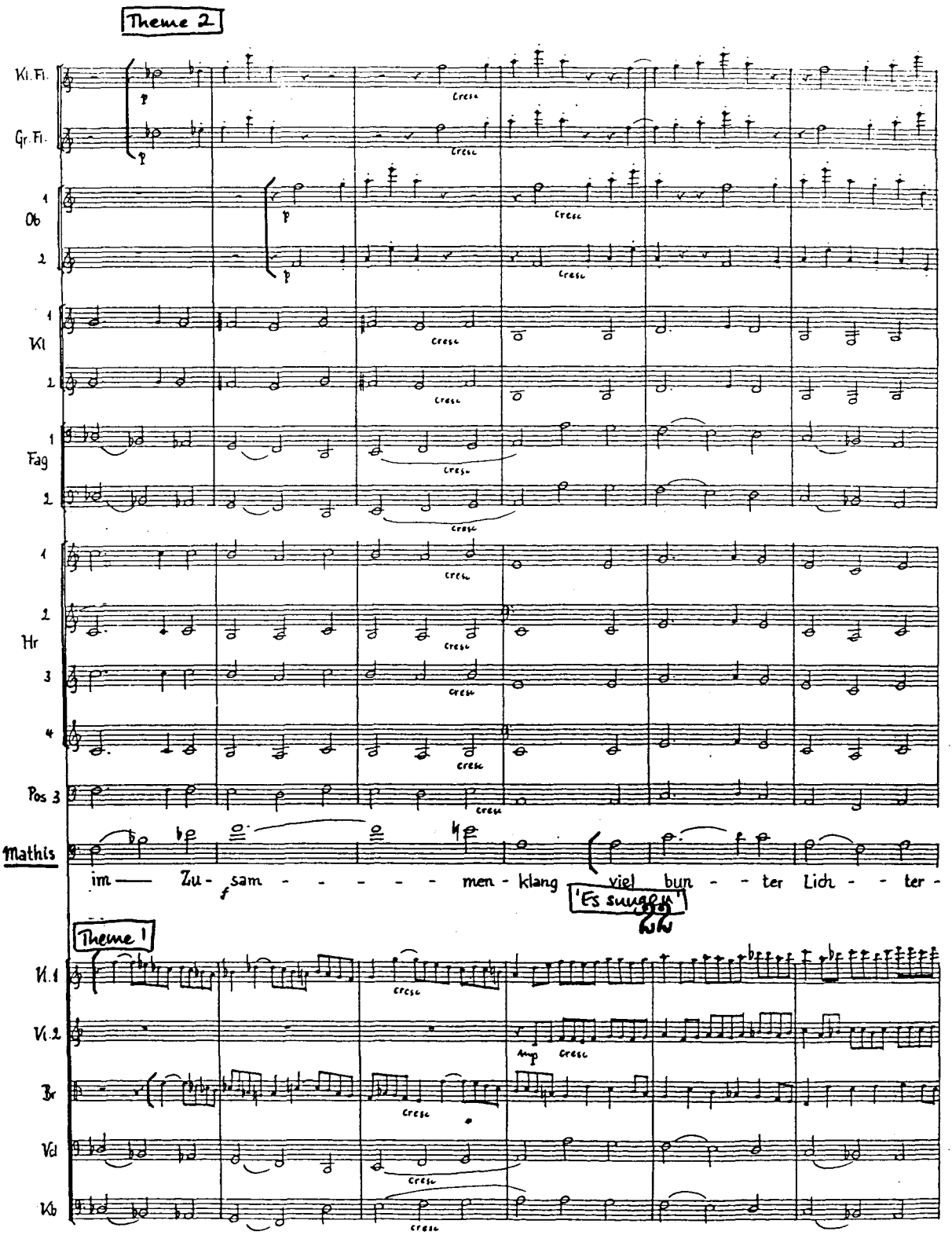

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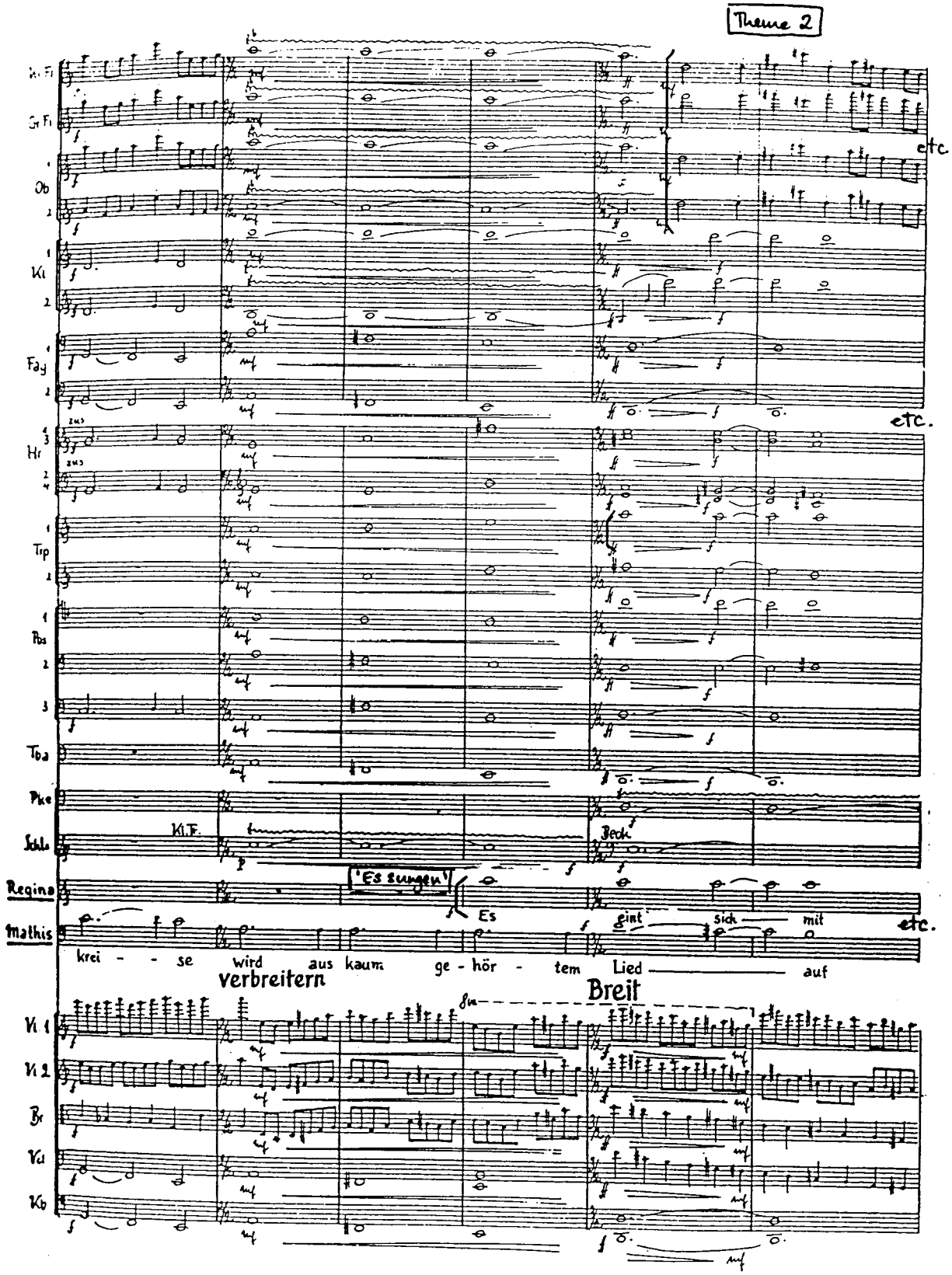

genuine musical experience is to be accomplished.'[32] The activity of listening is to be encouraged, no matter how modest it may appear. 'Whatever mental energy the listener invests in his attention, whatever his quality as a listener, the mere fact that he is attentive has to be recognized by the musician as a positive factor... As long as an effort is made at all, the listener has a moral right of existence.'[33] Composers who ignore the fact that music is a form of communication between composer and listener are criticised by Hindemith. Their attitude neglects 'one of the main reasons for artistic communication: the altruistic desire to present something of one's own to one's fellow men.'[34] Hindemith therefore combines his philosophy that the composer has mystical visions with a responsibility to communicate this deeper understanding. Here, Hindemith differs from Pfitzner's conception of music: while both have in common the idea of music being transcendent and above worldly concerns, Hindemith believes that this transcendent level should be put to use for the moral benefit of listeners. Pfitzner, in contrast, believes that the artist should remain on a transcendent level.

The emphasis which Hindemith placed on active listening led to his writing music for amateurs, his so-called *Gebrauchsmusik* or 'music for use'; the performer of *Gebrauchsmusik* is by necessity an active listener. Hindemith produced a great deal of *Gebrauchsmusik,* for instance, the *Sing- und Spielmusik für Liebhaber und Musikfreunde,* and the children's opera, *Wir bauen eine Stadt.* A banner at the first performance of the Brecht-Hindemith collaboration, *Lehrstück,* declared the aesthetic of *Gebrauchsmusik,* stating 'Musik machen ist besser als Musik hören' ('Making music is better than listening to it').[35] In his 1932 essay 'Forderungen an den Laien' ('Admonition to the Amateur'), Hindemith stated: 'The musical layman, who concerns himself earnestly with musical matters, is just as important a member of our musical life as the serious working musician.' Both

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[32] Hindemith, *A Composer's World,* 14.

[33] Ibid., 209.

[34] Ibid., 65.

[35] For discussion of *Gebrauchsmusik,* see Donald Mitchell, 'Hindemith and the History of a Term', *Musical Opinion,* 79 (Dec 1955), 163, Hinton, *The Idea of Gebrauchsmusik,* and '"Musik nach Maß": Zum Begriff der Gebrauchsmusik bei Paul Hindemith', *Musica* 39/2 (1985), 146-150, and

professional and amateur music-making 'are equally important for the development of music.'[36] With his belief in the importance of reaching one's audience, Hindemith took a step away from the aesthetics of Romanticism, in contrast to his belief in the timeless and eternal values of music.

This aspect of Hindemith's aesthetic theory, too, may be found in *Mathis der Maler.* The diegetic folk-songs and hymns within the opera function as *Gebrauchsmusik,* specifically Regina's two folk-songs, the monks' Gregorian chant in Tableau 1, and the Lutheran hymn tune in Tableau 3. All of these diegetic moments are comprised of music of indeterminate heritage, that is, it is music which does not have a specific composer and which belongs to a common repertoire to which everyone has access. It is, broadly speaking, 'folk' music.[37] Like Regina's folk-songs, the hymn tune 'Lobt Gott ihr frommen Christen' existed outside a liturgical discourse, according to Böhme, functioning as a political rallying-cry by early Lutherans; this therefore also renders it folk-like.[38] The plainchant is liturgical, but has the same clouded origins even if it is sung by a more closely defined group of people. Mathis himself never sings any of this music, and his relationship to this 'folk' music is no different from that of the other characters. For all of the characters, including Mathis, this music exists as a fact of life, without being elevated to the status of autonomous art music. It is, therefore, 'music for use'.

Mathis's belief that the task of the artist is to convey a heavenly vision to the people through art may be seen as a portrayal of Hindemith's belief in the importance of the composer's active involvement with ordinary music-making amongst amateurs. Mathis does not paint for selfish reasons, or to serve an elite who understand art, but represents his subjects as characters to whom ordinary viewers will be able to relate, such as peasants and cowgirls. In his wish to bring the 'spiritual power' of art to the ordinary people, Mathis may be seen as a persona

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Dieter Rexroth, 'Einige Voraussetzungen der "Gebrauchsmusik" bei Hindemith', *Musica* 34/6 (1980), 546-549.

[36] Hindemith, 'Forderungen an den Laien', *Auftakt* 12 (1932), 137.

[37] Stephen Hinton suggests that *Gebrauchsmusik* 'describes the condition of folk-music' *(The Idea of Gebrauchsmusik,* 35).

[38] Böhme, *Altdeutsches Liederbuch,* no. 394.

for the beliefs of Hindemith; just as Mathis wishes to offer his creativity to the people, Hindemith seeks to speak to the ordinary music listener, condemning those ivory-tower composers who are intransigent with regard to their audience.[39] Hindemith's belief in the value of *Gebrauchsmusik* as a means to combat the isolation of the contemporary composer from his or her audience makes an interpretation of *Mathis* in terms of retreat unlikely: if Mathis is interpreted as removing himself from society, then the opera advocates a separation of the artist which directly contradicts what Hindemith expressed elsewhere.

The position of Regina's song 'Es sungen drei Engeln' at the climaxes of the *Engelkonzert* adds a dimension to this scene which further illustrates Hindemith's aesthetic. The *Engelkonzert* is not only a vision of another reality, a Utopian society, but is linked to earth through the use of folk-song. 'Es sungen' is always sung by Regina in conjunction with Mathis's own text, rather than on its own, and corresponds with what Mathis is describing. For instance, as he finishes describing the three angels, Regina summarises by singing 'Es sungen drei Engeln ein süßen Gesang, der weit in den hohen Himmel erklang' ('Three angels sang a sweet song that rang far off to heaven'). With Mathis's last line, 'Ein Rest des Schimmers solcher Sphären mög unser dunkles Tun verklären' ('A vestige of the shimmer of these spheres could transfigure all our dark deeds'), Regina sings the similar, but more idealistic line, 'Die Welt ist erfüllt von göttlichem Schall, im Herzen der Menschen ein Widerhall' ('The world is full of the sound of God, which echoes in the hearts of humankind'). While Regina's line is in the present tense, the conditional tense of Mathis's line is more realistic and indicates that the vision of Regina's song is not yet realised in actuality. The *Engelkonzert* symbolically brings together art, the divine and the people: the angels indicate the spiritual but also descend to the level of the ordinary people thanks to the presence of Regina, and particularly because of her song about them, which links a religious text with the folk-song style of its music. Regina's name also suggests how she helps to bring together the worldly and the divine: 'Regina' is used liturgically to refer to Mary, the mother of Christ, who was human yet touched by God. The

[39] Hindemith, *A Composer's World,* 109.

alignment of the spiritual with the folk positions God on the side of the people; consequently, it is suggested, both they and Mathis's return to painting are 'right', and have God's blessing. The worldly and the heavenly are thus combined in the way Albrecht tells Mathis that they should be later in the Tableau. The combination of heaven and earth suggests how Mathis is close to both the angels and the real spirit of the people, as represented by Regina, and can thus use his art to convey a message to the world. It echoes Hindemith's own aesthetic tenets, in which a mystical vision can be communicated to ordinary listeners through music.

Germany in the 1930s

Hindemith's theories about art did not, of course, exist in an intellectual vacuum, but as part of the society of his time. He draws upon a familiar aesthetic tradition to formulate his theories about music and, in particular, when he refers to higher realms with which composers are in contact. In doing this, though, he positions himself as part of a cultural heritage which was also utilised in other ways, not least politically. The fact that this culture was also employed within political ideologies of the era, specifically that of National Socialism, means that we are able to draw correspondences between the two. These similarities exist not only on a theoretical level, though: when we turn to Hindemith's own political activities at this time, we realise that, while the composer may have been using familiar topoi in his formulation of the place of art in society, the fact of his doing so in 1930s Germany has implications that can be written off as accidental only with difficulty. As in previous chapters, it is first necessary to summarise the context within which Hindemith worked before returning to a discussion of his place within it.

