Music on the Eve of the Third Reich

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Das Musikleben ist kein Leben für die Musik.
Theodor W. Adorno

Ohne eine tragende Gemeinschaft, die dahintersteht, ist das musikalische Kunstwerk--im eigentlichen Sinne ein Gemeinschaftswerk--nicht lebensfähig.
Wilhelm Furtwängler

In view of its problems, tenuousness, and brevity, and its proximity and special relationship to the Third Reich, the Weimar Republic has commonly been called a crisis state. Numerous contemporary commentators and later historians have examined the economics, politics, and culture of Germany between 1919 and 1933 in terms of liberal, democratic, socialist, and conservative principles that were instituted to varying degrees in the period, only to then be abolished or channeled into the totalitarian dictatorship of National Socialism in 1933. The ideals reemerged and were reinstituted in the post-World War II era, again in various combinations in both German successor states, and became the ideological framework for the historical analyses of conditions in the Weimar Republic. In sympathy with select Weimar ideals and horrified over the Third Reich, postwar and Holocaust historians have not been able to deal with the Weimar Republic discretely. Cultural achievement, though acknowledged, consistently has been seen through the shadow of Auschwitz. Yet, the sense of doom, crisis, and failure is not the exclusive product of retrospection; it is contained in self-conscious Weimar commentary and introspection.

A creature of momentous historical forces and circumstance, the Weimar Republic had its Vernunftrepublikaner who entertained reservations about the new order but accepted it. Progressive intellectuals shared with them a historical perspective, one of
comparison and contradiction; a view of existence that stressed change, to some, even considered to be its essential feature. Some progressives responded affirmatively to the new order, others focused on its promise of a genuine republic. The well-known opposition from the Right, known to students of German history as the formulators of "the politics of cultural despair," the representatives of "the roots of the Nazi mind," or the völkisch-fascist or conservative revolution, rejected the new order of outsiders altogether and entertained visions of permanence and a hidden true order, which it was their duty to bring out into the open and thus to realize.  

Those who cried "crisis" the loudest actually also rejected the historical view of the world; they joined those who studied change and felt it was for the worse. Against modern developments they undialectically upheld eternal values and primal states: a world of unchanging phenomena and characteristics. Musicians and music commentators shared in the response to an assumed cultural crisis at large and in music specifically; they supported ideological rhetoric through their expert analysis of an alleged musical crisis, the result of the latter's alienation from both the community and itself. What follows will not be a survey of music on the eve of the Third Reich but rather a focus on the perception of crisis in music, which reflected and reinforced the ideological formulation of crisis in Germany.

Stripped of ideological jargon, the crisis in music is an expression of the inevitable tension between institutional and dynamic art and between different generations of artists. Having matured to Germany's outstanding and internationally recognized cultural institution, music suffered from its own success. From its lofty and seemingly autonomous position, official music reacted pompously to threats from within and naively to external threats. To knowledgeable composers, the happy reconciliation of music's objective materials and the musician's subjective imagination, as manifested in the celebrated musical creations of the tradition, as well as the fortunate harmony between the institutions and their sustaining creative activities, appeared to be fundamentally disturbed by profound changes in society and music's attendant social function and in response to radical developments in the art itself. Even the harmonious relationship between the different musical elements, a precondition for the reconciliation of objective materials and subjective impulses, and between inherited structural forms and their transformation seemed to lead toward imminent destruction of the tradition. Although previous revolutions in music were known to have been assimilated into the mainstream and thus to have enriched the musical heritage, at this moment of acute social crisis the apparently disrespectful and disintegrating impulses of the avant-garde pointed in a little understood direction, and against established patterns of expression and standards of taste. Traditionalists feared for the existence of music and civilization.
At issue was the fundamental attitude toward reality alluded to above: Is change, indeed, the dialectic understanding of contradiction and development, the characteristic and necessary trait of Western music, or had music evolved toward an ideal state of aesthetic experience, as manifested in the reconciliation of the demands of the material and subjective imagination and between the elements themselves, and in the ultimate creative achievement of the tonal order and rules of harmony which offer the comforts of structure as well as the flexibility to constantly challenge and satisfy innovative spirits? In numerous essays and letters to younger composers, Germany's celebrated conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler urged them to write the music they felt they must, always stressing the human factor in relationship to the musical material. Musical progressives responded with reference to a development in style and technique, as well as an inner dynamic of music that compels generational adjustment. Musicologists today still argue the same issue of free will and determinism. Peter Yates speaks of music as an unbroken series of events that determine another: during the seventeenth century, all roads led to Bach; during the nineteenth to Schönberg. William Austin, on the other hand, challenges notions of a compelling dialectic of the material by noting that major composers like Strauss, Ravel, and Ralph Vaughan Williams do not fit into the stylistic and technical evolution from Wagner to Schönberg. Reminiscent of Furtwängler, he suggests that composers choose to write the kind of music they wish to write, regardless of a place assigned them by determinists. Acknowledging major and representative milestones in the evolution of modern music, he nonetheless recognizes wide divergence from predetermined patterns.

The response to an alleged crisis of modern music in the Weimar period involved progressive and conservative formulations that overlapped and became confused with ideological categories and positions. Musicians themselves have contributed to this confusion. At least by the time of Carl Maria von Weber they had become accustomed to explaining their artistic and technical principles in music criticism, music theory, and teaching, which readily expanded into general cultural criticism with ideological overtones. It has been argued that the need for explanation, as opposed to simply composing and musicmaking, might itself be regarded as a symptom of crisis. This is in large part due to the fact that in a period of artistic upheaval, creative artists find themselves first of all sharply aware of their own relationship to their traditional inheritance and to the directions in which they feel impelled to extend or even to reject it. Secondly, they find themselves in a period in which the formulated notions regarding musical aesthetics, musical theory, and musical syntax have long lost the vitality they once possessed,
impelled or even obliged to arrive at what are at last working formulations of their own. If they are not to remain in relative solitude, they are also likely to communicate these formulations.\(^6\)

The assessment of music in the Weimar period was tied to general Weltanschauung and politics, as both the Republic and the autonomy of music were at stake. A book published by Erich Valentin in 1939 on Hans Pfitzner, *Volk und Gestalt eines Deutschen* expressly tied music to politics and traced the origin of the cultural-political parties of the Weimar period to Wagner's time, when music began to disintegrate into its components and lost its communal links, and the individual was deprived of the security of community and tradition.\(^7\) Wagner's völkisch notions of a revitalized national community, the communal function of art, and the reintegration of the discrete arts into the ritualistic Gesamtkunstwerk provided the inspiration for the Nazi author who thus introduced the traditionalist-völkisch Pfitzner as Wagner's heir in the 1920s. Yet, spokesmen of modern music also acclaimed the Wagnerian tradition for its contributions to the expansion of traditional harmony and other modernist innovations.