The world economic crisis, precipitated by the Wall Street Crash of October 1929, put an end to the relatively prosperous years of the middle-twenties. The crisis hit Germany particularly hard, mainly due to the fact that American loans to the country, made following the first World War, were recalled. The crash resulted in mass unemployment, while the hyperinflation of 1922-23 was still fresh in the

memory.[40] Those who did not lose their jobs often had to accept salary cuts; as a result, a large number of people were directly affected. Detlev Peukert states that 'the depression, immiseration and loss of security penetrated virtually every area of German society'.[41] The poor economy was accompanied by an increasingly unstable political structure. Under the existing proportional representation system, the country had been governed by a series of ineffectual coalitions, which were perceived as having achieved little, and having done nothing to combat the harsh realities of everyday life. By the late twenties and early thirties, people had become increasingly disillusioned with the mainstream centre parties, and support for them waned. The result was that a 'political vacuum' was created, with all options apparently eroded except for the radical solutions of either National Socialism or Communism.[42] Increasing numbers of voters turned to parties on the extreme left or extreme right in their disillusionment with the familiar politicians: at least two-fifths of all voters voted for the NSDAP *(Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* or National Socialist German Workers' Party) or the Communist Party in 1930, and almost 52% in July 1932.[43] The Communists' vote came predominantly from the working class, while the Nazis appealed to the disillusioned middle classes. The political crisis confirmed what the conservatives had been saying all along: that the democratic experiment was doomed to failure, and would bring nothing but hardship, crime and vice.[44]

The series of ineffective coalitions reached a crisis point in 1930, when the President, Hindenburg, appointed Brüning of the Centre Party as Chancellor,

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[40] For details of the economic situation, see Peukert, *The Weimar Republic,* 249 ff and Carr, *A History of Germany,* 340 ff. For further discussion of the history of the late Weimar Republic, see Passant, *A Short History of Germany* and Simon Taylor, *Germany 1918-1933: Revolution, counter-revolution and the rise of Hitler* (London: Duckworth, 1983).

[41] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic,* 252.

[42] Ibid., 240 and 258.

[43] Carr, *A History of Germany,* 343 and Laffan, *The Burden of German History,* x. There are sometimes discrepancies amongst historians as to what percentage of the population voted for extremist parties in particular elections, but the figure appears to be somewhere around two-fifths to a half in these years. Laffan's statistics (although not Carr's) are ratified by the statistics given by Nico Passchier, which show the combined vote of the NSDAP and KPD in 1930 being 31.4%, 51.6% in July 1932, and 50% in November 1932 ('The Electoral Geography of the Nazi Landslide. The Need for Community Studies', in Stein Ugelvik Larsen et al, eds., *Who were the Fascists: Social Roots of European Fascism* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), 285).

[44] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic,* 257.

despite the fact that Brüning did not have a parliamentary majority behind him. Hindenburg sidestepped this technicality by agreeing with the new Chancellor that they would invoke Article 48 of the Weimar constitution, whereby power would be wielded by the President and Chancellor without the backing of the Reichstag. This moment is often seen as the end of the Weimar Republic, for presidential rule had become established and parliamentary democracy was no longer effectual.[45] In the course of the next three years, the chancellors (Brüning, later von Papen followed by von Schleicher) continued to force measures through parliament by decree, with next to no backing. Eventually, as the Nazis became an ever stronger force in the Reichstag, Hitler was persuaded to join a coalition cabinet, to which Hitler agreed provided he was given the chancellorship. Hindenburg agreed to this plan and appointed Hitler as Chancellor on 30th January 1933.[46]

The train of events which led up to Hitler assuming the chancellorship are more understandable when we remember the deeply engrained conservatism of many Germans which I explored in Chapter 2; the change of political attitude which characterised the ostensibly more liberal Weimar Republic was only temporary and partial. Rather than there being a simple switch from an earlier *Weltanschauung* in 1919, the conservative forces within the country were still very much present during the 1920s. Hindenburg, the president of the Weimar Republic from 1925 until his death in 1934, was one of the leading monarchists during the first World War. The fact that it was possible for such a conservative to be elected in the middle of the republican years indicates the strength of those forces in the country. Similarly, while right-wing politicians now had to be democratically elected, the power structures of the country (such as the army, the judiciary, the police, and leading industrialists) were still comprised of the same people as before, who were conservative, monarchist, and profoundly suspicious of, if not actively hostile to, the new democracy.[47] Wilfried van der Will writes that the

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[45] Ibid., 258 ff.

[46] Ibid., 269.

[47] Ibid., 222 ff. The prevailing ethos of the pre-War era which remained in place had practical consequences which favoured the right wing. For instance, various civil uprisings succeeded the founding of the Republic and were quashed by the military, but in disturbances by the left wing it was common for the perpetrators to be routinely assassinated or imprisoned (the murders of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg in 1919 being perhaps the most famous example). Conversely,

'long-standing traditions of authoritarianism in Germany, which through the administration of state power and education shaped the character of large sections of the population, culminated in the vote for National Socialism not because this was inevitable but because the economic, parliamentary, and ideological crisis became so acute that it allowed the most negative and anti-democratic characteristics of the nation to become dominant.'[48]

Aspects of National Socialist Ideology

The National Socialists harnessed the existing conservatism of many Germans with the discontent brought about by social conditions, and tied it to a particular, characteristic ideology which drew upon, and reformulated, pre-existent prejudices.[49] The National Socialists played on the conservative belief in the inherent superiority of the German people and the nostalgic wish to return to better times. They brought together the divergent groups which disliked the Republic 'under the banner of [their] demagogic, uncompromising struggle against "the system"'.[50] In particular, the NSDAP portrayed itself as against modernity, arguing that greater industrialisation and new-fangled concepts like capitalism and democracy had only led to misery. Paradoxically, the Nazis also managed to portray themselves as new, dynamic and forward-looking, an attractive attribute for any political party even today. They also fulfilled the demand for strong leadership which had been heard to ever greater degrees through the years of the Republic with its unstable coalitions and increasingly unpopular chancellors.

The rhetoric in which the Nazis dressed their politics drew on a number of significant themes. Foremost amongst these was the idea of the *Volk.* The word *Volk* has various meanings, most literally of 'people', but as George L. Mosse

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leaders of right-wing coups were frequently let off or were given only light sentences. In the first of two attempted right-wing *Putsche,* the 'Kapp Putsch' of 1920, only one person was sentenced and 412 amnestied; after his attempted *Putsch* of 1923, Hitler was sentenced to five years' imprisonment but was released after less than nine months.

[48] van der Will, 'Culture and the Organization of National Socialist Ideology', 104.

[49] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic,* 231.

[50] Ibid., 232.

explains, it is 'a much more comprehensive term than "people"', also encompassing concepts of 'nation' and 'race', and invoking the image of a mythical German past.[51] An appeal to the *Volk* was an appeal to the very roots of one's Germanness, drawing upon a deep-seated faith in the superiority of the German people, and often a concomitant scorn of the non-German.[52] *Volk* signified 'the union of a group of people with a transcendental "essence"'; this essence was connected to the individual's inner nature, representing 'the source of his creativity, his depth of feeling, his individuality, and his unity with other members of the *Volk'*.[53] A contemporary writer, and later Nazi Minister of Agriculture, R. Walther Darré stated that 'Once we understand by "people" *[Volk]* not the purely quantitative total of all individuals whom chance has brought together within the present borders of the Reich, but only those within this mass who profess loyalty to their German blood and to a duty to their Germanness *[Deutschtum],* we thereby create a concept of people which by its nature relates to what is meant by Germanic.'[54] The long-standing concept of the *Volk* bound together by blood and destiny, upon which the National Socialists drew, was accompanied in the late nineteenth century by the rise of 'biological' racism. This 'proved' the inherent superiority of certain races, and gave rise to the belief in the superiority of the Aryan race, thus ratifying the anti-Semitism already in existence.[55] Edgar Jung, a contemporary right-wing journalist, stated that 'biologically, the most powerful people in Europe are the Germans'.[56] Such beliefs were supported by a pre-existent mythical history, in which the German race was the founder of civilisation, and joined with a quasi-religious mysticism.[57]

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[51] George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964), 4.

[52] Instances of such rhetoric appear in Pfitzner's writings; see Chapter 2.

[53] Ibid.

[54] *Neuadel aus Blut und Boden* (1930), quoted in Roger Griffin, ed., *Fascism* (Oxford Readers Series. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 126.

[55] Berghahn, *Imperial Germany,* 102 ff & 218.

[56] Jung, 'Deutschland und die Konservative [sic] Revolution', in Kaes et al, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook,* 352.

[57] A.J. Nicholls, 'Germany', in S.J. Woolf, ed., *Fascism in Europe* (London & New York: Methuen, 1981), 71-72.

Völkisch thought deemed that all members of the *Volk* were a unity, interconnected by race and history, and therefore should all work together as a unified whole. This concern for the well-being of all of the *Volk* inherent in National Socialism explains why it deemed itself a 'socialist' party, albeit of a very particular kind. Like the socialism which is associated with the left of the political spectrum, National Socialism was concerned with the emancipation of the majority of the population from its purported enemies. In the case of the left, this was the liberation of the 'masses' from capitalism, while on the right, the *Volk* had to be freed from two enemies: capitalism and Judaism (the two being synonymous with one another in National Socialist understanding). The National Socialists called for the overthrow of the existing order of the capitalist elite, were hostile towards parliamentary democracy, and argued for the nationalisation of industries, the fair distribution of wealth, and the abolition of money not earned by labour. They also argued that the state should assist ordinary people by means of pensions, education, health provision and so on. These revolutionary demands were held in common with the Communists, but in contrast to the Communists' inclusive definition of the 'masses', the National Socialists' generosity was limited to 'those of German blood'.[58] The *völkisch* world-view propagated by the fascists was vague enough to be able to function as the expression of different, even conflicting, interests. The NSDAP was 'programmatically both anti-capitalist and anti-proletarian, conservative and revolutionary' and appealed to the middle classes which felt threatened by modern capitalism, and which could take refuge 'in a mixture of restorational and revolutionary daydreams which transcended the prosaic republican everyday existence.'[59] The Nazis combined a nostalgia for a pleasant rural past with vague, ill-defined policies which advocated a 'third way' between capitalism and communism, indulging the dreams of the patriotic industrialist while

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[58] See the 1920 programme of the *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (the forerunner of the NSDAP), in Kaes et al, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook,* 124-126. Hermand & Trommler say that 'the National Socialists triumphed... because they took the wind out of the sails of the Communists in an ingenious way, in that they also described themselves as socialists' *(Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik,* 106).

[59] Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure and Consequences of National Socialism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 187.

not immediately threatening his livelihood in the short term.[60] Conveniently, the National Socialist ideal did not require a significant economic reorganisation, as Communism did, merely a reinterpretation of the existing capitalist structure in language more suited to the new Germany. The workers would receive recognition, but this was only a promotion of status, and the structure of industrial society did not need to be radically changed.[61]

The 'socialist' elements of National Socialism means that the customary modern practice of thinking about political positions is unhelpful, with its image of a straight line, and the terminology of 'far-right' and 'far-left' which suggests an insurmountable distance between the two. A more useful model in discussion of German fascism of the early twentieth century, according to Hugh Ridley, is that of a horseshoe where 'the extremes are closest to each other and the rest of the parameter (the centre) is out of touch with the extremes.'[62] Stanislav Andreski suggests that the fascists could be seen as moderates, offering a half-way house between the defenders of privilege on the 'right', and the socialist levellers on the 'left'. Their moderation was expressed through an appeal to national solidarity, and their proposal 'to reconcile the classes and to attenuate the inequalities without going to extremes.'[63] Andreski writes that the 'seemingly obvious' idea 'that the fascists represent the extreme right and their most determined opponents the extreme left' is only a 'reification', as 'right' and 'left' are 'spatial metaphors, the precise meaning of which is almost never made clear.'[64] A further way of explaining the 'socialist' element of National Socialism is to posit a 'grey area' between the two apparent extremes of left and right, in which Nazism embodies the ideals of both the right (nationalism) and the left (socialism).

The socialist aspects of the party had been in evidence since the early history of the movement. For example, one of the founders of the party, Anton

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[60] See the 1932 NSDAP campaign leaflet, in Kaes et al, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook,* 142.

[61] Nicholls, 'Germany', 67.

[62] Ridley, 'The Culture of Weimar: Models of Decline', in Laffan, ed., *The Burden of German History,* 23.

[63] Andreski, 'Fascists as Moderates', in Larsen et al, eds., *Who were the Fascists,* 53.

[64] Ibid., 52.

Drexler, wrote in an early NSDAP leaflet from 1920, addressed to his 'Dear Colleagues', that 'I am a socialist like yourselves, and want manual workers to gain equality with all other creative groups... I still hope for a true and just form of socialism, the salvation of the working masses, and the freeing of creative mankind from the chains of exploitative capitalism'.[65] (He goes on to show that the exploitative capitalists are the Jews.) In 1927, a Nazi leaflet pronounced: 'Help us build a new Germany that will be NATIONALIST AND SOCIALIST. Nationalist because it is free and held in respect; Socialist because any German who works and creates will be guaranteed not just a slave's ration of bread, but an honourable life, decent earnings and the sanctity of his hard-earned property.'[66] Such an important Nazi as Goebbels embraced a socialist stance; in 1925 he wrote to a 'dear friend from the Left' that both his own party and that of his 'friend' are 'fighting honestly and resolutely for freedom and only for freedom'. The only difference between them is that the bolshevist wants this freedom for the whole world, the National Socialist just for his nation.[67] In 1930, Goebbels characterised the National Socialist movement as even more socialist than the Marxists:

> We are SOCIALISTS because we see in SOCIALISM the only possibility for maintaining our racial existence and through it the reconquest of our political freedom and the rebirth of the German state. SOCIALISM has its peculiar form first of all through its comradeship in arms with the forward-driving energy of a newly awakened nationalism. Without nationalism it is nothing, a phantom, a theory, a vision of air, a book. With it, it is everything, THE FUTURE, FREEDOM, FATHERLAND! It was a sin of the liberal bourgeoisie to overlook THE STATE-BUILDING POWER OF SOCIALISM. It was the sin of MARXISM to degrade SOCIALISM to a system of MONEY AND STOMACH. We are SOCIALISTS because for us THE SOCIAL QUESTION IS A MATTER OF NECESSITY AND JUSTICE, and even beyond that

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[65] Reprinted in Taylor, *Germany 1918-1933,* 63. See Bracher, *The German Dictatorship,* 73 ff, for more detail on the historical background to National Socialism and the socialist aspects of this early movement.

[66] Reprinted in Taylor, *Germany 1918-1933,* 84.

[67] 'Nationalsozialismus oder Bolschewismus?', in Kaes et al, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook,* 127-129. It is not specified in this edition whether the letter was to a real person or if it was fictional.

A MATTER FOR THE VERY EXISTENCE OF OUR PEOPLE.... DOWN WITH MARXISM: FOR TRUE SOCIALISM![68]

As time went by, the Nazis reviewed their stance towards socialism. Hitler in particular was less comfortable with the socialist dimension than were other members of his party, and did not wish to antagonise the industrialists on whose support and money he depended heavily. According to Hitler, anyone who was genuinely concerned about the people was a socialist; he allegedly exclaimed "Why need we trouble to socialize banks and factories? We socialize human beings."[69] Nevertheless, the concept continued to be used, as it served a useful propagandistic purpose and provided a rallying cry, even if the details of how precisely the Nazis would turn Germany into a socialist state were avoided.

For the National Socialists, 'socialism' meant above all a sense of a nationally and racially defined community, termed the *Volksgemeinschaft. Gemeinschaft,* or community, was contrasted with *Gesellschaft,* or society, a contrast which was already part of conservative ideology before fascism had gained ground.[70] *Gesellschaft* epitomised the modern, the materialistic and the 'un-German'; it suggested an urban and capitalistic way of life typical of the corrupt modern world. The idea of *Gemeinschaft,* in contrast, comprised everything that was denied in modern, *gesellschaftlich* life: Rexroth writes that it consisted of 'a warm, close bond between people, a living and strong feeling of belonging and identification with one's fellow humans.'[71] The ideological split between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* betrayed a hostile attitude towards the alienating modernity of *Gesellschaft* and an embracing of the rural, 'rooted' community of *Gemeinschaft.*[72] National Socialism contrasted its vision of the *Volksgemeinschaft*

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[68] 'Warum sind wir Judengegner?', in ibid., 137-138.

[69] Bracher, *The German Dictatorship,* 231; Nicholls, 'Germany', 67.

[70] The dualism *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft* was used by Ferdinand Tönnies in 1887, in his book of that name. See Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1968), 80, and Otto Friedrich, *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s* (London: Michael Joseph, 1974), 228.

[71] Rexroth, 'Einige Voraussetzungen', 547.

[72] Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology,* 6. The closeness of ideological elements in the left and right wings in this era, and the 'grey area' between them, is demonstrated by the fact that the left-leaning Paul Bekker used the term *gemeinschaftbildende Kraft,* although synonymously with *gesellschaftbildende Kraft* (see Chapter 3).

with the ideal of society found in communism; in their view, the problem with Bolshevism was that it set the strata of society against each other. In contrast, National Socialist thought deemed that 'man can live only as a member of a nation, and therefore the nation transcends group interests. It is strong only as a cohesive unit, and therefore true "socialism" welds the classes together rather than dividing them'.[73] The contrast between 'false', divisive socialism and the 'true' socialism of the *Volksgemeinschaft* was continually played upon by the Nazis, who stressed the negative aspects of left-wing socialism, and contrasted them with the more noble aims of their own party. 'Socialism?', asked one party leaflet, 'That is the terrifying word that sends shivers down the back of every peaceful citizen.... *Socialism,* that means to him *class-struggle'.* In reality, according to the NSDAP, *'Socialism* means nothing other than *community: A people's community....* [Man] should not be valued according to his money, rather according to his accomplishments for the community.... THE COMMON GOOD BEFORE INDIVIDUAL GREED. THAT IS SOCIALISM.'[74]

The vision of the *Volksgemeinschaft,* situated in an idyllic rural past, was a form of Utopianism, like Americanism. Amidst the tribulations of the late Weimar Republic, a sizeable portion of the German public sought to redefine themselves through an appeal to their 'roots'. Americanism was mostly limited to the big cities, and could be overtaken by the rise of Nazism because the latter tapped into the inherent beliefs of those people opposed to the Republic. The inhabitants of many areas of the country, especially outside the cities, tended to be more conservative; they were not impressed by Americanism, and did not espouse the ideal of society which it held up. The conservatives of Pfitzner's generation, along with a younger generation brought up on nationalist ideals and still smarting from the defeat of their country in the war and the imposition of a 'foreign' democracy, saw no need for a new, 'Americanised' society. They were happy with the old one, whether they saw this as the late Wilhelmine years which they had experienced at first hand, or the more distant Utopia located in a rural Germanic past advocated by the Nazis.

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[73] Bracher, *The German Dictatorship,* 316.
[74] Reprinted in Taylor, *Germany 1918-1933,* 90 (n.d.).

Mathis der Maler and its Political Context

Hindemith's aesthetic and political beliefs present the same complex and paradoxical problems as are present in National Socialist ideology. His relationship to 'socialism' is part of this ambiguity, given his context. Hindemith had contact with both the left-wing and right-wing forms of socialism, but the latter have been largely overlooked by writers on the composer. Nor have any writers looked at the ambiguity of National Socialism in the context of Hindemith's work, but have taken it for granted that fascism was antipathetic to socialism. Because Hindemith can be seen to have had sympathy for socialist ideals, and because the Nazis were right wing, it is presumed that Hindemith must have been against the Nazis. However, as we have seen, it is not the case that Nazism and socialism are mutually and straightforwardly contradictory. This means that Hindemith's relationship to both may be further interrogated in order to assess the composer's standing within his society, and how he wished to present his ideas in his opera.

Most of the existing critiques of *Mathis der Maler* see the opera as autobiographical, equating the artist Mathis with Hindemith in the way both allegedly retreat from the world around them. Hindemith never gave any explicit indication whether or not he regarded Mathis as an autobiographical persona. The nearest clue we have about the composer's opinion is a letter from Hindemith's publisher and friend Willy Strecker writing to his brother Ludwig in August 1933. Strecker writes that 'The figure of Grünewald, who went his own way in spite of being misunderstood, and resisted the foreign influence of the Italian Renaissance, is of course a reflection of [Hindemith] himself, and that is why it interests him so tremendously.' This may suggest that this is Hindemith's own view, but this is contradicted later on in the letter: 'it was so characteristic of Hindemith the way he constantly - and almost shyly - tried to conceal the human connections with his own personality, dragging in irrelevant historical happenings to hide the essential point.'[75] The autobiographical interpretation here would therefore seem to be Strecker's rather than Hindemith's; the composer was resisting any connection being made between himself and Mathis. Later writers follow Strecker's lead:

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[75] Quoted in Skelton, *Paul Hindemith,* 112-113.

Skelton says that 'Hindemith... saw the predicament [of Mathis] as similar to his own', Hans Redlich says it is 'his greatest, confessionally conceived opera', Giselher Schubert says it has 'autobiographical features', and Andres Briner says that Mathis is a version of Hindemith himself.[76] Kemp points to the fact that the opera is set in the area from which Hindemith came (around Mainz), and says that 'by writing his own text he emphasized its autobiographical aspects. It is indeed a personal testament.'[77] Breimann attempts to explore the question of 'how far Hindemith's understanding of himself as an artist *(Künstlerverständnis)* is reflected' in *Mathis,* and concludes that the opera is 'very closely linked to Paul Hindemith's own artistic life both through the circumstances of its formation in fascist Germany and through its content'.[78]

Whenever *Mathis der Maler* is taken to be an autobiographical portrayal of Hindemith's own life, the composer is deemed to have gone into what is often called 'inner emigration' in the face of the Nazi seizure of power, at the same time as the final scenes of *Mathis* are read as 'retreat'. The term 'inner emigration' is frequently found in discussions of public figures who remained in Germany after 1933. Zenck writes that the term developed within literary history after the war as referring to a position 'which developed from political distance from the Hitler state, implied a claim of moral satisfactoriness, and understood the retreat inwards as an expression and consequence of opposition'.[79] Figures who stayed in Germany in a state of 'inner emigration' were, by this argument, opposed to the regime, and resisted it on a spiritual level if not on a practical one. The term functions as a way of making sense of a difficult situation, namely the reasons behind why a figure like Hindemith remained under the Nazi regime. Whether the term is valid or not varies depending on the individual discussed; for instance, it seems more appropriate in the case of the composer Karl Amadeus Hartmann than in Hindemith's; Hartmann remained in Germany throughout the war, but removed

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[76] Skelton, 'One Person's Response', in the programme book for the Royal Opera House production, 11; Hans F. Redlich, 'Paul Hindemith: a Re-assessment', *Music Review* 25 (1964), 242; Schubert, *Paul Hindemith,* 84; Andres Briner, *Paul Hindemith* (Mainz: Schott, 1971) 128 & 270.

[77] Kemp, *Hindemith,* 30.

[78] Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler',* 15 & 183. Also see ibid., 171.

[79] Zenck, 'Zwischen Boykott und Anpassung', 111. Zenck lists literature dealing with the 'inner emigration' idea with reference to writers.

himself from musical life and withdrew his works from performance in the country.[80] Interpretations which are based around 'inner emigration' often do not consider the complexity of reasons around why someone may have stayed in Germany, and neglect the fact that our present-day understanding of Nazism is not that of the German citizens of the 1930s, but has been coloured by subsequent events. Such Germans would have had a different perspective on Nazism; its negative characteristics apparent at that time operated within a larger cultural context. For instance, its anti-Semitism was part of a background of well-engrained anti-Semitism which may not have seemed as extreme in the mid-1930s as it does to us now, in the light of the Holocaust.

In Hindemith's case, it is rarely countenanced that the composer could have been less than fully oppositional to the Nazis. Breimann, for example, attempts to demonstrate Hindemith's 'inner emigration', with which he supposedly wished to preserve 'the honesty and integrity of his conception of art... He insisted on the unrestricted sovereignty of artistic creation and the division of aesthetics from politics, and consequently refused as an artist to become politically active.'[81] She holds that 'from the beginning, he made no compromises' with his political rulers, something which is plainly contradicted by the events I shall spell out below.[82] Those writers who maintain Hindemith's 'inner emigration' contend that he found this necessary because he was, at heart, left wing. Skelton is vociferous in his denial of any possible affiliation between Hindemith and the National Socialists, instead insisting on the composer's affiliations with the left. For instance, he writes that Hindemith's teaching at an evening class in a workers' district of Berlin demonstrates the composer's 'lean[ing] towards social democracy'.[83] Schubert says that Hindemith is politically 'classified as "left-bourgeois"', but neglects to say who classifies him.[84] Kemp likewise denies that Hindemith was anything other than politically reputable, saying that Hindemith 'could scarcely believe' that

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[80] Guy Rickards, *Hindemith, Hartmann and Henze* (20th Century Composers Series. London: Phaidon Press, 1995), 90; Kater, *The Twisted Muse,* 233 ff.
[81] Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler',* 15. Also see Briner, *Paul Hindemith,* 101 & 108.
[82] Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler',* 53.
[83] Skelton, *Paul Hindemith,* 101.
[84] Schubert, *Paul Hindemith,* 49.

Germany would remain 'hypnotized' by the Nazis for long.[85] Hindemith does, indeed, often express views which outwardly seem consistent with a conventionally socialist position, such as in *A Composer's World* where he states that 'one of the main reasons for artistic communication [is] the altruistic desire to present something of one's own to one's fellow men.'[86] He displays an idealistic view of community music making, saying that an amateur music group is a 'great fraternity' whose purpose is 'to inspire one another and unite in building up a creation that is greater than one individual's deeds.'[87] Indeed, he goes so far as to advocate a peace movement through collective music making, in which politicians would enjoy the pleasures of playing together, because 'people who make music together cannot be enemies, at least not while the music lasts.'[88] One of the main substantiations for Hindemith's left-wing tendencies is his collaborations in 1929 with Bertolt Brecht on the works *Lehrstück* and *Der Lindberghflug.*[89] However, such a circumstance must be balanced against the fact that not only did Brecht and Hindemith part company acrimoniously a few years later, but the composer worked with the writer Gottfried Benn in 1931 on *Das Unaufhörliche;* Benn was later involved with the Nazis.[90] Such an apparent swing may be explained by the 'grey area' model; in their wishes to bring art to the people, Hindemith, Brecht and Benn all resided within the same ideological field, their differences arising in who they wished the recipients of their efforts to be.

A preconception about the work which stresses 'retreat' and 'inner emigration' can lead to an argument which ignores or misinterprets salient facts, both within the opera itself and in its immediate context. Breimann is a typical example. She restricts her argument to how Hindemith himself allegedly withdrew from the world; however, she does not consider aspects of either his political or his

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[85] Kemp, *Hindemith,* 28.
[86] Hindemith, *A Composer's World,* 65.
[87] Ibid., 217.
[88] Ibid., 218.
[89] Kemp, *Hindemith,* 22 & 24.
[90] Hindemith and Benn later considered another collaboration, although this never materialised. In his letters to the composer, Benn suggests that a possible topic might be 'die W.R.' (Gottfried Benn, *Briefwechsel mit Paul Hindemith,* ed. Ann Clark Fehn (Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag, 1978), 44 & 52 (August-September 1931). According to Fehn's 'Afterword', Benn used this abbreviation to refer to 'die weiße Rasse' ('the white race') (ibid., 197).

aesthetic views which could contradict her initial assumption that the work demonstrates a retreat. Indeed, she takes issue with critics such as Zenck, who suggest that Hindemith was less than completely politically reputable: 'The numerous insinuations and prejudices which have been brought against him by certain musicologists even today are without foundation... they may finally be recognised for what they are: unfactual *(unsachlich),* discriminatory, and simply false.'[91] Breimann's own interpretation of the opera is in many ways incorrect; for instance, she says that Hindemith believed 'that the artist, despite his basic sovereignty, is obliged towards society', and mentions Hindemith's concerns in the 1920s with music for amateurs. Yet she continues that this position 'is not given any consideration in the final version of the opera libretto whatsoever.'[92] She says that Mathis does not try to seek contact with the *Volk* through art, something plainly contradicted by the text at the close of Tableau 6. The consistency with which Mathis's 'retreat' is held, by Breimann and others, to represent Hindemith's 'inner emigration' is something of a chicken-and-egg situation: it is impossible to tell whether the misreading of the opera has itself influenced the view taken of Hindemith's political position, or whether a preconception about Hindemith's politics has led to the final scenes of the opera being misread.

Only a few writers disagree with the prevailing attempt at the purification of Hindemith's image, instead questioning his alleged anti-fascism and 'inner emigration'. Redlich, for instance, points out the irony that it was *Mathis der Maler* which caused trouble for Hindemith with the Nazis, as the work 'could have been hailed by the Nazis as the prototype of a teutonic work of art'.[93] Bokina is also

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[91] Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler',* 184. A similar attack on the same writers can be found in the essay by Friederike Becker, itself entitled 'Of the Artist's Renunciation', although she does little to present a convincing alternative. After some conventional manuscript studies of the opera, she discusses principally the reception of Grünewald in the 1920s by visual artists such as Dix and Beckmann, the influence of Hölderlin on Hindemith, and Hindemith's difficulties with the Nazis, none of which is particularly persuasive in her attempt to prove the innocence of the composer in the face of Nazism ('Des Künstlers Entsagung. Die "Dichtung" *Mathis der Maler,* ihre Entstehungsgeschichte und einige kritische Anmerkungen zur Legendenbildung um Paul Hindemiths Libretto', in Giselher Schubert, ed., *Biographische Konstellation und künstlerisches Handeln* (Frankfurter Studien. Veröffentlichungen des Paul-Hindemith-Instituts Frankfurt/Main, Bd. 6. Mainz: Schott, 1997), 128-157).

[92] Breimann, 172.