The Weimar parties agreed on the significance of Wagner, particularly his *Tristan-Vorspiel* (1859), as the first clear expression of an alleged disintegration of harmony—of our Western system of tonality. What to musical progressives initiated progress, liberation, and the expansion of new tonal possibilities, to alarmed pessimists constituted the beginning of a process of increasing decay at the end of which appeared the formalized twelve-tone music to which man no longer related. A Schönhberg's student, Winfried Zillig, has analyzed this evolution of music in sympathetic terms in a 1966 publication, as an organic process of the dialectically evolving and constantly re-integrating musical materials. A system-immanent theory informs this history, which traces musical progress through focus on major composers since Wagner. Zillig identifies with those progressives who have interpreted Wagner as a revolutionary and antibourgeois, who was kidnapped by reaction, the bourgeois, soldier organizations, and finally National Socialism. To him, Wagner's "honor your great German masters" has been distorted into serving the purpose of denouncing good German musicians and condemning the development which had become possible and necessary through the revolutionary innovations in music since the disintegration of tonality. Like nuclear physics, which since Einstein's theories has upset a traditional and honored view of science, Wagner's musical development has fundamentally questioned the sanctified order of tonality to such an extent that Tristan can be called an atonal work.\(^8\)

Through the analysis of radical works of Wagner, Debussy, Reger, Strauss, and others, Zillig is able to present German nationalists and racialists with a dilemma: Their national heroes, predominantly acceptable on national and racial grounds, have contributed to
the modern tradition, which for aesthetic-political reasons had become unacceptable in the Third Reich.

RADICALISM

Our understanding of the progressive interpretation of music in system-immanent, philosophical, and social terms is much enriched by the radical music sociology of Theodor W. Adorno, formulated in large part in post-Weimar times. It is he who has examined the paradox of Wagner's reactionary, anti-Semitic, authoritarian personal behavior, writing, and political agitation relative to his revolutionary musical oeuvre, noting, with respect to his strictly musical achievement, contradictory ideological impulses of ambiguous consequence. Sharing Nietzsche's and Thomas Mann's ambivalent attitude towards Wagner, he has clearly identified the musical wizzard as a Nazi forebear, who at the same time negated fascist cultural policies through aspects of his lifestyle and the revolutionary consequences of his work. Adorno's extended examination of Wagner is crucial for the study of pre-Third Reich fascism and anti-Semitism, in view of the methodology and insights of the author and the significance of Wagner as perhaps the outstanding cultural hero of the Nazis, certainly of Hitler. Yet, in some earlier Weimar-period essays, "On the Social Significance of Music" and "Reaction and Progress," Adorno already had captured the spirit of our topic and emerged as a most perceptive apologist of the avant-garde, especially of the Schönberg variety, and a critic of Weimar's music culture at large in both system-immanent, that is strictly musical, as well as social terms. His critical analysis of music serves both as object and conceptual framework of this study. Even though suffused with classical reductionist analysis of art as a reflection of social trends and anathema to traditional Ideengeschichte, that is, the study of ideas in a social vacuum, his thought rejects the "fetishization" of either material or cultural structure. The essence of his dialectically conceived reality rather lies in "force fields" between objective conditions and subjective imagination. In order to free the arts, especially music, for a liberating and critical role—central to his concern—he insisted on the integrity of music, its necessary autonomy, and the need for the composer to grasp its substance at the most recent and progressive level of historical development; thus he was able to illustrate through music the meaning of "Critical Theory," that negative and critical system of analysis that would be impossible without the positing of genuine dialectic tension. Music had to transform itself, as well as "portray through its own structure the social antinomies responsible for its isolation." Stressing autonomy with reference to the objective condition of the art, "negative dialectics," and the application of this anti-affirmative philosophical premise to music, Adorno differed from both "vulgar" Marxian reductionists, the promoters of socialist realism, as well as traditionalists and reactionaries, who variously stressed the affirmative function, rationalization,
and administration of music, and thus ill-advisedly treated what to him was an abstract and critical expression as "reified"—alienated, an object for consumption and manipulation.

Central to Adorno's exposition of traditional bourgeois understanding of music and the symbolic worth of music to the bourgeois ideology of individualism—regressive and status-quo-oriented in current social context as revealed by him and other critical theorists elsewhere—was the questioning of inherited notions of individual creativity. For one, he found the artistic subject to be not only individual but social as well, thus unintentionally expressing objective social tendencies. Moreover, he insisted that not single works, but the development on the level of music's materials constitutes the level of progress in art as developed by generations of composers. Even though he warned composers against simply wishing "to meet the demands of the time," he insisted that the freedom of the composer is curtailed by historically evolved elements and that the meeting place of a material dialectic and freedom of the composer is the concrete work itself, the result of a process that sets each artistic creation apart from another. It was this focus on the historically evolved material, the insistence on autonomy, and the disregard for the affirmative function of music within a concurrently formulated notion of a Volksgemeinschaft, that, for a variety of reasons, offended large segments of the bourgeois concert-going public, traditionalist nationalists, as well as "vulgar" Marxists. Adorno had moved from reductionist Marxian aesthetics, which characterized the earlier work of the Institute of Social Research, to the defense of music's autonomy, its utopian and even transcendental powers, because of his conception of music's crisis in this overly rationalized and administered world, no less represented in Zhdanov's socialist realism of the 1930s than in the market-oriented music of the Weimar Republic or the artificial and manipulated folk music of the Third Reich's Blut und Boden cult.