[93] Redlich, 'Paul Hindemith: a Re-assessment', 245. Strecker wrote to his brother in August 1933 of *Mathis* that it 'can become *the* German opera' (quoted in Skelton, *Paul Hindemith,* 112).

guarded about Hindemith's position towards the Nazis, saying that 'the choice of Grünewald as an opera subject may have also been an instance where opportunism meets principle. Hindemith hoped for a work that would be both popular and acceptable to the Nazi regime.'[94] Bokina points to the conservative elements of Hindemith's style, such as his neo-classicism dating from the 1920s, and says that his difficulties with the National Socialists arose from the fact that he was the 'wrong kind of reactionary'.[95] Zenck questions Hindemith's supposed 'inner emigration' in detail, looking closely at the facts of his involvement with the Third Reich. She also understands Hindemith's motives as opportunism: 'he definitely wanted a public and to find recognition as a German composer. To this end he was ready to let himself be used for the benefit of the disliked state, until he learnt to realise that making pacts weighed on his conscience'.[96] Zenck interrogates the validity of Hindemith's 'inner emigration', but at the same time tenaciously retains the idea; as a result, she cuts the possible autobiographical link between Mathis and Hindemith, maintaining that Mathis does not retreat and saying therefore that 'Mathis's return to his art cannot be seriously understood as the inner emigration of Hindemith.'[97]

I shall return to the particulars of Hindemith's activities in the Third Reich below. We may first examine in which ways *Mathis der Maler* itself partakes of a contemporary ideological discourse. The majority of writers do little to demonstrate how exactly the opera reflects its environment beyond asserting the concurrence between Hindemith and his fictional creation. However, a few of the interpretations which see Mathis's 'retreat' as portraying Hindemith's 'inner emigration' do consider the work's political context: they hold that it is in opposition to contemporary society, and particularly its politics. Ashley, for instance, sees the opera as 'an act of self-definition in the face of Nazism' and 'a lament for the collapse of the Weimar Republic and a fierce demand for the right of

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[94] Bokina, 'Resignation, Retreat and Impotence', 172.

[95] Ibid., 182.

[96] Zenck, 'Zwischen Boykott und Anpassung', 117.

[97] Ibid., 127. Michael Kater also comments that Mathis 'was not a symbol of "inner emigration"... as some Hindemith admirers have insisted', and notes that 'elements of the story, such as the Peasant's War, accorded with the Nazi ideal of "struggle for the Reich"' *(The Twisted Muse,* 180).

the artist to his own individual conscience'.[98] He contends that Mathis, standing in for Hindemith, is reacting against a Nazi world view, for example saying that the solitary Mathis in the final scene is 'opposed to the massive crowd scenes that dramatize the immersion of the individual will in the collective which the Nazis favoured'.[99] Mathis's final isolation is therefore an 'act of defiance against an ideology and an aesthetic which could only perceive the world in terms of "we" and "them"'.[100] Ashley's interpretation is often unclear. For instance, he says that the slaughter of the peasants in Tableau 4 is a portrayal of 'the Republic's bitter betrayal of itself in its failure to sustain democracy', but he does not point out the inherent conflict between the peasants and their rulers.[101] Kemp also says that the libretto of *Mathis* 'point[s] to an indictment of Nazi doctrine' through 'numerous overt references', although he cites only one, the book-burning scene of Tableau 3.[102]

Bokina, in his 'Resignation, Retreat and Impotence', writes that 'the references to radical mass movements and political book burnings obviously mark *Mathis* as a product of its era', and says that the opera has a 'negative attitude towards revolutionary movements'.[103] However, it is not obvious whether the 'radical mass movements' he names are the peasants or the Lutherans, either being possible. In addition, each of these groups opposes the book-burners, whereas Bokina aligns them, taking the 'radical mass movements and political book burnings' as signifying Nazism.[104] Such a reading neglects the complexity of the

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[98] Ashley, 'An Act of Necessity', 26 & 23.

[99] Ibid., 26.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid., 25.

[102] Kemp, *Hindemith,* 28 & 30. Meyer also holds that the book-burning scene is an anti-Nazi comment *(The Politics of Music in the Third Reich,* 132). However, it may be suggested that the book-burning scene, the most overt reference to contemporary politics within the opera, is strangely equivocal. It seems inconceivable that anyone seeing Hindemith's opera would have failed to notice the reference to the Nazi's burning of 'un-German' books, which took place in Berlin in May 1933. However, Hindemith's presentation of the Catholics' burning of Protestant literature is not much more than background colour within the opera, albeit with condemnation of the event by the Lutherans which could, perhaps, be interpreted as Hindemith's own comment on the book-burning in Berlin. In general, though, it has little relevance to either the main plot of the opera, Mathis's artistic dilemma, or the subsidiary plot of Albrecht's financial difficulties.

[103] Bokina, 'Resignation, Retreat and Impotence', 181 & 182.

[104] The fact that the various groups in *Mathis der Maler* (Catholics, Lutherans, students and peasants) are all set in opposition to one another makes it impossible to determine whether any of

presentation of society in *Mathis der Maler.* More significantly, Bokina relates Hindemith's metaphysical conception of music to contemporary political ideology, saying that 'despite Hindemith's conscious reservations about the Nazis, his natural mystification of music replicates the typical Nazi subordination of history and subjectivity to natural myth'. He likewise refers to the 'social integration' which is achieved 'not by participation in revolutionary movements, left or right, but in a mystical-religious conception of community'.[105] Bokina's weakness is that he does not consider Hindemith's context in enough detail, and does not make particularly clear how these ideas figure in the work itself; there is no discussion of the *Engelkonzert,* for instance.[106]

These attempts to situate *Mathis der Maler* in its political context make no reference to a number of important concepts which are contained in the libretto of the opera, and which are significant when viewed against Hindemith's environment. Foremost amongst these is the importance of community, expressed particularly through the use of the word *Volk,* which is prominent throughout the work. Mathis's motivation through the various twists of the plot is his desire to help his 'brothers', the *Volk.* Mathis tells Albrecht in their meeting as Paul and Anthony in Tableau 6 that he fought 'meinem Volke Blut und Geist zu opfern' ('to offer my blood and spirit to the *Volk').* Albrecht's argument to Mathis persuading him to return to art is phrased in parallel terms: 'Dem Volke entzogst du dich, als du zu ihm gingst, deiner Sendung entsagtest' ('You denied the *Volk* when you went to them, and denied your calling'). If he returns to art, Albrecht says, Mathis will be 'ein Teil des Volkes, Volk selbst' ('a part of the *Volk,* the *Volk* itself'), and Mathis replies that 'der Mund des Volkes sprach durch dich' ('the voice of the *Volk*

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them represent a group found in 1930s Germany. For instance, one could take the ruling Catholics as standing in for the Nazis, especially given their largely philistine relationship to art and the book-burning scene. However, the leader of this group, Albrecht, is more positively presented, as we have seen. A further difficulty is their relationship to the peasants: the Catholics are against the ordinary people, the *Volk,* while the National Socialists were for them. Another group, the Lutherans, could seem significant because they are more 'German' than their Catholic opponents, as they have no allegiance to Rome, and follow a German leader.

[105] Ibid., 182.

[106] Instead, he says only that 'in the opera, there is Regina and Mathis's prayer for understanding and harmony in the world, but this harmony and understanding are no longer the outcomes of human effort. They are, rather, the products of the Pythagorean music of the spheres and the harmony of the universe' (ibid., 180).

has spoken through you'). As discussed earlier, the peasants are an incipient yet tainted form of the *Volk,* who have lost their true, pure identity because of their espousal of violence. Despite his misgivings about their brutality, though, Mathis still supports the peasants' cause, and their fight is portrayed as a noble one even if their methods are criticised. The way in which Mathis's actions are motivated by his concern for the *Volk* has clear resonances with the language used by the National Socialists. Another echo, this time with the National Socialist concern with *Gemeinschaft,* is the ideal of community, which is contrasted several times with 'Eigennutz' ('self-interest'). When he is questioning the purpose of his art at the beginning of the opera, Mathis asks himself, 'Bist nicht nur eignen Nutzens voll?' ('Are you only being full of self-interest?'). Later, he reproaches the peasants, saying 'Ihr wollt die Macht stürzen, eigennützige Tat verhindern, und seid selbst voll Eigennutz!' ('You want to overthrow those in power, prevent self-interest, but are yourselves full of self-interest!'). Such language is reminiscent of a specific Nazi slogan which stressed the idea of community before the individual, 'Gemeinnutz geht vor Eigennutz' ('The common interest comes before self-interest').[107] The fact that Mathis gives the ribbon he had received from Ursula to Regina symbolises his removal from the world of the bourgeois to that of the *Volk;* he was first tied by one, but is now bound to the other. This move from bourgeois to *Volk* may be seen as specifically referable to National Socialist ideology, in which capitalism and the modern world is seen as suspect, and the wholesome *Volk* in a rural setting is lauded. The way in which art is distanced from money at the close of the opera is also comparable to the anti-capitalism of the National Socialists. In *Mathis,* though, this community largely remains on the level of the ideal: the peasants have not achieved a *Volksgemeinschaft,* although it is suggested in the *Engelkonzert.* The Utopianism of National Socialism can be seen not in the negative presentation of the peasants, but through the vision scene.

Many of the same passages link the *Volk* with a further rhetorical device of National Socialism, the use of metaphors of the organic. The ideal of community within the concept of the *Volksgemeinschaft* frequently expressed the idea that the

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[107] Carr, *A History of Germany,* 344.

individual must give way to the common good in terms of being only a part of a living, organic whole. National Socialist rhetoric 'derived from a *Weltanschauung* anchored in an organic concept of society'.[108] E. Günther Gründel expressed this sentiment in 1933: 'The new human being lives in conscious service of the community, but with a deeply personal sense of responsibility. He is not a person "in his own right", and not the embodiment of a class, but of his people. He does not live for himself, but as an integral part of a living whole.'[109] Such ideas were central to Nazi ideology. The nation was an organically united collection of the *Volk,* an 'organism of a people bound by destiny and blood', rather than the pejoratively viewed 'Western' nation, a 'mass of people formed into a State'.[110] The ideal of the *Volk* as an organism was expressed through organic images such as that of the tree, used to symbolize the strength of the rural *Volk,* its roots anchored in the past and a crown which reached up towards the cosmos.[111] Another slogan linked to the same metaphorical nexus which gained particular popularity was the appeal to *Blut und Boden,* or 'blood and soil', which encapsulated the combination of race and rural life.[112]

Similar rhetorical devices appear within *Mathis der Maler.* For example, Mathis asks in Tableau 1 'Wo ist des Schaffens Boden, wo Wachsen und Reifen?' ('Where is the soil for creation, where growth and ripening?'), answered by Schwalb's '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' ('Whatever deeds should blossom in you, they only flourish in God's sunlight if your absorbing roots reach deeply into the ground of your *Volk').* In Albrecht's

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[108] van der Will, 'Culture and the Organization of National Socialist Ideology', 109. Also see Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology,* 4.

[109] *Die Sendung der jungen Generation* (1933), quoted in Griffin, ed., *Fascism,* 128.

[110] Edgar Jung, *Die Herrschaft der Minderwertigen: Ihr Zerfall und ihre Ablösung durch ein neues Reich* (1927), quoted in ibid., 107. Such language is reminiscent of Thomas Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen,* while Pfitzner described art in the same terms: 'National art is the noblest part in the organism of the body of the people *(im Organismus des Volkskörpers)'* ('Die neue Ästhetik', 245).

[111] Mosse, *The Crisis in German Ideology,* 26.

[112] The phrase was coined by R. Walther Darré in his book *Neuadel aus Blut und Boden* ('New Nobility from Blood and Soil'); part of this can be found in Kaes et al, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook,* 133-137, and in Griffin, ed., *Fascism,* 125-127.

speech to Mathis converting him back to art in Tableau 6, where he also refers to the *Volk,* he uses the image of a tree to describe Mathis's purpose in life: 'Wenn du demütig dem Bruder dich bogst... wirst du gebunden und frei, ein starker Baum im Mutterboden stehen.... Wenn man dir alles nahm und dich darob vergaß: Der Baum weiß nicht um seine Frucht' ('When you bow in humility before your brother... then you will stand both bound and free, a strong tree in your native soil.... If they take everything and then forget you: the tree does not know what happens to its fruit'). Continuing this image at the end of the opera, Mathis says that 'Wie sich alle Frucht von mir löste, sei auch das letzte Blatt aus reifem Herbst dem Boden übergeben' ('As all the fruit has now gone from me, may the last leaf of ripe autumn fall to earth'). Ideas of the organic are thus used to suggest the relationship which the artist should have to his people: his 'roots' must be within the 'soil' of the people, and he should be like a 'tree' to them. The artist must be organically bound to the *Volk,* a vision which has much in common with the Nazis' conception of an ideal society. Such language is used in the opera in connection with artistic creation, thereby tapping into a familiar pattern within language about music in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; however, it gains an additional connotation given contemporary Nazi rhetoric.

'Inner Emigration'? Hindemith and the Third Reich

Despite the assertions by the majority of Hindemith scholars to date that the composer was politically reputable, the affiliation which may be made between *Mathis der Maler* and the ideology of National Socialism hints that this judgement is, at the very least, open to further interrogation. These correspondences could simply be put down to the fact that Hindemith existed within the same culture as his political rulers, and therefore employed the same rhetorical and cultural discourses. However, the fact that he was using such devices in the mid-1930s cannot fail to make a political point. Furthermore, although in itself the opera is open to varying readings, Hindemith's involvement with the politics of his time brings the prevailing view of his 'inner emigration' into question.

Unlike a composer such as Pfitzner, Hindemith did not leave any clear indication of his political affiliations. His personal opinion of the National Socialists is never made particularly explicit, although in 1934, he did refer to himself in a letter as 'a passionate patriot'.[113] Nevertheless, the contention that Hindemith went into 'inner emigration' is not difficult to refute when we look at the details of the composer's political involvement in the 1930s. Many leading Nazis themselves saw Hindemith as potentially valuable to their cause; they believed his supposedly 'German' musical style might be harnessable to their own ends.[114] However, others in the party were more hostile, and this ambivalence towards the composer continued for a number of years. Some, but not all, of his works were banned in the early years of the Third Reich, and eventually all were. This forced him to emigrate in 1938, along with the fact that his wife was Jewish.[115] To say that Hindemith was hostile to the Nazis from the beginning of the Third Reich, though, as so many writers do, neglects a number of important facts. Hindemith himself was involved with a number of cultural organisations which were either part of the NSDAP party structure, such as the *Kraft durch Freude* movement, or were originally independent far-right groups that were later affiliated with the Party, such as the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur.*[116] His letters from the early years of the Third Reich state his position towards the new scene. In April 1933, he wrote to Willy Strecker that 'I don't think we need worry too much about the musical future.... Recently... I had a long talk with some of the higher-ups in the *Kampfbund.* It was only about educational matters, but I got the impression (after having satisfied them that I was neither a half nor any other fractional Jew) that they have a good opinion of me there.'[117] He goes on to say that 'they have commissioned me (though not quite officially) to work out plans for a new system of teaching composition and musical theory'. Hindemith also talks in this letter about his position within the new cultural order: 'One of these days I shall of

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[113] Letter of 15.11.34, quoted in Skelton, *Paul Hindemith,* 119.

[114] See Levi, *Music in the Third Reich,* 108 ff, and Kater, *The Twisted Muse,* 179 ff.

[115] Zenck, 'Zwischen Boykott und Anpassung', 104.

[116] Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler',* 33. On the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur,* see Kater, *The Twisted Muse,* 14 ff.

[117] Hindemith, *Selected Letters of Paul Hindemith,* ed. and trans. Geoffrey Skelton (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1995), 69 (15.4.33). Also in German in Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler',* 34.

course have to get the *Kampfbund* to support my things officially, but it is a bit too early yet for that.' He says that at present there is too much 'uncertainty'; however, Hindemith would seem to wish to keep on the right side of the Nazis, telling Strecker that he should continue with 'any kind of campaign or attempts at conversion amongst smaller cultural associations' that he may have planned. (The letter does not explain what these might be.)

The following year, in February 1934, Hindemith was approached by *Kraft durch Freude;* he wrote to Strecker that he would make suggestions to them 'for a very far-reaching musical education system for the German people and, if things continue to show goodwill towards me, I hope to provide the impetus for vast plans and to cooperate in putting them into effect.'[118] In a different letter of around the same time, he says that the *Kraft durch Freude* suggestions would 'provide the basis for the most ambitious programme of popular musical education... the world has ever seen. One could literally have the musical enlightenment of millions in one's hand.'[119] Skelton says that Hindemith was 'tempted', although he did not become involved in an official capacity; Hindemith wrote that he 'trust[ed] to achieve all the more in the background.'[120]

These are not the only instances of Hindemith's involvement in the Nazi cultural scene. In February 1934, he accepted an official position on the council of the Composers' Section of the *Reichsmusikkammer,* and conducted a performance of his *Concert Music for Brass and Strings* at a concert in Berlin to unveil the *Reichsmusikkammer.*[121] A few weeks before this, the composer took part in an official National Socialist concert in Lübeck, the first in which he had been involved; in a letter to Strecker he wrote that 'Lübeck was a big success, as first official concert in the III. [sic] Reich a good omen, anyway.'[122] In the summer of 1936, Hindemith accepted a commission to write a work for the *Luftwaffe* and

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[118] Hindemith, *Letters,* 76 (5.2.34).
[119] Ibid. (9.2.34).
[120] Ibid.; Skelton, *Paul Hindemith,* 115.
[121] Kater, *The Twisted Muse,* 179; Levi, *Music in the Third Reich,* 109.
[122] Hindemith, *Letters,* 77 (9.2.34). This letter is also cited in Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler',* 35, but draws no comment from the author.

wrote to Strecker that 'I want to give them something really good.... I am quite certain that this piece, if reasonably successful, could mean *Mathis* in the Staatsoper'.[123] Perhaps most significantly, he signed an oath of loyalty to Hitler in January 1936.[124]

Hindemith's comment about the *Luftwaffe* commission points to the situation in which he found himself regarding a first performance for *Mathis der Maler.* The authorities wavered for years about whether or not to allow a performance, having doubts about the 'Germanness' of Hindemith's musical style, and being suspicious of his earlier Expressionist works. He was suspected of being *'entartet'* ('degenerate') because his music, particularly that of the early- and mid-1920s, was often dissonant, and had used elements of popular music (for instance in the *Kammermusik no.1).* The plots of many of his earlier operas were also seen as subversive or frivolous.[125] Hindemith and his colleagues struggled to assure the authorities that *Mathis* was a suitable work for performance in the National Socialist state. In late 1934 the composer planned a campaign with Furtwängler, who wished to conduct the first performance of the piece. Furtwängler would write an article about the opera, making sure Hitler saw it, and would then go and see the Führer with the libretto of the opera in an attempt to win him over and to bypass his subordinates who were objecting to a performance. Hindemith would simultaneously write to Hitler and invite him to visit his Hochschule class, and would have the *Plöner Musiktag* cantata performed for him there.[126] The plan backfired; the Nazis reacted strongly against Furtwängler's plea in the *Deutsche*

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[123] Quoted in Skelton, *Paul Hindemith,* 133 (8.7.36).

[124] Levi, *Music in the Third Reich,* 114-5. The words of the oath can be found in Berndt Heller & Frieder Reininghaus, 'Hindemiths heikle Jahre. Eine Dokumentation', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 145/5 (1984), 8. Also see Zenck, 'Zwischen Boykott und Anpassung', for details of these events. Breimann notes that Hindemith took the oath, but explains it by saying all state employees were required to do so *('Mathis der Maler',* 48). In 1935, and again in 1936 and 1937, Hindemith spent some months in Turkey, assisting in the institution of a conservatoire. This trip was approved of by the National Socialists, who saw it as ambassadorial for German culture; Hindemith also referred to it in these terms. Space does not allow a detailed discussion of this part of Hindemith's life here; for further information, see Heller & Reininghaus, 'Hindemiths heikle Jahre'.

[125] For instance, his Expressionist *Sancta Susanna* dealt with the sexual frustrations of a young nun, while his *Neues vom Tage* famously appalled Hitler because of its scene in which the heroine sings the praises of hot water systems while in her bath.

[126] Skelton, *Paul Hindemith,* 120.

Allgemeine Zeitung for art and politics to remain separate. Nevertheless, the article itself is revealing; it is not a refutation of Nazi cultural politics, but attempts to show Hindemith's suitability for the Nazis' aim of creating a German music. The conductor points out, for instance, how Hindemith works in the 'spirit of simple craftsmanship... like the old German tradesmen', and that his 'blood is purely Germanic'.[127] Furtwängler writes of Hindemith's affiliation to the Youth Movement and to the ordinary people:

> no one in modern Germany has the youth behind him as does Hindemith... unceasingly he strives in his own way to productively close the gap between art music and the music of the people. In this instance his desire parallels the present tendencies of the new national socialistic Germany.[128]

The following year, Hindemith's publisher Strecker wrote to Gustav Havemann, an important figure within the *Reichsmusikkammer,* in a further attempt to win official approval.[129] With a similar tactic to Furtwängler, he pointed to the admirably National Socialist qualities in Hindemith's work, saying that Hindemith's aim in his music, as Skelton reports it, 'was to overcome post-Wagnerian influences and to return to the strict polyphony of the old German masters; his harmonic language was not atonal, but followed understandable laws of logic.'[130] Strecker argued that Hindemith's positive, constructive music could not be compared with 'the decadent intellectual musical efforts of a Schönberg', to whose ideas Hindemith was sharply opposed. The composer had never written 'cheap successes' such as *Die Dreigroschenoper* or *Jonny spielt auf,* and he did not owe his success to Jewish cliques and critics; in fact, he had often had trouble with Jewish critics. Nor did he use 'fashionable instruments typical of a destructive age', such as vibraphones and

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[127] Quoted in Paulding, 'Mathis der Maler - The Politics of Music', 106-107. Despite its title, Paulding's essay is a biased and uncritical account of the Furtwängler-Hindemith campaign which attempts to maintain Hindemith's anti-Nazism. However, it does quote the text of Furtwängler's article in full, in translation. Paulding also provides a synopsis of *Mathis der Maler,* along with a few comments on the music, although without any analysis. Many accounts of the Furtwängler incident misrepresent it by not paying attention to the particularities of the conductor's language; a typical example is Meyer, *The Politics of Music in the Third Reich,* 352.

[128] Paulding, 'Mathis der Maler - The Politics of Music', 106. Paulding inserts an editorial exclamation after this sentence.

[129] Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler',* 38; Kater, *The Twisted Muse,* 17.

[130] Skelton, *Paul Hindemith,* 126.

wind-machines.[131] Through all the attacks he had suffered, according to Strecker, Hindemith had 'dedicated himself without wavering' to his art and was 'at pains to serve German music to his best'.[132]

Such attempts by Hindemith and his colleagues could, of course, explain his involvement with the Nazis as simple opportunism. This is no doubt possible, especially as the true nature of the regime would not have been apparent to those living under it at the time (although some dubious elements would have been known about). However, whatever Hindemith's motivation, he cannot have been wholly antipathetic to the National Socialists, as is often held, and nor did he go into 'inner emigration'. Furtwängler, Strecker and Hindemith himself obviously believed that such campaigning would have an effect, and that their rulers would come to see the merits of Hindemith's music. *Mathis der Maler* played on many favourite Nazi tropes, its concern for the *Volk* being the most notable, as well as being based on a historical event, the Peasants' War, which was admired in National Socialist circles.[133] How far *Mathis* did appeal to National Socialist sensibilities is illustrated by the prevarication about its fate. Various officials had conflicting views about Hindemith and his music, some deeming him *entartet* because of his early works. The young Hindemith's tendency to *épater les bourgeois* had not won him any favours, despite his later retreat from such comparative extremism. The leader of the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur,* Alfred Rosenberg, in particular disliked Hindemith's music, much of which was placed on the *Kampfbund*'s blacklist in 1933.[134] Other Nazis, such as the Reich Propaganda Minister Goebbels, initially took a more lenient line, believing that keeping Hindemith on side would be useful to their own aims.[135] The *Kampfbund* was

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[131] Strecker quoted in ibid., 127. Part of this letter is also in Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler'*, 46-47. Strecker sent a draft to Hindemith, who according to Skelton, 'surprisingly approved it. He even made a handwritten addition to Strecker's list of his musical aims: "A search for concise expression, for clarity of melody and harmony."' Skelton says that this 'was an uncharacteristic moment of weakness which can perhaps most charitably be explained as a symptom of his current anxiety' *(Paul Hindemith,* 127). Strecker's comments, particularly about Jewish critics and fashionable instruments, are not wholly accurate.

[132] Quoted in Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler'*, 47.

[133] Zenck, 'Zwischen Boykott und Anpassung', 126.

[134] Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler'*, 33.

[135] Ibid., 34. Breimann states that the developing antagonism between Rosenberg and Goebbels during the 1930s was less about Hindemith himself or his music than it was a power struggle

assimilated into the *NS-Kulturgemeinde* in June 1934, and this organisation itself expressed its dislike for Hindemith in November of that year; this led to fewer of his works being performed, as concert arrangers were careful not to fall foul of the regime.[136] Hindemith himself was not allowed to perform within Germany. An official ban on Hindemith's works, on the instruction of Goebbels, was not ordered until October 1936 (two years before Hindemith's emigration), as part of a new campaign to 'clean up' music, although it was fought against by Hindemith's colleagues.[137] However, despite these events, the Nazis still hesitated over the fate of *Mathis der Maler.* In June 1936, officials from the *Reichstheaterkammer* met with the Propaganda Ministry to talk about the opera, having ordered two vocal scores and two librettos, and finally gave their consent to it being performed.[138] Once Rosenberg himself read the libretto of the opera in 1937, he was, according to Skelton, 'completely converted. At any rate, he was now anxious that Hitler should at last be told the truth about the work, and there was even the suggestion of a meeting between Rosenberg and the composer.'[139]

While Hindemith had explicit dealings with the National Socialists, there are also instances where he appears to have been more equivocal towards them. For instance he preferred to remain in the 'background' of the *Kraft durch Freude* organisation's educational project, cited above, rather than taking an official position.[140] Similarly, in 1934, he refused a position on the Music Committee of the group organising the Olympic games.[141] There are also a few instances of hostile language about the National Socialists in Hindemith's letters, such as when he refers to 'the swamp of musical life' in 1936, or when in 1933 he wrote, after his meeting with *Kampfbund* officials, that he did not wish to 'curry favour' in these quarters.[142] He also expressed reservations about his previous collaborator Benn's

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between two individuals who both believed they had responsibility for the musical life of the Third Reich (ibid., 37).

136 Ibid., 36 & 38.

137 Ibid., 50; Zenck, 'Zwischen Boykott und Anpassung', 101-102.

138 Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler'*, 49.

139 Skelton, *Paul Hindemith,* 157.

140 Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler'*, 35; Hindemith, *Letters,* 77 (9.2.34).

141 Breimann, *'Mathis der Maler'*, 37.

142 Ibid., 49; Hindemith, *Letters,* 69 (15.4.33).

conversion to Nazism in 1933, saying he seemed to 'have been completely dragged into things', and that 'he could have gone more slowly with offering the kiss of comradeship'.[143] Hindemith thought that Benn would be 'disappointed' after a few months. Given Hindemith's difficulties with the regime, his occasional reservations are, perhaps, not surprising; what is more surprising is that he went on trying to work with the Nazis for as long as he did. This fact points to Hindemith's political naïveté, that he thought an accommodation with the regime might still be possible.

Hindemith's *Unterweisung im Tonsatz*

Seen against this context, in which the Nazis attacked much modern music for being 'degenerate' and 'unnatural', Hindemith's 1937 book *Unterweisung im Tonsatz* can be understood as a further attempt by the composer to position himself within the Germany of his time. A particularly striking aspect of the book is Hindemith's efforts to prove the 'natural' credentials of his music. It contains numerous references to the 'naturalness' of tonality; for instance, Hindemith writes that the major triad is 'one of the most impressive phenomena of nature, simple and elemental as rain, snow, and wind.... The musician cannot escape it any more than the painter his primary colours, or the architect his three dimensions.... the triad corresponds to the force of gravity.'[144] This insistence on nature forms the basis for his theory: 'tonal relations are founded in Nature, in the characteristics of sounding materials and of the ear, as well as in the pure relations of abstract numerical groups. We cannot escape the relationship of tones.... Tonality is a natural force'.[145] Hindemith's use of language invoking the 'natural' reminds us of Pfitzner's rhetoric in 'Die neue Ästhetik', as well as other contemporaries such as Schenker.[146]

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[143] Hindemith, *'Das private Logbuch': Briefe an seine Frau Gertrud,* ed. Friederike Becker & Giselher Schubert (Mainz: Schott / Munich: Piper, 1995), 101 (25.5.33).

[144] Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition,* 22.

[145] Ibid., 152. This same image of tonality and gravity also appears in *A Composer's World,* as do further references to tonality as natural.

[146] Hindemith wrote to Schenker in 1926 expressing his interest in the theorist's work: 'I can say to you that I am an enthusiastic and delighted reader of your books. Delighted because... in them the foundations of musical creation are revealed, which... have always been and will always be valid. And for our present-day music they are just as important as for any in the past' (Hindemith, *Briefe,*

Compared to diatonicism, Hindemith's concept of 'tonality' is an expanded one, setting forth a theory in which 'tonality' is based around the 'natural' overtone series. Hindemith constructs his theory around a number of 'Series'. Series 1 is the overtone series, 'the significant order in which the twelve tones of the chromatic scale made their appearance, in diminishing degree of relationship to the given tone'. Series 2 is a 'natural order' of different intervals, which the composer explains in depth to attempt to justify acoustically the 'naturalness' of the order.[147] According to Kemp, Hindemith believed his Series 1 and 2 'to embrace discoveries of almost divine provenance. Until the end of his life he considered music which failed to take account of them to be little short of a betrayal.'[148] Hindemith says that the intervals of the overtone series are 'embedded in the tonal raw material which Nature has made ready for musical use', but, Hindemith continues, this order 'is not arbitrary: it is determined by a strict law, and is as immutable as the color series of the rainbow.'[149] This leads him to the conclusion that the twelve-note chromatic scale, as he constructs it, is 'even more natural' than the major and minor scales. However, he has some qualifiers: not all twelve-note music is valid, only that which returns to the anchor of more conventional tonality based around the triad, as his does. 'The adoption of the chromatic scale as the basis of music does not mean that harmony and melody must consist of an uninterrupted series of whining half-tone slides, or that according to some arbitrarily conceived plan the tones of this scale must be scattered broadcast through our music, reappearing aimlessly in a thousand different forms... The advantages of tonal connection and of chordal and melodic interrelation are as much ours as they ever were. But we have thrown off chains that hampered our movement; we have discarded the tinted lenses that transformed the many-colored world around us into a dull and monotonous image.'[150] While composition and theory 'can never disregard the conditions laid down by the facts of the existence of pure intervals and the desire of the ear to perceive them wherever possible in tonal combinations', this does not

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ed. Dieter Rexroth (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982), 122-123 (25.10.26). Translation as in Neumeyer, *The Music of Paul Hindemith,* 11).