Adorno's relentless dialectic raised questions about all expressions of Weimar's celebrated music culture, including the modernist section, thus contributing to the sense of crisis that would otherwise perhaps be hidden by the richness of its achievement, its affirmative function, and the positive commentary that it attracted. Furtwängler, for one, called German music "the clearest, most joyful and profoundly characteristic manifestation of the German spirit, the most original and artistic accomplishment of all modern peoples." And Artur Schnabel noted in an American lecture that "the German audiences in the medium-size towns ... knew most of the music they went to hear at concerts ... (and) there was probably not one in these audiences who was not involved, actively or passively, in home-made music." Having inherited from nineteenth-century political entities a cultural network of excellent stages, orchestras, operas, and
choruses, the Weimar state fulfilled its responsibility to music, which was sheltered, organized, and well attended. Although underneath this prosperity existed the conflict between music's institutional and practical needs and the claims of the autonomous artist, the resulting tension did not have only negative consequences, since it contributed to the radical music of the period which, in part, reacted against the commercial exploitation of the traditional idiom. Central to all musical controversy was Berlin, which had originally strengthened its position with the abolition of the courts, while Munich, Stuttgart, Dresden, and other cities had declined. Boasting three opera houses which offered new works of Strauss, Korngold, D'Albert, Berg, and others, Berlin attracted great singers, chamber groups, performers, and conductors. Here the public witnessed experimentation in literature, art, film, theater, and music. An international elite flourished around musical institutions and in the salons, especially the salons of Peter Landecker, owner of Berlin's Philharmonie Hall, and that of Louise Wolff of the Wolff & Sachs concert agency, attended by businessmen, politicians, and artists. The various musical factions were represented by great numbers of critics and journals, all contributing to the general excitement of the age. 19

The general trends of twentieth-century music concentrated in Weimar Germany. Its many concert halls presented the offerings from the past—itself reassuring to traditionalist concert-goers but alarming to others, who deplored the increasing performance of compositions of dead composers over those of live ones. Moreover, traditionalist impulses governed much of the contemporary offerings from neoromantic to neoclassic and new versions of nationalism—in toto, the kind of composition which, when integrated with the völkisch cult of the German folk song, was to find favor in the Third Reich under direct sponsorship of the Reichsmusikkammer. 20 In addition to this openly regressive music culture, Adorno added that of an avowedly progressive nature to his critical analysis, a more demanding task, which required more careful decoding. Expressionism, for instance, the avant-garde rage in all the arts already in Imperial days, aroused the dialectician for its elevation of subjectivity to authoritative ideology—a reference to system-immanent contradiction which, one might add, is an inevitable development of art. Yet, institutionally, too, the radical and oppositional impulse had been tamed. By Adorno's time expressionism could look back on a venerable tradition and had become celebrated and institutionalized; its leading spirits had entered the academy and assumed positions of power. Strauss, the future president of the Reichsmusikkammer, had introduced expressionism to opera with his shocking Salome and Elektra, thus initiating a musical trend of subjectivism, which culminated in the dramatic works of Schönberg and Berg. Throughout his life, even when as an artist he was hardly composing in the expressionist mode any longer, Schönberg continued to articulate the credo of the
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movement: "To express himself," he declared to be the artist's greatest goal. Rooted in the chromaticism of Tristan, expressionist musicians utilized ultra-expressive harmonic language, wide leaps in melody, and the higher registers of instruments. Distortion of language as of abstract musical forms of communication characterized an idiom that represented the critical features that Adorno demanded of art. The neurotic atmosphere of Schönberg's Pierrot Lunaire, for instance, was evoked through the eerie vocal line and lack of formal bearing of the entire work. Its medium and message were critical, yet Adorno, after expressions of appreciation, concluded that "absolute subjectivity is also subjectless . . . ; the more of the I of expressionism is thrown upon itself, the more like the excluded world of things it becomes." Recalling his views about attistic freedom and the general error of subjectivism, he found the aesthetic rationale of expressionism to be contradictory; the subjective impulse had become contained in Schönberg's neoclassical, abstract twelve-tone scheme, which the well-tempered and triad-conditioned public would continue to reject as "atonal." Yet, when the objectified system became a rigid imperative of composition, devoid of its negative function, Adorno, in the 1950s, warned against the "hypostization" of the twelve-tone row and the establishment of twelve-tone schools. In the 1930s, however, Adorno identified Schönberg with all that was progressive in modern music. Other radical impulses that drew their shock effect from nonmusical or musical elements of traditions outside the concrete dialectic of Western art music were rejected more readily. The uses of folk or popular traditions, for instance, and especially jazz, which were external to the Western musical experience, were simply dismissed for reasons of inauthenticity. Commercially exploited "exotic" music offers potential entertainment, relief, or introductions to other cultures, but not genuine criticism. The radical dialectician knows that "contradictions refer to those oppositions that are both necessary for, and yet destructive of, particular processes or entities."

However, when he identified Stravinsky's primitivism and neoclassical objectivism with the völkisch-fascist ideology of the times, knowledgeable musicologists have felt and continue to maintain that Adorno's critical analysis had also assumed a life of its own and had grown distant and too abstract. Adorno seriously and consistently had correlated the habit of adapting old forms and primitive rhythms that are external to the current level of the musical material to new realities with fascism, thereby associating celebrated subjects of fascist defamation—Stravinsky, Hindemith, and Hanns Eisler—with their later persecutors.

During the Weimar Republic, the progressive music establishment boasted of its avant-garde music festivals, of its celebrated composers of diverse persuasions who held positions at prestigious academies and other institutions, of its connections and interactions with radicals in the other arts, supportive critics,
musicologists, and a paying public—all in a culture that was accustomed to musical controversy. Reaction concentrated its attention on these "outsiders" as momentary "insiders," the symptom of cultural crisis. The radicals, on the other hand, realized that the avant-garde constituted but a small section of musical life and that its existence was precarious. Aware of economic, political, and social problems that foreshadowed the repression of the Third Reich, music's avant-garde was caught in the classical dilemma of radicalism—of either becoming further estranged from the unsympathetic public and institutional powers and creating and performing for only their own shrinking circle, or of striking compromises in various guises, which would gain greater audiences and lead to assimilation and the taming of the critical impulse.

Adorno found musical radicalism sharing in all art's tendency to reification, compromise, and idolization, but expressionism represented negativity in as pure a form as possible; it lived up to Schönberg's strict command that "music shall not adorn, but speak truth," lest it atrophy. Schönberg's expressionism fulfilled the tenets of Adorno's negative dialectics in that it was firmly and consciously rooted in the historically evolved musical material, while refusing to compromise with the unresolved dissonances of contemporary society. Atonality challenged tradition, social order, and popular taste, while it opened up the infinite world of compositional possibilities, which was perpetuated in the objectified new musical order of the twelve-tone row. A product of the radical dissonances of expressionism, Schönberg's twelve-tone row consistently expressed musical development and autonomy and thus was worth protecting. The threat to music from tendencies within as from fascist dictatorship without, so understood, constituted the core of the radical's concern on the eve of the Third Reich.

CONSERVATISM

The historian studies phenomena, but we know, from the German idealist philosophers and critical theorists, of an active element in cognition. The objects of historical analysis are shaped by the historian, himself both a critical and historical subject. Moreover, just as the object of this analysis, music, is affected by the critical and historical mind and is at the same time assumed to exist and develop through system-immanent processes, so critical theory as applied to the analysis of modern music is known to follow the norms intrinsic to itself. Indeed, it is one of the most refined objects of conservative concern over the state of modern music. In order to properly assess the thought of musical conservatives and nationalists about their art and its alleged crisis, we can therefore not rely exclusively on Theodor Adorno. We must instead turn to the sources, that is, the conservative and nationalist thought as articulated during the Weimar Republic.
The great conductor, music director, and pre-eminent interpreter of German music, Wilhelm Furtwängler, expressed the traditional humanist concern for the integrity of music both as an art form and institution, for its autonomy, as well as its relationship to the public. Like the avant-garde, his representative conservative response to modern developments of music also focused on the "exhaustion of the inherited material" but then entertained prospects of revitalization through the human spirit (Adorno's subject). His focus recalls Thomas Mann's Doktor Faustus, a book written in consultation with Adorno. The writer and the conductor agreed that music was linked to culture and politics, that it symbolized this particular historical situation of Germany, which was believed to be heading toward disintegration and chaos. Germany's and music's untimely materialism in the Weimar period was understood to be at the core of the problem; it had to be reversed, since it was leading society and art towards self-destruction. Yet in the eyes of the traditional humanist, the human spirit will not concede an end to music. While the material may be exhausted, there is no end to the spirit. This "faith in the spirit" recalls Adorno's ironic "nature will take care of itself."

Furtwängler was director and conductor of major orchestras, was recognized already in the early Weimar period as one of two or three outstanding interpreters of German music, and was to emerge as the major authority of music on the eve of the Nazi assumption of power. He was wooed by the Nazis, was vice-president of the Reichsmusikkammer held other offices in 1933, and gradually identified his calling during the Third Reich as that of a priest who stayed behind to care for the needy with his music and to assert his representative authority in defense of music against totalitarian control. Unlike the critic Adorno, a radical outsider, Furtwängler spoke and wrote with the authority of power and institutional representation. He was widely regarded as music's official custodian and representative, and as such, reflected generally held views on music, its tradition, and the problems of contemporary music. Already in 1915 he had written of crisis. His "Contemporary Observations of a Musician" registered a plea for the human factor in composition, the active, integrated, and rooted musical experience against what he called a contemporary one-sided intellectualism and a frantic commitment to change at any price. These latter aberrations he identified with articulate spokesmen who, in his eyes, unfortunately controlled contemporary music. Yet, this great interpreter of romantic music also rejected romantic programs as well as political slogans of nationalism and later Nazism in music as inappropriate in the current context. Recognizing the impossibility of a return to romantic conditions due to an enormous development of music and social consciousness since then, he found contemporary reactionary efforts in this direction to be another symptom of music's crisis. Using dated materials and lacking musical compulsion, the contemporary
programmatic composer shares an estrangement from the recent level of music with naturalism, another expression of crisis. Furtwängler believed the principles of naturalism to be realistic only in the case of rhythm because that element can copy a natural process, although both romanticism and naturalism may be realized when music is expressed in union with other arts (as in songs, opera, and so on) that carry extramusical program. In the case of absolute music, however, it speaks its own, exclusive language. Harmony, for one, defies naturalistic principles. "One chord alone transfers us into a world of art" to which the other senses have no access. The precious art can exist only on its own terms, the conservative agreed with the critical theorist, but he held the avant-garde responsible for modern music's alienation from the public due to its disregard for human needs, the denial of "natural materials" within the tradition—ridiculed by Adorno as mere convention—and its exclusive concentration on the most recent level of the musical material, which in the consciousness of itself tends to become objectified and thus alienated from the community. Though a prerequisite for the creative process, alienated and exaggerated consciousness produces denatured and visionless music; the balance between the objective material and subjective imagination is destroyed.

In his attempts to assume a posture of moderation and compromise between the extreme forms of the regressive program of romanticism and progressive materialism, he leaned to the former by demonstrating an affinity with Wagner which was not shown, for instance, in his relationship with Schönberg. Although he acknowledged the revolutionary role of Wagner in the development of music, he rejected the material consequences of that revolution while accepting its underlying ideological assumptions. Wagner was acceptable for his revolutionary role in his historical setting, not for the role he might play as inspiration for future revolutionaries. The conservative thus treats his heroes in historical isolation. Recalling Wagner's intentions, Furtwängler wrote:

The step from Wagner to Schönberg, which is traditionally explained and justified exclusively on the grounds of historical development, is the first real nonhistoric step, the first real break with history.

In 1915, Furtwängler the musician had commented on the breakup of the traditional relationship between vision, the concept of the whole, and the material, in conjunction with an emphasis upon the materialistic threat to music and the creative process in the arts. He had expanded his conception of crisis throughout the 1920s to include the grave danger inherent in the progressive isolation of modern music from the community. He charged that serious music in its contemporary form had become the domain of
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an elite, not of the community. He deplored the wide gulf between traditional music, which continued to play a socially functional role, and music as modern creative art form. In view of this social crisis of music, Wagner was attractive as one who had appeared not as a destructive innovator, but as a constructive revolutionary, eager to involve the community in his new art form, the music drama, by means of which he had tried to recapture those archaic communal impulses that had given rise to music originally and which bind rather than separate.35 Although his innovations have contributed to the isolation and autonomy of the elements, Wagner seduced conservatives with his intention to create an art that was to recall primeval unity to a community frightfully conscious of disintegration, uprootedness, and alienation. The material was to serve music, and music was to further the poetic and political vision. The Wagnerian Volksgemeinschaft was projected in response to the self-isolating tendencies in music. Moreover, conservative acceptance of the Wagnerian regression in the twentieth century demonstrates the perversiveness and depth of Wagner's impact on music because Wagner personified another conservative ideal in that he combined in his person both theory and practice. He lent himself to conservative reaction to the alleged preponderance of intellectualism and materialism in Weimar Germany. Championing traditional music for its social utility, conservatives denounced complicated theory and abstraction, which could no longer be grasped by the community. The preeminence of theory in addition to the practice of an uprooted and abstract, intellectualized, and esoteric music was no longer justified socially.

The dichotomy between music at its most recent level of material development and the community's understanding of its needs epitomized the crisis as observed by traditionalists. Indeed, art is destined to die if no longer relevant to the community. The central concern of völkisch romantics and Richard Wagner especially was therewith restated by twentieth-century conservatives: It involved the existence of specialists who had become estranged from the community. Conservative criticism reflected the pervasive cultural criticism of other alienated intellectuals after World War I who held onto visions of cultural unity and themes of continuity, in spite of the changes affected by the world war. Alarmed over the gulf that separated the musician from the audience, the musician ignored the social and political realities of his time. Furtwängler, for one, was ignorant of the Nazis until they had the authority to command him.36 Critical of the esoteric nature of modernistic music, the conservative was unaware of his own profound isolation and ahistorical existence.