147 Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition,* 56-57.

148 Kemp, *Hindemith,* 39.

149 Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition,* 15-16.

150 Ibid., 48.

mean 'that we must return to a more primitive level of harmonic and melodic practice.'[151] Hindemith therefore argues that his post-tonal music, with its 'dissonances', is actually tonal after all, and most importantly, completely 'natural'.[152]

When seen against the context of the era, the political neutrality of Hindemith's book is brought into question, despite the long history of the connection between music and nature. Some writers, for instance Redlich, have seen Hindemith's composition treatise as an apologia by the composer in the face of the accusations against him as musically 'degenerate'. Redlich also posits that Hindemith's move towards a more tempered musical style in these years was an attempt to distance himself from the Second Viennese School; he suggests that the composer perhaps did this 'in the hope of endearing himself to Dr. Göbbels', and in response to his 'increasingly precarious personal situation'.[153] Zenck comments that Hindemith's system is presented as 'natural and lifted above time; the hierarchy is unchangeable. It forms the strong fortress *(die feste Burg),* the dam against the flood of products of an "arbitrarily changing spirit" *(Geist),* which has led to "confusion". This is the mode of expression and argument of the art-politicians of the Third Reich.'[154] Zenck remarks on other formulations in the book which are close to the language and vocabulary of the Third Reich: 'the talk is of confusion, riffraffs and rabbles; on the other side are contrasted clean, healthy feelings, which are good *per se,* and which form a dam against capriciousness and exaggeration'.[155] She points out that the use of church modes, folk-songs, and hymn tunes in *Mathis der Maler* 'corresponds very exactly to the official

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[151] Ibid., 45.

[152] Hindemith includes an analysis of part of the *Mathis der Maler* Prelude in the *Unterweisung,* which may lead one to the conclusion that he is demonstrating how he composed it (ibid., 220-223). However, he also includes analyses of other pieces of music, from Gregorian chant to Schoenberg, in an effort to show that the theories he has expounded in the book can be applied to any music, not just his own.

[153] Redlich, 'Paul Hindemith: a Re-assessment', 245. It is interesting to note that Hindemith spends some time in the *Unterweisung* criticising 'atonal' composers and serialism because their music is 'contrary to nature'; see 152-156. Willy Strecker's line, quoted above, that Grünewald 'resisted the foreign influence of the Italian Renaissance' could show a belief that Hindemith similarly resisted modernism.

[154] Zenck, 'Zwischen Boykott und Anpassung', 128.

[155] Ibid.

conception of modern German music in the Third Reich'.[156] Hindemith's language positions him both as aesthetically conservative, in his adherence to a musical system of the past, and links him to a politically reactionary discourse. In addition, in a paradox typical of National Socialism, Hindemith attempts at the same time to show his progressiveness: his music and theory are not simply reactionary, but a new, modern form of an eternal truth.

Hindemith and the *Jugendmusikbewegung*

A part of the composer's life which has been defined by his biographers as being politically left wing is his involvement in the *Gebrauchsmusik* movement. However, the status of *Gebrauchsmusik* within German life in the 1930s is not so clear cut. The idea of music being integrated into everyday life was one of the main tenets of the *Jugendbewegung,* or Youth Movement; Hindemith was involved for some years with the musical wing, the *Jugendmusikbewegung* (both of these are blanket terms for a host of smaller organisations). Before 1933, the *Jugendmusikbewegung* was part of an attempt on the part of both the left- and right-wing parties to bring art to the masses. Both political wings, the NSDAP on the right and the SPD and KPD on the left, implemented programmes to educate the populace in similar ways although, as we have seen, there was a significant ideological difference in who exactly these masses were deemed to be.[157] While both the left- and right-wing versions of the *Jugendmusikbewegung* existed during the Weimar Republic, left-wing groups, such as the *Musikantengilde,* never gained as much popularity as those on the right, such as the *Wandervogel* and the *Bündische Jugend.* The *Jugendmusikbewegung* was later assimilated into the

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[156] Ibid., 119. Becker criticises this view, saying it is a 'stubborn prejudice', but does not provide a convincing alternative ('Des Künstlers Entsagung', 146).

[157] For details of left-wing movements, see Hermand & Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik,* 123 ff, Guttsmann, *Worker's Culture,* and John Rockwell, 'Kurt Weill's Operatic Reform and Its Context', in Kowalke, ed., *A New Orpheus,* 53-54. For a comparison of *Gebrauchsmusik*'s use by the left and right, see Hanns Eisler, 'Contemporary Music and Fascism' (1942), in his *Musik und Politik: Schriften 1924-1948,* ed. Günter Mayer (Munich: Rogner & Bernhard, 1973), 492. Also on Eisler and the *Jugendmusikbewegung,* see Hermand & Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik,* 340.

Nazis' propagandistic aims in groups such as the *Hitlerjugend,* expounding their belief in music for the *Volk.*[158]

Music within the *Jugendbewegung* was intended to help bring about a sense of community, or *Gemeinschaft,* and an understanding of one's place in the social order.[159] Folk-music found particular favour for its ideological resonances, amongst the left as well as the right.[160] The *Jugendbewegung* saw itself as tapping into the spirit of the *Volk* and offering a meaningful alternative to the shallowness of modernity, therefore showing clear allegiance to the incipient National Socialist ideology.[161] The nostalgia for a mythical past was balanced against a stance which was progressive in its departure from nineteenth-century aesthetics. This worked in tandem with the 'socialist' aims of the fascists in the economic sphere: the rejection of the virtuoso, and of professional musical life in general, in favour of collective music making was consistent with their rejection of capitalist society.[162] *Gebrauchsmusik,* music which could be played by amateurs and which would foster a sense of community amongst the players, was therefore encouraged. It was preferable to the bourgeois and exclusionary practice of listening reverently to professionals in a concert hall. Here, the right wing again overlaps with the space more normally associated with the left, espousing a form of selective 'socialism' which employed the same cultural practices as the left to achieve its aims of *Gemeinschaft.*

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158 On the *Jugendmusikbewegung* before and during the Third Reich, see Pamela M. Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998), 7-9 & 13-16. On music in the Hitler Youth, see Kater, *The Twisted Muse,* 135 ff.

159 The idea that music had the power to form communities is reminiscent of the thought of Paul Bekker, examined in the last chapter.

160 Hermand & Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik,* 337.

161 Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology,* 6; Hermand & Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik,* 334; Geoffrey Skelton, *Paul Hindemith,* 86. Andres Briner maintains that the *Jugendmusikbewegung* was apolitical before the Nazis' appropriation of it, although this may be disputed ('Ich und Wir - Zur Entwicklung des jungen Paul Hindemith', in Dieter Rexroth, ed., *Erprobungen und Erfahrungen: Zu Paul Hindemith's Schaffen in den Zwanziger Jahren* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1978), 27 & 31).

162 See Eric Levi, *Music in the Third Reich,* xiii, Neumeyer, *The Music of Paul Hindemith,* 14, and Potter, *Most German of the Arts,* 8.

Hindemith's involvement with the *Jugendmusikbewegung* and his composition of *Gebrauchsmusik* therefore occupies a similarly ambiguous position. The composer was for a time involved with the left-wing *Musikantengilde,* for which he earned praise from Kurt Weill.[163] Hindemith believed the *Jugendmusikbewegung* to be central to 'the most important question of today's musical life, the bringing together of people and art'. He came to prefer the term *Gemeinschaftsmusik* to *Gebrauchsmusik,* which alludes to the rhetoric of the NSDAP's form of socialism as well as to that of the left.[164] Rexroth comments that Hindemith believed that 'through collective *(gemeinsames)* music-making the feeling of community *(Gemeinschaftsgefühl)* [would be] increased'.[165] Around 1930, Hindemith began to employ folk-songs within his own music, either quoting actual folk-songs, such as in *Der Schwanendreher,* or alluding to the style of folk-song, such as in the *Konzertmusik* works, of which Kemp says that they have 'a lyrical melody whose vocal contours and strongly tonal bias stem ultimately from German folk-music'.[166] Ernst Krenek, in later years, though, saw Hindemith's activities as tied to the right wing: 'An unbroken line leads from the activist *Wandervogel...*, by way of Hindemith's concerto grosso style, to the Hitler youth, of whom it is told that they give vent to their indomitable spirit of independence by secretly performing Hindemith's *Spielmusik'*.[167] To say that Hindemith, with his ideal of *Gebrauchsmusik,* was therefore right wing, however, is just as limiting as confining him to the left. A more balanced picture of the state of affairs can be

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[163] Weill, 'Shifts in Musical Composition', 479. On Weill and *Gebrauchsmusik,* see Hinton, *The Idea of Gebrauchsmusik,* 83 ff.

[164] Hindemith, *Briefe,* 131 (5.1.27); Lamb & Phelan, 'Weimar Culture', 76.

[165] Rexroth, 'Einige Voraussetzungen', 547.

[166] Kemp, *Hindemith,* 25. Jürgen Mainka also comments that Hindemith's use of folk-songs could be related to fascism, but goes on to argue that the composer rejected political involvement in favour of 'inner emigration', and used such sources to indicate his 'humanism' ('Von innerer zu äußerer Emigration. Eine Szene in Paul Hindemiths Oper *Mathis der Maler',* in Hanns-Werner Heister & Hans-Günther Klein, eds., *Musik und Musikpolitik im faschistischen Deutschland* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984), 265 & 269).

[167] He continues by saying that these phenomena have characteristics in common, 'an activist trait, a tendency to whittle down, a reduction of music from a spiritual art to a professional craft. And so it is not accidental, either, that these movements look to the precapitalistic period, when the guild system prevailed, for their historical ideal of music' *(Music Here and Now,* 75). This would seem to contradict Hindemith's transcendental understanding of music; in fact, Krenek's implication that Hindemith 'reduced' music to a 'professional craft' by writing *Gebrauchsmusik* overlooks Hindemith's own motivations for doing so.

discerned by considering the nature of Hindemith's political context, in which we can speculate that he occupied a position in the 'grey area', the point at which the ideologies of left and right overlapped.

Conclusion

The ideal of the artist's place in society in *Mathis der Maler* is expressed both in the vision of the *Engelkonzert,* in its depiction of a well-ordered and well-functioning society, and in the final scene, where Mathis has returned to his work in order to impart his vision to the people. Consistently with the views expressed by Hindemith in his writings, the artist Mathis 'gives his best to his fellow men' in order to point them to a higher, more spiritual ideal.[168] In this respect, the artist Mathis may be seen as acting as a persona for Hindemith's aesthetic stance. However, this aesthetic position is simultaneously a political one: the opera reflects the complexities of the political situation in which it was written, and the resultant ambiguities of its composer's ideology. The Utopia presented in *Mathis* may be read as having elements in common with the Utopia advocated by National Socialism, at the same time as it is also 'socialist', thanks to the ambiguity between the left-wing socialism to which we are accustomed and the exclusive 'socialism' of the right. Furthermore, the rhetoric of the opera, with its accent on the *Volk,* may be seen as concordant with the ideas of the NSDAP. The nature of Hindemith's political context clarifies Hindemith's activities during the Third Reich, which as we have seen, were far from being an 'inner emigration', as well as helping to elucidate the character of the opera itself. A reading of *Mathis der Maler,* and of Hindemith's own political views, as sitting in the grey area of National 'Socialism' helps to explain the circumstances of his life and involvement with the regime. Given the facts, the argument that Hindemith's dealings with the Nazis were the valiant attempts of a man struggling to come to terms with a hostile political situation, or the actions of an innocent who did his best at resistance, is unconvincing. Rather, Hindemith is shown as a man who at first thought the Nazis

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[168] Hindemith, *A Composer's World,* 220.

shared his own vision of an ideal society and was only later disabused of this belief.

5. Conclusion

Palestrina, Jonny spielt auf and *Mathis der Maler* offer widely contrasting representations of the artist's place in the modern world. In *Palestrina,* the composer removes himself from involvement with the world, at the same time as it reveres him as a great artist. There is, therefore, a discontinuity between the attitudes of composer and society towards each other; despite the artist's disinterest in anything but his art, his audience nevertheless appreciates his work. In *Jonny spielt auf,* this situation is reversed. Here, the composer's disinterest is met with equal disregard from his potential audience, and contrasted with the popularity of the jazz musician Jonny. Once Max becomes aware of his isolated situation, he decides to resolve it by engaging with society, rather than removing himself from it further. The resolutions of Krenek's and Pfitzner's operas are combined in Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler,* where the painter literally removes himself from society to concentrate on his painting, but at the same time seeks to reach out to the people through the instrument of his art. By doing so, he hopes to show them a glimpse of a higher, more spiritual ideal of society.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the *Künstleroper* may be seen as a projection, and construction, of the composer's own ideas about artistry, and its use as a means of establishing self-identity may be interpreted as a response to the changing landscape of early twentieth-century society and the subsequent reassessment of the artist's role in the world. In this regard, the operas by Pfitzner, Krenek and Hindemith are notable in that they clearly formulate an ideal relationship of some kind between the artist and his environment, with all invoking the idea of a Utopia, either as an actual situation within the opera or as a potentiality. Krenek's Utopia is the society of America, and while *Jonny spielt auf* does not take place in this country, the ideals which it represents are nonetheless present in the person of Jonny. Jonny's society is the promised land, offering the solution to Max's problems, apparently without any clouds on its horizon. The Utopia in *Mathis der Maler,* in contrast, is only a potentiality, shown in the vision of the *Engelkonzert* in which the angels play music harmoniously together in a way which is symbolic of a well-functioning society. It is implied that such a society can be created with the

help of the artist, who shows ordinary people the way to this ideal, albeit only if he and his art are grounded in the spirit of the *Volk*. The artist's place in *Mathis* is as an intermediary between the discontents of the present world and the vision of a new order; in this respect, the artist fulfils a role comparable with that of a politician, whose aim is to transform present existence into a promised ideal of a better society. While the angels in *Mathis* offer a Utopian vision to the artist through their appearance as a tableau of an ideal society, the angels in *Palestrina* have a different function. Rather than suggesting any specific vision of society, these angels merely dictate the music of the Mass, although they do point Palestrina towards his own personal Utopia where he can compose in peace. Palestrina's rejection of the world is set against the 'political', distopian realm of the Council of Trent, which is at once a representation of the literally political and a metaphor for the world at large. While *Palestrina* shows an ideal situation for the artist, it also hints at how society as a whole should be constituted, although this is only implicit: the hidden message is that Germany should be ordered along truly 'German', that is, conservative, lines.

In their construction of an ideal of the artist, the three operas offer different perspectives on contemporary understanding of art and artistry, and engage with many of the central questions of the era. One of these is the theme of how the artist may receive recognition from, and how he or she may interact with, society. All three works are concerned in some way with the idea of recognition, although the terms of this acknowledgement vary. Palestrina is lauded at the end of Pfitzner's opera for 'saving' music; this is shown to be largely irrelevant to the composer himself, who only wishes for solitude in order to create. Nevertheless, with his inclusion of the crowds which sing 'Evivva Palestrina' at the end of the work, and which Palestrina ignores, Pfitzner foregrounds the artist-society relationship and underlines the solitary task of the composer. Krenek's opera is, again, the direct opposite, with Max becoming aware of his distance from society. There is a hint at the beginning of the opera that he is recognised as an important art composer (Anita comments in Scene 1 that his picture can be seen all over the city), but he nevertheless loses his ability to compose, and then craves a reconciliation with the world on an altered level. Mathis too wants to renounce one way of life in order to

achieve recognition from the world outside, although initially on a personal level rather than an artistic one; he is prepared to give up his art altogether to achieve his aim of greater engagement with society. He wants to show the world, and himself, that he can serve his people, and this aim eventually leads him back to his art, so that he can try to communicate the higher ideal towards which he is striving.