Wagner figures so prominently in these pages because he had helped establish a German pattern of cultural criticism, and his articulation of cultural crisis was original. Twentieth-century conservatism in music in its specific German setting
was derivative, although it merits representation in its own right, being coeval with developments that reflected and reinforced the ideological formulation of National Socialism. Conservative musicians represented an esteemed music tradition, powerful institutions and competency in the eyes of a grateful public, yet, their much-praised activist music principles were frozen by respect for the past. Dead composers' works were performed in the formal ritual of official music life—nowhere illustrated as clearly and commented on as frequently as at Bayreuth—where the conservative custodian of the tradition clung to traditional values, which could be upheld only in the exclusive realm of the arts while society was in turmoil. The alienated artist nostalgically recalled the traditional relationship between himself and his patrons, mistaken now by him for the people. The theme of alleged security was thus distorted ideologically by means of a rugged pose of individualism and expertise; in Furtwängler's case, rooted in the study of Beethoven with whose struggle and sense of independence he identified. Beethoven had been able to simplify complexities while the modernists appeared to be uncomfortable with simple expression and consciously strove for complexity. Within the framework of Beethovenian individualism, the musician was said to have composed for his public, fought against its resistance, but then helped shape its taste; while in the current context the emancipated, autonomous, and intellectually arrogant avant-garde imposed impossible demands on the public, isolated itself, and thus undermined public appreciation and support for all.

The progressive's atonality had begun as exciting experiment and stood for freedom from tonality. Furtwängler recalled the rich offerings of Strauss, Pfitzner, Reger, Mahler, Schönberg, Debussy, Ravel, Honegger, Stravinsky, Bartok, the young Hindemith, and others at the beginning of the century. He praised the liberating impulses of the generation of Schönberg's theory, the creativity of Bartok, the progressive works of Stravinsky, Hindemith, and so on. Spellbound by the great tradition and accustomed to its revitalization through new directions, he looked for a new synthesis of the creative principle and the material dialectic. Yet, he found that experimentation and liberation had culminated in Schönberg's twelve-tone music: systematized, stylized, theorized, and increasingly ideologized. The addiction to composing within the parameters of the new wave had resulted in the alienation of music from its tradition and especially its public, since the composers no longer had to face the public for confirmation, but simply like-minded peers who, as a group, concentrated on the development of the material: harmony, rhythm, and the methods and constructs of the musical elements.

The conservative musician's indictment of the modern situation of music moved him close to the official position of Third Reich cultural policy, which was derived from völkisch formulation. The
proximity of an independent and sincere conservatism to the Musikpolitik of National Socialism caused much soul-searching on the part of conservatives and allowed skillful manipulation by the Nazi regime in the Third Reich. The ironic feature of Nazi control of culture in Germany is demonstrated in this confusion, since this essentially anticonservative movement could pose as savior of traditional culture from the deplorable situation of which it was born.

Already before 1933 the public had taken sides in matters of art by not supporting progressive music. Then and later the public favored the conservative and much more prestigious position that, in aesthetic formulation, sought to vindicate its inability to grasp modern developments. In the same way that it could not make sense of Einstein's insights, it failed to understand Schönberg. While the progressive insists on the same exclusive rights for music that are granted nuclear physics, the conservative rejects this comparison as self-defeating. In 1949 Furtwängler deplored the liberation of the elements in all human endeavors.

As the Germans have given rise to concentration camps, and the atom bomb was developed, both, to be sure, not in the interest of the human spirit, atonality, too, followed dictates of the material, without consideration of man... if this condition might possibly be excused in matters of material objects... its consequences in the realm of man, i.e., in the arts and in ethics are terrible. This condition amounts to the surrender of man... to the anonymous powers of a merciless world spirit.40

These words of conservative humanism were composed after Furtwängler had a chance to assess his relationship to völkisch sentiments in the reality of the Third Reich, when the Nazis had rendered all purely musical debate meaningless. His legacy documents the plight of humanism and its political naivety in our time.41

Völkisch and Racialist Thought

Before Furtwängler was forced to compromise himself in the reality of the Third Reich, he already sympathized with various features of the völkisch tradition during the Weimar period. Not yet subjected to political pressures and manipulation, he praised no other contemporary composer more highly than Hans Pfitzner, whose polemical conservatism differed from his own in its radicalism, fervent advocacy of German cultural values, and national resentment.42 To the artistic avant-garde and the political left as well as the center, Pfitzner could not be accepted on those terms. His distinguished compositional record aside, his cultural-political polemics brought him very close to the political and cultural fascism of the Weimar period,
which posed the severest threat to the autonomy of music on the
eve of the Third Reich. If the intellectual finesse of an
Adorno was required to decode the traditional musical idiom
and musical commentary and even outstanding components of the
avant-garde and exponents of socialist realism for fascist features
and potential, no such dialectic probing was necessary for an
analysis of the völkisch or fascist literature of the Weimar
period. The völkisch-fascist approach to defining and resolving
the crisis of modern music epitomized the threat to music's
autonomy as understood by Adorno. Pfitzner and the musicologist
and SS Untersturmführer Richard Eichenauer formulated the
völkisch and racist responses respectively to an assumed pre-1933
crisis in music and German society in the terminology of later
Nazi Musikpolitik.\footnote{43}

The völkisch-racist ideology was to become official policy in
Germany as a result of the Nazi assumption of power in January
1933, and the subsequent Gleichschaltung of all culture. In
the Third Reich, categories of race were applied to the under­
standing and classification of music and musicians. Musicological
writing, guidelines for musical composition and performance, and
personnel decisions at musical institutions were governed by
principles associated with a German romantic-völkisch tradition,
which had secured scientific status in the eyes of its believers
and practitioners through identification with the alleged
determinism of immutable racial laws. Music and musicians
were known and classified as arteigen (native) or artfremd
(alien), and these categories were no longer exclusively
understood in the romantic-völkisch sense of the arts and artists
being rooted in a distinct Volksgemeinschaft of common culture
but in terms of a racial community of common blood. Third
Reich formulators and executors of Musikpolitik looked to racial
theory to identify and promote the German and purge the alien—
above all the Jewish component of music.\footnote{44}

This situation of music in the Third Reich accords with a
familiar picture of Nazi totalitarianism and that of culture in
general as well as other realms of the arts and the mind in the
Third Reich.\footnote{45} Moreover, the intellectual framework and
assumptions of National Socialism are well known.\footnote{46} If hindsight
seemed to guide many engaged analysts of the background to
Auschwitz, there is no doubt that National Socialism had roots
and synthesized much in German history: It was not an inevitable
product of German history, but the fulfillment of a set among
countless other sets of potentiality.\footnote{47} That the empiricist
thus is forced to document and has indeed traced through careful
recording of thought and action in time—always being vulnerable
to the charge of drawing on selective data in support of
retrospective knowledge—theorists have explained, ordered in
intelligible structures, and rendered as a negative program in
opposition to and thus in confirmation of their own positive
view of the world. A most compelling review and at the same
time encompassing explanation of the evolving ideology is offered in George Lukács's *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft*, a work of theoretical constructs and certainties and, at the same time, of familiarity with all the nuances and detail of empirical research. This enormous volume traces the evolution of the fascist doctrine, with its reactionary racist potential, from an ideational and ideal conception of race—as in Gobineau's pessimistic assessment of history—to one of post-Darwinian scientific certainty, until its ultimate fascist synthesis in *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* of H. S. Chamberlain—the blueprint of Rosenberg's Myth of the Twentieth Century. This learned Marxist synthesis and explanation, too, is familiar. What has been relatively little explored by historians is the relationship between the anti-transcendental völkisch-fascist ideology and music, even though musicians have significantly contributed to its pre-Third Reich formulation, while holding a decidedly honored place in the writings of nonmusicians. Wagner, as stated above, was central in every respect, but so were lesser known musicians. Having begun to analyze their music and its place in society, the romantics introduced music to social and political issues. Schumann in 1834 had founded the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* for musical, social, and political commentary. The journal had developed a "national" perspective on art, so that by the time of Alfred Heuss's editorship from 1921 to 1934, the official Gleichschaltung with National Socialism in 1933 required no particular coercion. Known then as the *Zeitschrift für Musik*, this journal propagated Nazi Musikpolitik and is an outstanding source for the students of the politics of music in the Third Reich.

Continuity between the romantic nationalism of Weber and Schumann, the völkisch anti-Semitism and racism of Wagner, and the official racism and totalitarianism of the Third Reich thus had an institutional foundation, which underscored the sense of crisis in the eyes of Weimar progressives. Nationalist and racist musicians joined the Lagardes, Langbehn's, and Moellers in their quest for the regeneration of culture by political means and for a restoration of healthy politics through the spiritual regeneration of culture.

Hans Pfitzner's musical-political writings reflect this two-fold dynamic of pre-Nazi musical-political polemics and confirm the continuity thesis of historians who have analyzed "the roots of the Nazi mind" or the progressive "destruction of reason." In order to test Lukács's sweeping synthesis in music, the musical counterpart to the post-Darwinian racial anthropology of a Gumplovicz, Voltmann, or Schultze-Jaumburg has to be examined, and to that end the representative racial scholarship of Richard Eichenauer appears most suggestive. A teacher, composer, musicologist, SS Untersturmführer, and author of the 1932 publication *Musik und Rasse*, Eichenauer articulated the final response to crisis, while like all other participants in this
debate on the state of music on the eve of the Third Reich, giving expression to it in the eyes of his opponents.

Hans Pfitzner composed much music, offered master classes of composition at prestigious music academies, was recognized by fellow musicians as a major composer of his day and like his idol Wagner, wrote political polemics on the situation of German music and culture in general, which he held to be in a critical state. Similar to Furtwängler, he addressed an alleged crisis in music whose order of tonality, room for the "human spirit," and general sense of proportion and purpose were threatened. The alleged chaos in music mirrored conditions in Germany, the West and the world, and music symbolized that condition. Salvation would thus be possible through a regenerated music, while music, it appeared, could only be restored to its ennobling mission by a revitalized society—the classic predicament of the völkisch politicians of cultural despair. In differing with Furtwängler's stand, Pfitzner asked for the intervention of politics in the affairs of the arts.

Pfitzner addressed music and the world in his extensive writings. As a composer and writer about music, he was a traditionalist conservative who believed in a musical tradition worth preserving against "subversive" expressions in composition—materialistic atonality in the sophisticated and alien jazz in the popular realms—as well as the complementary music commentary. He felt our Western art music to be unique in that it had evolved a perfect system of tonality, a balanced relationship between the musical material and the human spirit, and—totally from within itself—the miracle of harmony, a new and essential element not to be found in nature. Like all self-chosen defenders of civilization, he feared for its fragile, artificially human, and thus precious nature, which is nonnature—an expression of his fundamental pessimism—and he wondered whether it would survive. Can this creature of the human spirit be preserved against the modernist (the machine) in music whose objectivism and materialism is striving toward the elimination of civilization, the disintegration of all national culture, and a return to chaotic nature?—he asked as he turned from crisis in music to stating his alarm over the deficiencies of German culture.

His polemics strayed from musical discourse to politics and to "warfare of cosmic dimensions." The progressives in music and music criticism, anathema already for their understanding and rendering of music, were accused of participation in the anti-German conspiracy. Pfitzner’s essays and musical works were placed in the context of national and universal conflict and crisis, which reached such an acute state in his mind that radical political solution had become necessary. His outburst in conversation with the writer Franz Werfel that "Hitler will show you—Germany will yet win," demonstrates his commitment at a time when Hitler's success was by no means a certainty.
The issues on all levels, personalities and subjects as well as national categories, were clearly established and the racial orthodoxy of the Third Reich was anticipated with the Jew emerging as the embodiment of an opposite principle.

Pfitzner also dealt with Jewry in relation to "The fate of our national art, specifically music." Since to him the national element constituted the basis of his discussion on music, he regarded internationalism as a "poison of the people" and the Jew as uprooted and international. He actually denied being anti-Semitic, stating that those Jews who agreed with him were acceptable, and that he, indeed, had "Jewish friends." However, the Alljuden were active in international Bolshevik subversion, and he took exception to the existence of a "Jewish critic in a German national newspaper" who had accused him of being against Beethoven—such is the state of music and decency in Germany, he wrote. Although he allowed for good Jews, he clearly insisted on racial characteristics of all peoples, which were expressed in their art, the state of war, and "the weapons to be used in battle." The language of his defense against the enemy who ranges from "atonal chaos" to "primitive jazz," "international bolshevism" to "American materialism," and "political pacifism" to "international slush" in the arts, moved him close to National Socialism, although his recognition of the adversary's strong points, for instance, the virtuosity, perfection, and creative originality manifest in jazz; and his idealism, which permitted Jewish contributions to German art, bring into question total identity of the "prophet" with the reality of the Third Reich.