A further important issue within the early twentieth-century debate about art is also to be found in these works, namely, how an artist positions himself or herself in relation to the aesthetic heritage of Romanticism. In *Palestrina,* the conventional tenets of Romanticism are straightforwardly maintained: the opera upholds the paradigm of the solitary artistic genius, in communion with the divine. (Many of these ideas were also carried over into modernism, as mentioned in Chapter 3.) A further common concept found in Romanticism, that of the supernatural, is also invoked in the opera with the appearance of the angels. In both of the other two works, though, the heritage of Romanticism is more problematic. In *Mathis,* the artist straddles an aesthetic divide: on the one hand, the opera, like *Palestrina*, features angels in what would appear to be a conventionally Romantic fashion, with the artist being inspired by the divine. On the other, there are important differences which move *Mathis* out of the realm of the conventionally Romantic of which *Palestrina* is a part. Unlike his reclusive Pfitznerian counterpart, the hero of Hindemith's opera intends to remain a part of the world around him through his art. While Palestrina is writing music to serve God, and to be 'an seiner schönen Ketten der letzte Stein' ('the last stone on his beautiful chain'), Mathis is creating art in order to be 'ein Teil des Volkes, Volk selbst' ('a part of the *Volk,* the *Volk* itself'). Palestrina turns his back on society, but Mathis does not; in this he goes against the conventional aesthetic of Romanticism in which art and society are opposed.[1] Finally, in *Jonny spielt auf,* the heritage of Romanticism is explicitly parodied through the presentation of Max, who encapsulates a nineteenth-century artistic sensibility. Krenek turns the conventions of Romanticism on their heads by playing them off against the anti-Romantic, modern, and popular Jonny. The talking

[1] The attempts to read Mathis's return to art as a 'retreat', showing Hindemith's supposed 'inner emigration', deny the possibility of art being associated with society, and therefore retain the autonomy aesthetic of the nineteenth century.

mountain in Scene 7 of *Jonny* also refers to the nineteenth-century use of the supernatural, but here, the normal convention is subverted. Instead of the supernatural offering succour to the needy artist, it rejects him, forcing him back into the world. Through such renegotiations of the idea of the artist, composers attempted to establish a place for themselves within the modern world.

When a composer constructs an image of an artist like himself in order to position himself within society, in the manner of these *Künstleropern,* he also influences the way in which the world sees him. Conversely, the world's reaction to such a statement may affect the composer's own self-perception. A good example of how a work's reception influences a composer is offered by the case of Krenek, to whom the huge success of *Jonny spielt auf* came, he said, as a shock. He gradually began to distance himself from the work, protesting that it had been misunderstood and was never meant to be a 'jazz-opera', as it had come to be called. Instead, he said, it was a serious investigation of Max's problems. This objection began to be voiced shortly after the opera's première, in response to productions which Krenek viewed as overly frivolous; however, the focus of Krenek's comments about the work also changed subtly over time. In the late 1920s, Krenek expresses positive opinions about Jonny and about jazz music, while his comments on Max are more negative. For instance, in the essay entitled 'Jonny spielt auf' (1928), he says that Max's character is based on the 'sterile and dead' art-composers who reject their audiences; he also refers to such composers' 'arrogance', 'vanity', 'cowardice' and 'weakness'.[2] In later years, however, his comments on the jazz elements are more cautious, and come across as an attempt at self-justification; he also places more emphasis on Max, and in particular on how he was partly autobiographical (an idea absent from earlier essays).[3]

Krenek's success not only altered how he viewed his opera itself, but also had a profound effect on his view of music and its place in society. The opinions which Krenek enunciated around the time of *Jonny spielt auf* about the necessity of

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[2] Krenek, 'Jonny spielt auf', 18-19 & 21.

[3] Krenek's later discussions of the opera include 'New Humanity and Old Objectivity' (1931), in *Exploring Music,* 54-5, *Im Atem der Zeit* (1948), 651, 'Self-Analysis' (1953), 16, *Horizons Circled* (1974), 38 and 'Jonny erinnert sich' (1980), 187.

reaching the audience, and the use of popular music to achieve this, suddenly change in the years following the opera's composition. From around 1930, he moves away from the position which is fictionally represented through Max, who decides to become part of the modern world, implicitly (though explicitly in Krenek's case) by using popular music to reach a broader public. Krenek still expresses the desire to reach his audience, but this is now phrased in terms of 'bringing them up to' his level, while his previous stance is viewed as 'going down to' theirs. He adheres to the philosophy that music can, and should, reach an audience, but only if listeners are prepared to extend themselves intellectually. Art should not pander to the taste of the masses, but should give them something higher to consider; artistic quality should take priority. This change in ideological position is concurrent with a shift in his musical style. Within a relatively short space of time, Krenek moved away from the jazz-influenced style found in *Jonny* and *Der Sprung über den Schatten,* to another, 'neo-Romantic' tonal style (between 1927 and 1931), as in *Reisebuch aus den österreichischen Alpen,* and then to serial technique, which made its first appearance in the *Gesänge des späten Jahres* of 1931. Krenek expressed his new aesthetic position in his writings: in an essay of 1932, he wrote that cultural values should not be aimed at the 'capacity of the lowest level', as such a strategy is 'risky'.[4] Similarly, in 1944, he wrote:

> Far be it from me to intimate that worthy intellectual achievements, like for instance, the understanding and enjoyment of art, are accessible to unusually talented and especially trained persons only.... if the abode of the artist appears solitary, aristocratic, and precious and frail, it does so because most people are contenting themselves with undeservedly miserable intellectual habitations, although they could live in a state of comparative luxury if they would decide to make proper use of the faculties granted to nearly all of them by their creator.[5]

By 1953, Krenek saw the cultural movements of the mid-twenties, of which with *Jonny* he was a part, in a critical light, denouncing the 'dehumanizing effects of

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[4] Krenek, 'The Freedom of the Human Spirit', in *Exploring Music,* 65.
[5] Krenek, 'The Ivory Tower', in *Exploring Music,* 162.

mass production and commercialization, the appalling vulgarization of political and social relations after 1914, the ever increasing gap between physical accomplishments and spiritual standards.'[6]

In the events of his life after *Jonny spielt auf,* Krenek vividly shows the dilemma of a composer caught up in often contradictory ideas of how an artist should position himself or herself within modern society. While *Jonny spielt auf* advocated a unification with society, Krenek showed afterwards that he could not completely distance himself from Romantic aesthetics in order to assimilate with the modern world. He remained ambivalently caught between desiring recognition and adhering to the demand, found in Romanticism and modernism, that art be autonomous from society. The success of *Jonny spielt auf* gave Krenek financial independence, which could have given him the opportunity, had he so wanted, to retreat into his ivory tower and close the door firmly behind him.[7] This solution did not satisfy him: he later wrote that while his financial independence enabled him to be as 'intransigent and esoteric' as he wished, 'the practical component' of his nature was still frustrated, as he 'was not given any opportunity to accomplish things here and now'.[8] Stylistically, the success of the opera did not precipitate a life-long understanding between Krenek and his audience on which he could capitalise; once he had been labelled as a 'popular' composer, his serious works attracted little attention amongst those who liked *Jonny,* and the musical style to which he returned was not understood.[9] 'Serious' composers, on the other hand,

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[6] Krenek, 'Self-Analysis', 6. Krenek said that his change in aesthetics and musical style around 1930 was a general shift of perspective which was entirely internally motivated. However, Krenek's friendship with the sociologist T.W. Adorno almost certainly precipitated the composer's reappraisal of his position towards society and his audiences. The two men first met in 1924, although their friendship did not really begin until 1928. Krenek began corresponding with Adorno from 1931, and the views on art which he betrayed in his later writings seem to bear the imprint of the sociologist's thought. Krenek's decision to distance himself from *Jonny* could also be linked to Adorno's influence, given the latter's disdain for jazz and popular music. See Theodor W. Adorno & Ernst Krenek, *Briefwechsel,* ed. Wolfgang Rogge (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1974). Also see Gieseler, '"Was an der Zeit ist"', Stewart, 'The Composer Views His Time', in *Horizons Circled,* and Krenek, 'New Humanity and Old Objectivity', in *Exploring Music.*

[7] Krenek, 'Self-Analysis', 19.

[8] Ibid., 23.

[9] Ibid., 17.

rejected the opportunism he was deemed to have displayed by writing *Jonny spielt auf.*[10]

Like *Jonny spielt auf,* Pfitzner's and Hindemith's operas explore ideas of artistic identity, although unlike Krenek, neither of these composers distanced themselves from their works in subsequent years. The reception of Pfitzner's opera did not seem to deviate from the composer's own ideas about the work, although, as in Krenek's case, the relationship to the world which the hero of the opera has was not to prove viable as a long-term strategy for the composer's self-placement in musical life. The conclusion of the opera, in which the artist retreats from the world around him, is not paralleled by Pfitzner. While he remained faithful in theory to the artistic ideal he had presented in his opera, his continuing engagement with society is demonstrated by his political involvement, both at the time of the opera's composition and later. In addition to the political views expressed in his polemics, he dedicated music to political figures, such as his two *Deutsche Gesänge für Bariton und Orchester,* op.25, of 1916, which he dedicated to Fleet Admiral von Tirpitz, the commander of the navy.[11] His *Krakauer Begrüßung* (1944) was dedicated to his friend and leading Nazi official, Hans Frank, while he wrote his *Fons Salutifer* (1941) as a commission for the National Socialists.[12] Pfitzner wrote manifestly nationalist works throughout his life, such as his 1921 'romantic cantata', *Von deutscher Seele.* In the Third Reich, he had contacts with the *Reichsmusikkammer,* and despite sometimes exasperated relations with the Nazi

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[10] Zenck, 'The Ship Loaded with Faith and Hope. Krenek's *Karl V* and the Viennese Politics of the Thirties', *Musical Quarterly* 71/2 (1985), 119. Also see Krenek, 'Self-Analysis', 17, and *Im Atem der Zeit,* 651.

[11] Mann comments that by dedicating his piece to Tirpitz, Pfitzner 'politicized' himself, while still being unequivocally 'nationalist' and 'antidemocratic' *(Reflections,* 312-313). Of course, in saying this, Mann contradicts his own insistence that one cannot be 'national', 'antidemocratic' and 'political' at the same time.

[12] Vogel, *Hans Pfitzner,* 106; Ashley, 'In Sympathy with Death', 39. For more details of Pfitzner's relationship to the Nazis, also see Williamson, *The Music of Hans Pfitzner,* 322 ff. A selection of Pfitzner's writings was republished during the Nazi era, edited by Alfred Morgenroth, imperatively entitled *Hört auf Hans Pfitzner! Kernsätze deutscher Kunstgesinnung aus seinen Schriften und Reden (Listen to Hans Pfitzner! Essential Texts on German Attitudes to Art from his Writings)* (Berlin: Bernhard Hahnefeld Verlag, 1938). Although, as far as can be ascertained, this was not an official National Socialist publication, its reissuing at this time demonstrates the appositeness of Pfitzner's ideas to the regime. There was also an official *Kraft durch Freude* publication on Pfitzner, by Ludwig Schrott *(Hans Pfitzner.* Schriftenreihe des Amtes Kulturgemeinde der N.S.-Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude' (Berlin-Halensee, n.d. [post-1937])). See Franklin, 'Audiences, Critics', 89.

hierarchy, tried for some time to make headway into the establishment before giving up when faced with official intransigence. Such behaviour is obviously 'political' in the narrow sense: it demonstrates Pfitzner's collusion with very specific political groups. As a conservative, Pfitzner himself may well have not considered such actions to be 'political', just as Mann thought himself to be a 'nonpolitical man'.

In Hindemith's case, the composer stayed true to the idea of serving the people expressed both in *Mathis der Maler* and in his ideas of *Gebrauchsmusik,* as well as resuscitating his mystical conception of music in his 1957 opera, *Die Harmonie der Welt. Mathis der Maler* is a turning-point in the composer's oeuvre, with which Hindemith decisively distanced himself from his earlier avant-garde works, and manifested a conservative stance which would remain consistent in his music and aesthetics in later years. It could be argued that *Mathis der Maler,* like *Jonny spielt auf,* was misinterpreted during its early reception, although unlike Krenek, Hindemith did not correct the view of the opera in which Mathis is supposed to retreat, perhaps because this misreading helped to protect the composer's reputation in the face of Nazism.

In addition to the ideas about society within each opera, the previous three chapters have shown that it is all but impossible to separate aesthetic beliefs from political ones, both being different facets of the same personal ideology. An attitude about art *is* an attitude towards society: the stance taken on the place art should have in the world necessarily carries with it a statement on the nature of society in some form. The positions presented by Pfitzner, Krenek and Hindemith in their *Künstleropern* are symptomatic of the larger cultural debate within musical circles in Germany at this time concerning the nature of composers' interaction with society, a debate to which such composers as Strauss, Weill, Schoenberg, and Schreker also contributed. All of these composers wrote works which figure an artist-character, as evidenced in Chapter 1 or Appendix 2. Other works of the period reflected on the position of the individual within society in other ways, Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* being a prime example. Some composers, for

instance Eisler and to some extent Weill, are conspicuous in using explicitly political music to serve a defined political aim, and in doing so, attempting to make music which could cross the perceived composer-audience gap. Space does not allow a detailed investigation of these composers here, but all could be profitably studied to shed further light on the issues presented in this dissertation. Similarly, the approach I have adopted could be extended to instrumental, and particularly absolute, music. Lawrence Kramer has written that textless instrumental music can contain 'discursive meanings' which are not 'extramusical' and which are 'produced as a part of the general circulation of regulated practices and valuations - part, in other words, of the continuous production and reproduction of culture.'[13] The possibility of a 'broad' political representation in music has already been explored by musicologists, but 'narrowly' political ideas have yet to be considered with reference to absolute music.

Questions such as how an artist should present himself or herself to the world, and what it means to be an artist, have remained central for composers throughout the twentieth century. The belief that artists should be above society and should not concern themselves with reaching an audience has been retained in modernism, thus perpetuating the aesthetics of Romanticism. This philosophy still tenaciously persists through the continuing fascination with the idea of genius and the reverencing of 'Art', and in the protestations of high modernists that audiences are irrelevant. Other composers, though, have rejected this aesthetic, attempting to reach an audience through populist means. Whatever position a composer takes, the relationship of an artist to the audience, and the artist's role within late twentieth-century society, remain a matter of debate, both for composers themselves and for those engaged with music, as listeners, performers, or administrators. The position of audiences, in particular, towards twentieth-century 'art' music has come increasingly to the fore, with most displaying ambivalence, sometimes even hostility. The reassessment of the artist's place in society, which was debated in the

[13] Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice,* 1-2.

early decades of the century, is still a contested issue; the questions which Pfitzner, Krenek, Hindemith, and others, investigated in their *Künstleropern* continue to be relevant today.