In short, a reading of Pfitzner's extensive writings offers examples of continuity as well as discontinuity with the Musikpolitik of the Third Reich. His grouchiness and ill temper kept him from easy integration into Third-Reich musical organizations. He did not join the party, nor did he readily sign solidarity proclamations with the Third Reich. Even in strictly ideological terms, his racism was not clearly defined. For such a definition, Richard Eichenauer's Musik und Rasse was to play a central role.

The study of racial determinants in cultural achievement had infiltrated German institutions of learning before the Third Reich. Music too had been studied relative to the racialist literature of Ludwig Ferdinand Claus, Paul Schultze-Naumburg, Alfred Rosenberg, and Hans F. K. Günther. Yet, when Richard Eichenauer published his Musik und Rasse in 1932, he acknowledged race to be a young science. Nonetheless, he pointed out that explicit race theory had roots in the comparative study of music of different nations. Whereas earlier superficial studies had simply referred to the distinct music of Europe as that of the white race, he now recommended the refinement of the scientific study of racial determinants of music, an endeavor...
he felt to be consistent with the program of National Socialism. Committed to that ideology and equally rooted in a conservative-romantic musical tradition, he had no problem rejecting modern trends as deviations from racial norms on the basis of scientific evidence. He assumed the "new racial science" to be generally known—especially that of Günther—and proceeded to present a methodology, which served as a general reference for racialist musicology throughout the Third Reich.

It is this positive formulation of racism that also served as reference to critical theorists in their discovery of racism in the structures of art and letters even when not explicitly stated or admitted. Similarly, the reality of fascist totalitarianism positively instituted and formulated, served as a model for the various studies of authoritarianism and fascism by critical theorists. In retrospect, some of the pre-1933 analyses were indeed understood to be validated by post-1933 events.

Steeped in National Socialism and the romantic-völkisch tradition, Eichnauer wrote no less than a primer for Third Reich racialist musicology. Music was to be studied as a product of the whole person, whose racial identity, in turn, was revealed by the music so understood. The biological basis of music and musicians thus established, Eichnauer compiled a list of physical traits of musicians that served as clues for the racial identification of music. However, he held the features of what he called the "racial soul" as more important because it was not subject to the deviation encountered in physical traits, yet he held this soul to be as pronounced and distinct as physical characteristics.

As an antidote to cultural relativism, abstractionism, and the internationalism of music, the German racist sought recourse in absolute racial characteristics of human beings and their musical products, in timeless and characteristic values, in set definitions of good and evil as of friend and foe, and in the struggle between racially determined antagonists. Moreover, only members of a race can truly appreciate the musical products of their race and, as a German, he acknowledged his preference for German music in the full confidence of that being a superior music. Yet, even though his purpose and the end result were clearly stated and the history of music was understood in the same terms—by Eichnauer as by many others, including internationally known musicologists—the new race science admittedly had to be refined as racial norms had to be constantly verified by the classified material. Data and theory reinforced each other. The scholar simply had to acquaint himself with this racial law, the racial traits of the objects of his study, biographical detail for confirmation of basic racial characteristics as well as deviations, and the musical works themselves. Music thus contributed to the establishment of racial norms which, in turn, facilitated the classification of music.
This musical-racial soul theory accorded with the classics of Nazi art theory, Schultz-Neumburg's much-cited *Kunst und Rasse*, for instance, in which the physical traits of artists, especially their faces, were classified relative to cultural and environmental factors. Similarly H.F.R. Günther compiled comparative lists of literary and plastic art objects on the basis of racial traits of the artists in his important book on *Rasse und Stil*. A racial musical typology was thus rooted in the general Nazi approach to the study and classification of the arts and other products of the mind. Race defined prevailing styles—introduced as objective conditions—whereas differences within a style were attributed to the individuality of the artist (composer). Citing Karl Ludwig Schemann, *Rasse in den Geisteswissenschaften*, 1930, and Richard Müller-Preifensfel, *Psychologie des deutschen Menschen und seiner Kultur*, 1930, Eichenauer thus permitted musical individualism not in reference to the evolution of music understood to be the product of an object—the musical materials and inherited structures—subject dialectic in time, but as idiosyncratic deviation. Timeless racial standards prevailed, even in the case of known musical masters whose stature was celebrated in their ability to reveal the racial soul of their people and whose racial identity was therefore of utmost concern to the Nazi musicologist. The rapid succession of modern styles was dismissed as irrelevant and inconsequential—a result of racial mixing—but not indicative of basic racial changes.

In the atmosphere of what Rosenberg had described as Volkerchaos, the decadent phase of modern music had found its time and place to develop. To root out the latter and guide music back into its healthy path, the Third Reich would have to secure the regeneration of the race, a project of ruthless biological warfare, which would take centuries.

In the laboratory of music-biologism—to which thousands of books and articles bear witness—Adorno found explicitly stated what he had discerned in the musical structures and librettos of bourgeois music culture and read in some romantic-Völkerisch music commentary—a racial community in Parsifal, the first storm trooper in the person of Siegfried, and the virulent anti-Semitism in Wagner's essays, which was mirrored in some of the characters of his music dramas. A relationship is suggested between Nazi reality and the anathemas of the terminology of Adorno's analysis of modern music. Time was to stand still in the thousand-year Third Reich, during whose twelve-year span Adorno examined the spell-binding effects of Wagner's music: in the dream realities affected by the high-pitched violin tremolos of the Venusberg music or the reference to bourgeois values placed in a medieval setting in the Meistersinger—the suggestion that if those values existed then and now they will always exist. Love at first sight, primeval drives, basic natures, categorical enemies, pseudo-rebelliousness and pseudo-naturalness, roaring laughter of those in power (Wotan) at the expense of those who suffer (Alberich), good and evil embodied in racial opposites, a stage
on which the gods and men converse, class conscious, and representative individualism contrasted with idiosyncratic and counterrevolutionary rebels, and many other of Adorno's suggestive terms and interpretations of Wagnerian characters and settings testify to familiarity with the realities of the Third Reich and its official music commentary.

The fellow emigre Thomas Mann discovered his own affinity to Adorno's ambivalence toward the genius Wagner in the 1940s, and Wilhelm Furtwängler, whose own denazification took several years, praised the "heroic" Pfitzner shortly after the war, when such protestation did not help his own cause but no one spoke in behalf of Eichenauer. In normal times the Eichenauers have to be sought in the unspoken referential world of analysts who remember the unmediated world of domination only too well. It is perhaps for this reason that a few old critical theorists became liberals. Though skeptical of liberalism as well, Adorno increasingly became estranged from the traditional Marxist concentration on the economy and focused instead on aesthetics and mass culture. If in the 1930s he offended nonfascists with references to fascistoid features of their work and lives, he revealed his sensitivity to the overwhelming threat of barbarism. The *Götterdämmerung* had preceeded the Holocaust. His famous question whether after Auschwitz a lyric poem is still possible was formulated by him, in other words, already before Auschwitz.
NOTES


See especially Theodor W. Adorno, Dissonanzen: Musik in der verwalteten Welt, 3d ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965); Moments Musicaux (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1958); Musiksoziologie (1962); Philosophie der neuen Musik, 2d ed. (Frankfurt/Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1950); Prismen (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1955).


Adorno, "Zur gesellschaftlichen Lage der Musik," Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung 1, 1/2 and 3 (1932).

Adorno, "Reaktion und Fortschritt," Moments Musicaux.


Title of his major philosophical work, Negative Dialektik (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1966).


Ibid., p. 155.


Martin Jay, The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950 (Boston/Toronto: Little Brown and Co., 1973), p. 177; quoting Adorno from an article "on Kafka during the forties" in which he returned "to an argument he had used earlier in his critique of Kierkegaard." These views are developed at greater length in Adorno, Philosophie der neuen Musik.


Jay, Dialectical Imagination, p. 183.


"Die Musik soll nicht schmücken, sie soll wahr sein," in Probleme des Kunstunterrichts: Musikalisches Taschenbuch (Vienna, 1911) quoted in Adorno, Philosophie der Neuen Musik, p. 45.

In addition to the above-cited works of and about Furtwängler see Berta Geissmar, The Baton and the Jackboot (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1944); Friedrich Herzfeld, Wilhelm Furtwängler (Leipzig: Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, 1941); Wulf, Musik, pp. 85-90.

Furtwängler, Vermächtnis (1956), p. 49. Furtwängler praised Doktor Faustus in 1948 though, typically as a musician, he referred to Mann as Literat who manifested extraordinary mental versatility in place of commitment and responsibility. (Wilhelm Furtwängler Briefe, Letter 170.)

Ibid., p. 23.

See notes 3, 19, 22.

Furtwängler, Vermächtnis (1956), p. 57; passim.

Ibid., p. 63.

Ibid., p. 29.

Furtwängler's concession is well-developed in Adorno, Versuch Über Wagner.

Riess, Furtwängler, p. 115.


Riess, Furtwängler, p. 33.


Furtwängler, Vermächtnis, p. 43.

It must be noted that Furtwängler did not see himself as
naive politically as particularly his former secretary Berta Geissmar has alleged in her sympathetic book, even though he acknowledged her integrity and loyalty. In a letter to his friend Emil Praetorius (April 24, 1946) he objected to her reference to him as nervous and afraid. His "inner emigration" was purposeful, and he was aware of his actions. In a celebrated letter to Thomas Mann (July 4, 1947) he indeed claimed that everybody in Germany knows that of those who stayed no musicians had opposed the Nazis as clearly as he in spite of Nazi propaganda which had exploited his presence in Germany. (Wilhelm Furtwängler Briefe, Numbers 155 and 163.)

42 Furtwängler, Vermächtnis, pp. 113-22.


44 See Wulf, Musik im Dritten Reich; Michael Meyer, "Prospects of a New Music Culture in the Third Reich in Light of the Relationship between High and Popular Culture in European Musical Life," Historical Reflections 4/1 (Summer/été 1977), pp. 3-26, for examples of the racialist component in Third Reich Musikpolitik.


46 See note 3.

47 See the recent questioning of numerous generalizations about German and German-Jewish history in Peter Gay, Freud, Jews and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

Towards the Holocaust


49 H. S. Chamberlain includes three musicians in his list of eight great Germans (Foundations, 1922 edition). Yet the role of musicians in other than music histories has rarely been recognized.


52 For general reference see Hans Pfitzner, Gesammelte Werke (Augsburg: Dr. Bruno Filser Verlag, 1926).

53 See examples throughout Pfitzner's collected works that deal with atonality as "the machine" in music (Ibid., p. 222) or "chaos . . . the artistic parallel which is threatening European states," and jazz, the "great danger to the European soul" (p. 113), the anathema to "the truly creative artists /who/ are not affected /by them/" (p. 122). It is equally important however, to note that Pfitzner carries on his part of the dialogue in earnest. His relationship to National Socialism exists on an ideal level. He entertained genuine fear of decay of national consciousness, culture generally and his own field of music. His attack on modernity expressed a profound pessimism, which was easily translated into the Musikpolitik of the Third Reich in the area of the Institutionalized aspect of music life. The consequences cannot be blamed on Pfitzner, who reacted to a world falling apart, but who did not foresee the effects upon culture when subjected to total censorship, in purely musical terms, he maintained a conservatism without any National Socialist implications. He fought progressives who saw the essence of music in terms of its material construction, while, like Furtwängler, he believed in the sense of balance. Uniqueness of a composition can be guaranteed by clinging to a traditional tonal arrangement and repetition because change of essence is implied in every compositional context (p. 214).

54 Ibid., pp. 122, 166-36.
Valentin, Hans Pfitzner.

In condemning Busoni, Pfitzner emerged with his Futuristengefahr as champion of conservatism. He defended the great masters against the suggestion of being only parts in a chain of progress, which will in its individual parts lose much relevance with the passing of time. The progressive Busoni, an optimist, saw music at its beginning stage. Pfitzner supported a more common view according to which music had reached a height that was threatened in the contemporary setting.

58 In this most characteristic attack on a leading contemporary music critic, the issues of twentieth-century music, in the German context, were crystallized. "Art cannot be discussed without touching on the question of nationality, nor can we speak of national or international art without touching on the deepest roots of artistic creation, as our time contains a threat to all established norms," he wrote in the preface to the third edition in 1927. "It is not possible to deal with any aspect of German creativity without considering the question of existence of the German people."


On his controversial status in the Third Reich, see Wulf, Musik, pp. 334-41.


See, for instance Friedrich Blume, Das Rassenproblem in der Musik (Wolfenbüttel/Berlin: G. Kallmeyer, 1939); further on Blume see Wulf, Musik, pp. 347-48.

Eichenauer, Musik und Rasse, pp. 16, 22.

Wulf, Musik, pp. 434-46.
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70 Eichenauer, Musik und Rasse, p. 23.

71 Ibid., p. 316; and other references in Wulf, Musik, pp. 345-64.

72 Wulf, Musik.

73 Adorno, Versuch Über Wagner.