Appendix 1

Opera Synopses

a) Palestrina

Act One

Scene 1

As the scene begins, Palestrina's pupil Silla is singing one of his own compositions, 'Schönste, ungnäd'ge Dame'. Silla wants to leave Rome to join the Florentines, whose music attracts him more than does Palestrina's.

Scene 2

Silla is joined by Ighino, the composer's son, who tells Silla about his father's despair since his wife, Lukrezia, died. Palestrina's pain is so great that he can no longer compose. Ighino is worried about his father, and is himself becoming miserable at the apparent hopelessness of the world. Silla interrupts his friend's contemplations, and insists on performing his song for him.

Scene 3

As Silla is singing, Palestrina enters with the Cardinal Borromeo. After Borromeo chastises the boy for such 'strange cacophony', Palestrina tells the Cardinal how his own, traditional, art is threatened by this new music. Borromeo tells him that a far greater danger for music is in prospect than the new style of the Florentines. As part of the debates of the Council of Trent on the constitution of the church service, the Pope has decided that sung mass should be banned from the Church, because it has become incomprehensible. Luckily, the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Ferdinand, has persuaded the Pope to delay his final decision until a 'trial mass' has been written, which will show him the glories of polyphony and how it may work for the praise of God. Palestrina has been chosen to write this mass. Palestrina, though, refuses: because of the death of his wife, he has lost the ability to compose. Despite Borromeo's threats and persuasion, the composer is resolute. Borromeo exits in anger, ominously telling Palestrina that he will regret his refusal.

Scene 4

Palestrina, left behind in shock at Borromeo's vehemence, bemoans his lot. His 'last friend' has left him without understanding his problem, and he describes how he feels alone and despairing in the world.

Scene 5

At this moment, a group of figures appears. They are the 'Nine Dead Masters of Composition', Palestrina's musical forebears; the identity of all of them is not revealed, although Josquin is one, and 'Tedesc' Enrico' is another. The Masters tell Palestrina that he must compose the mass, because God wishes it. Palestrina, however, still resists, and as the apparitions fade away, he again feels his solitude.

Scene 6

Palestrina calls to heaven, and is answered: an angel starts to sing a Kyrie, heard, but not seen, by the composer. He is suddenly inspired, and takes up his pen to begin writing with vigour. The angel is joined by others, and as this angelic chorus augments, Palestrina feels joy in his creativity. In the midst of this creative enthusiasm, the figure of the composer's dead wife, Lukrezia, appears, although again he cannot see her. She reassures him of her spiritual presence near him before fading from view. As the angels disappear and the mass is completed, Palestrina falls asleep surrounded by his manuscript.

Scene 7

Silla and Ighino find the composer asleep in his room, and marvel at his sudden productivity.

Act Two

Scene 1

The Council of Trent. The Cardinal Legate Novagerio and the Master of Ceremonies Severolus prepare the room for the meeting. Novagerio warns the servants not to get into any fights, as they had done recently.

Scene 2

The Prince-Bishop of Trent, Madruscht, arrives, followed by Borromeo. The clerics converse politely.

Scene 3

As more Council members arrive, Borromeo and Novagerio talk about political issues, and then about the mass which Palestrina is supposed to be composing. Borromeo tells Novagerio that after the composer's refusal, he had him thrown into jail.

Scene 4

Madruscht, Novagerio, Borromeo and the Cardinal of Lorraine converse about the forthcoming meeting. A group of Spaniards observe and make derogatory comments on the group of Italians, who talk amongst themselves. The Patriarch of Assyria, Abdisu, arrives. Severus requests that everyone take their places so that the meeting can begin.

Scene 5

After an introductory prayer, the Cardinal Legate, Morone, moves through the points on the agenda, including a short discussion on the trial mass. However, dissension quickly breaks out amongst the Council members: they cannot agree in what order the points should be discussed, and some members complain about the haste in which they are being rushed through. Lorraine objects to how the Spanish ambassador, Count Luna, has been given a chair in a privileged position, and the two of them begin to argue. The argument spreads, until Luna finally cries that he will invite the Protestants to the debate, when 'pandemonium' breaks out. Morone adjourns the meeting until later in the day.

Scene 6

Some of the principal clerics discuss what has just occurred.

Scene 7

After the clergymen have left, a further argument breaks out between their servants, in disregard of their earlier vow to keep the peace. Madruscht solves this civil disturbance by ordering that those brawling be shot down.

Act Three

Scene 1

Palestrina's room. The composer has been released from prison, as Ighino told the authorities about the existence of the mass. As the scene begins, the work is being performed elsewhere for the Pope. Palestrina, Ighino and some of Palestrina's choristers wait around nervously for the Pope's decision. Suddenly, voices can be heard in the distance which proclaim 'Long live Palestrina! Long live the saviour of music!'.

Scene 2

The Pope's entourage enters, making hurried preparations for the pontiff's imminent appearance. He arrives, and praises the beauty of Palestrina's music before asking the composer to lead his choir once more. After the Pope departs, Borromeo and Palestrina are reconciled. Ighino leaves to celebrate with the crowds outside.

Scene 3

Palestrina sits down at his organ in contemplation, and asks God to 'forge me as the final stone on one of your thousand rings'. The happy shouts of 'Evviva!' outside are juxtaposed with Palestrina's quiet improvisations on the organ, which end the work.

b) Jonny spielt auf

Part One

Scene 1

The composer Max is found on a glacier, admiring the scenery. There he meets Anita, a singer, and after conversing, the two of them leave the mountain together.

Scene 2

Max and Anita have become lovers, and are living together. Anita is about to leave to sing in Max's latest opera in Paris. Max complains about her leaving him; as they are waiting for her car to arrive, the two of them rehearse a song from his opera, 'Als ich damals am Strand des Meeres stand'.

Scene 3

The hotel in Paris where Anita is staying, Yvonne, a chambermaid, and Jonny, a jazz musician, sing a comical love duet. Jonny tells Yvonne how he wishes to steal the violin belonging to Daniello, a famous violinist also staying at the hotel. Daniello arrives and promptly leaves again, surrounded by autograph hunters. Anita returns from the opera, and is propositioned by Jonny; Daniello reappears and throws some money to Jonny to distract him from Anita. Anita thanks Daniello, and the two leave together. Yvonne and Jonny argue about his behaviour and resolve never to see each other again. Anita and Daniello return, and, after Anita has decided not to catch the train she was planning to take, they disappear together into her room. Meanwhile, Jonny steals Daniello's violin from its case, putting it into Anita's banjo case for safekeeping.

Scene 4

The next morning. Anita takes her leave of Daniello, who is annoyed at her returning to another man. He discovers the theft of his violin, and the Hotel Manager sacks Yvonne, suspecting her of the crime. Anita promptly appoints Yvonne as her maid. Daniello gives Yvonne the ring which Anita has just given to him, and asks her to pass it on to Max. Jonny announces his resignation, as, he says, he fears for the safety of his own violin. After a chorus, Anita and Yvonne leave the hotel, carrying the banjo case.

Part Two

Scene 5

The same evening as in Scene 4. Max anxiously awaits Anita's return, realising she has not caught the train she was intending to.

Scene 6

The next morning. Anita returns, and argues with Max about her behaviour in returning late and leaving him alone. Yvonne presents Max with Anita's ring, telling him it comes from Daniello; Max, realising her infidelity, departs in despair for the glacier. Jonny appears to reclaim the hidden violin, and is reconciled with Yvonne. Anita discovers from Yvonne what has happened concerning her ring.

Scene 7

Max alone on the glacier. He is contemplating throwing himself from it, and appeals to the mountain to speak to him, which it does. The glacier tells him that it cannot help him, but that he must 'return to life'. As the glacier's voice fades away, Max becomes even more despairing, until he suddenly hears Anita's voice singing his song, 'Als ich damals', being carried from the radio loudspeaker in the hotel at the foot of the mountain. He decides he must return to Anita. The song is replaced by jazz music, played by Jonny on his new violin. Daniello, who is staying in the mountain hotel, hears it, recognises his violin's tone and calls the police.

Scene 8

Jonny is on the run, followed by three policemen.

Scene 9

Having returned from the mountain, Max is waiting for Anita at the railway station, as she is about to leave for America. Jonny appears and puts the violin with Max's luggage; the police arrest Max and take him away. Anita and Yvonne arrive and wait for the train and for Max; Daniello gloatingly tells them that Max has been arrested. Yvonne, who knows the truth about the violin, tells Anita she will go and find Jonny and persuade him to confess so that Max will be released. Daniello tries to stop Yvonne leaving, and in the struggle, he falls under an incoming train.

Scene 10

Thinking that the police will soon retrieve the violin, Jonny disguises himself as the police chauffeur. As he is waiting in the car, Yvonne pleads with him to save Max. The policemen arrive with the composer, and as he is being driven away, Max first despairs, and then resolves to escape and return to Anita. He tells the chauffeur, not knowing who it is, to return to the station, and Jonny does so.

Scene 11

Anita and Yvonne anxiously await Max's and Jonny's return, as the train is about to depart. They arrive, and Max leaps onto the train just as it is moving away. Jonny remains in the station and plays the violin, triumphally seated on top of the station clock. The clock turns into a revolving globe, as the chorus sings that 'time is up for the old ways, the new time is at hand. Don't miss your connection, the journey is beginning into the unknown land of freedom'. The soloists then reappear in front of the fallen curtain to finish the opera, at the end revealing Jonny through the crack in the curtain, still playing the violin.

c) Mathis der Maler

Tableau 1

The painter Mathis is in a monastery, where he has spent the last year working. He is in the service of Albrecht, the Archbishop of Mainz, and has been given a year's sabbatical. Mathis is racked by doubt about the purpose of his painting, asking himself 'Is it enough that you create and paint?'. As he is brooding on the meaning of his art, Schwalb, the leader of the peasants' uprising, bursts in with his young daughter Regina; they are being pursued by the government's forces. Schwalb scorns Mathis's art; he tells the painter about the peasants' misery, and Mathis resolves to leave his art and join their fight. He helps the peasant leader to escape just before the leader of the army, Sylvester, arrives on the scene; in discovering his quarry gone, he tells Mathis that he will bring this dangerous behaviour to the attention of his patron.

Tableau 2

Mainz. Albrecht's entourage and the townspeople are awaiting the Archbishop's return from his travels. Brawling breaks out between the Catholics and the Lutherans, with the 'humanist students' deriding both parties; the fighting only ceases as Albrecht, unaware of the conflict, enters. Albrecht is visited by a rich merchant of the town, Riedinger, a Lutheran, who asks the Archbishop to stop the impending burning of 'heretical' books. Albrecht, outraged, vows to do so, but after Riedinger's departure is persuaded out of his resolution by his advisors, Pommersfelden and Capito. The advisors bring Albrecht's attention to his impending financial crisis, and they realise that Riedinger could help them. But without the situation being resolved, Sylvester enters and tells Albrecht of Mathis's insubordination in having helped Schwalb and Regina to escape. Albrecht asks Mathis to explain himself, but the painter pleads with his patron to have mercy on the peasants. Albrecht reluctantly relieves Mathis of his duties, as he requests, so that he can go and fight.

Tableau 3

The bonfire for the 'heretical' Lutheran books is taking place. Riedinger is furious, but is deflected from his rage when Capito shows him a letter from Luther to Albrecht, in which Luther entreats the Archbishop to marry. By doing so, he would join together the opposing factions; if he marries a woman from a wealthy family,

his financial problems would also be solved. Riedinger proposes his daughter Ursula for this marriage; Ursula is in fact Mathis's lover. She is told of the plan, but is unenthusiastic. As she is left alone deliberating, Mathis enters to tell her that, despite his love for her, he is going to leave her in order to join the peasants' fight. Faced with this situation, Ursula reluctantly agrees to her father's plan.

Tableau 4

The peasant army, who have just captured an aristocrat, kill him and then torment his wife. Mathis tries to stop them, telling them how they are becoming just as bad as their oppressors, but they do not listen to him. The government army arrives outside, and a battle takes place; everyone except Mathis and Regina are killed. Mathis despairs once more: he realises that fighting, like art, is also useless. Not knowing what to do any more, he departs from the scene with Regina.

Tableau 5

Albrecht refuses to marry as his advisors wish him to, but, as Capito points out, he is not far from bankruptcy and is running out of options. Albrecht finally agrees to meet the woman whom they have planned for him, and is astonished to see Ursula. He is impressed with the lengths that she is prepared to go to for her faith, and resolves not to marry her, but to relinquish his life of luxury.

Tableau 6

Mathis and Regina travel through a wood. The painter tries to calm the girl's fears, and starts telling her a story which paints a picture of angels who play music. As Regina falls asleep, strange visions appear to Mathis, who sees himself as St. Anthony; various characters appear before him as personified 'temptations'. They all try to persuade Mathis to indulge in their own particular vices. As they close in on him, along with a chorus of demons, Mathis does his best to resist. As he does so, Albrecht appears, in the form of St. Paul. He tells Mathis that he has been 'ungrateful and unfaithful' to God by denying his talent for painting, and in doing so has only deprived his people. Albrecht exhorts him to return to painting, so that God may work through his art and so that he can best serve his people. Mathis realises the error of his ways, and the two men sing praises to heaven and earth.

Tableau 7

Mathis sleeps while Ursula tends the dying Regina. Ursula tells how the painter found a new burst of creativity upon his return, which has exhausted him. Ursula wakes Mathis as Regina takes her last breaths. After an interlude, the now solitary Mathis is joined by Albrecht, who offers the painter his house, but Mathis declines. Mathis feels that he too will shortly die, and Albrecht assures him that his work will be remembered 'eternally'. After Albrecht has left, Mathis packs away his belongings, including his brushes, some books, and the ribbon which he had given to Regina on their first meeting, and which she returned to him as she died.

Appendix 2

German Operas Written Between 1912 and 1935 Featuring Artists or the Idea of Art

1912: Schreker, *Der ferne Klang* (Composer - Fritz)
Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos* ('The Composer'. Also a Music Teacher, a Dancing Teacher, a Primadonna and actors)

1913: Schoenberg, *Die glückliche Hand* ('The Man' makes jewels)
Schreker, *Das Spielwerk und die Prinzessin* (Centres around the mechanical instrument *(Spielwerk)* created by Meister Florian, and the ability of the 'Wandering Youth' to make it sound when he plays his flute)

1915: Pfitzner, *Palestrina* (Composer)

1918: Schreker, *Die Gezeichneten* (Painter - Carlotta. Also Alviano, who has created a wonderful garden)

1920: Schreker, *Der Schatzgräber* (Minstrel - Elis)

1923: Krenek, *Orpheus und Eurydike*
Krenek, *Der Sprung über den Schatten* (Poet - Goldhaar)
Schreker, *Irrelohe* (Musician - Christobald)

1924: Strauss, *Intermezzo* ('Kapellmeister' Robert Storch)

1925: Weill, *Der Protagonist* (About a group of actors)

1926: Hindemith, *Cardillac* (Jeweller - Cardillac)
Krenek, *Jonny spielt auf* (Composer - Max; Jazz musician - Jonny)

1927: Schreker, *Der singende Teufel* (Organist/Organ Builder - Amandus. The 'singing devil' of the title refers to the organ)

1929: Schreker, *Christophorus* (About a group of music students and their teacher)

1935: Hindemith, *Mathis der Maler* (Painter - Mathis)
Berg, *Lulu* (Composer - Alwa)

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