

A NEW PATRON FOR MUSIC

HANS HEINSHEIMER

AS one engaged in the business of publishing, I have been asked to discuss the present-day relations of a music editor to the modern composer. In this age music has attained a singular importance, social and economic. Means of distribution have been multiplied a hundredfold and with the consequent increase in musical "consumption," we face altogether novel problems. Moreover, in Central Europe (with whose conditions I am most familiar) the present is an extraordinarily critical moment—a difficult and laborious time which aggravates the seriousness of the musical situation as it does every other one.

In Germany—and when I refer to Germany here I mean always to include Austria—this musical situation differs in one important respect from that of other countries. Composer and publisher are integrated in a huge organization created by the public's "will to culture." The patronage of princes, kings, bishops and kaiser was eliminated by the revolution of 1918. In its place we have an energetic and conscientious public control.

Our only patron today is the *Kulturwille* of the German people. This "patron" has effected a unique organization for theatres, concerts, great choral units and broadcasting. As publishers we cooperate with nearly a hundred German theatres whose personnel, engaged for a solid ten months' season, includes the orchestra, singers, actors, dancers, directors, stage managers and artists. One hundred theatres ambitiously and ceaselessly attempting the new; with closely knit, unified staffs that not only have the right to experiment but are in duty bound to do so. These theatres are subsidized with large sums by the various cities and states out of an unshakable conviction that the German theatre must not waver as a foundation of cultural fulfillment. The citizens pay taxes not only for street cars, garbage removal and canals, in other words, for physical well being, but for the maintenance of

a cultural consciousness. The stage must be part of the city organism. Its function must arise not in the temporary enthusiasm of a theatre management but in the heart, in the cultural entity of the city; the theatre must be an eternal possession of the citizens.

Thus the smallest cities have well-disciplined personnels which boldly and successfully undertake the most hazardous musical tasks. For example, Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* was first presented in the Berlin Staatsoper in 1925. Because of its orchestral and singing problems it has proved to be one of the most difficult operas in the history of music. Five years later it had been successfully produced on thirty German provincial stages. Singers and orchestras in cities of 60,000 to 80,000 population have presented this work. Recently the municipal theatre of Aachen (with a population of 150,000) staged the opera for the festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music in Liège. Imagine what it means to a theatre-minded publisher to have the privilege of working in a land where the remarkable incident of the Aachen municipal theatre is repeated a hundred times.

All classes of the people today enjoy stage productions. Enormous organizations of theatregoers (the Sozialdemokratische Volksbühne and the Katholischer Bühnenvolksbund) take over performances and sell tickets at low prices to their members. A splendidly organized touring system makes it possible for well trained groups, not wandering second-raters, to travel to the smallest towns near metropolitan centers. In this way several hundred German cities regularly see performances of modern works.



This then is the state of the German stage today and it is why the theatre is our greatest concern and effort. The cooperation of publisher and composer begins at the very first stage in production, the selection of the text. To mediate between poet and musician is one of our most responsible problems and though we are seldom entirely successful, fresh attempts are always made.

We all know how some subject will possess a musician. Suddenly he is charmed with a magic spell by a milieu, a scene, a figure, a color, a gesture. It evokes music in him, it claims him; he finds an outlet for a pent-up musical material; he is swept

along and his free fantasy blots out the bare shore of reality. But what enthuses him may not be perceived by the spectator who sees the opera from the cold distance of his orchestra seat. This distance creates a great task for the publisher. How difficult it is can be illustrated by one example. Two years ago we held a competition for an opera text and invited well-known professional people, composers, and directors to be judges. Well over two hundred texts were received and the experience was devastating. Heroic Germanic sagas poured out of the drawers of schoolmasters, there was a plethora of Indian stomach and scarf dances, and a torrent of modern librettos. Several were of necessity awarded a prize; but today, not one has yet found a composer.

We rely for guidance on an ever increasing circle of young stage directors and managers; on travel, so that we may ascertain the direction of public feeling, learn its new cultural needs, and get a constantly fresh picture of Germany. This picture changes from year to year. The background may remain the same but everything else is in flux. Therefore it is important to listen to the new voices and be ready to forget the old. To evolve from these impressions some advice for our creative artists is our most important work, for we mediate between them as producers and the enormous cultural consumption of the day.

Believing that art is real only when it is essential we attempt to adapt the law of supply and demand of the produce exchange to the most sublime art. Bach writes cantatas—they are needed for Protestant divine services; Haydn's symphonic manuscripts are weighed out in gold; Chopin writes nocturnes, and a hundred-thousand languishing maidens clink dollars into the pockets of the piano industry; Wagner provides satisfaction to the German dreams of the nineteenth century. Therefore we ask what is the need of this age? We do not hesitate to discuss it with our composers for we believe that creative material can be molded into the right form only when it is used. Music is like the elements; we cannot create them, but we may transform them.



Along with the theatres the German radio is also maintained and supported as a great cultural institution responsible to public

control. Nine German broadcasting stations (with several subsidiaries) are united in the National Radio Company and are advised by a committee of intellectuals—a Cultural Advisory Council. It is easy to conceive what the programs of these stations, practically all of them directed by young, quite modern people, are like. They are unique in the world. Contemporary music is energetically fostered. There are laboratories and research units for the new sound requirements of the microphone; special works are commissioned from composers of all tendencies. Thus an individual radio literature has arisen in Germany. Music that meets the special technical requirements of the microphone and whose spirit and form take into account the peculiar, diversified audiences of radio listeners. There are no private broadcasters here and no radio advertising. It is obvious, therefore, that beside the life of the theatre, the radio in Germany is creating a special place for publisher and composer.



I have attempted to define our horizons thus from a distance. But a cloud has arisen in the last few months whose ominous shadow grows daily more threatening. I mean the severe economic distress by which our tremendous musical activity is affected today. One out of twelve Germans is now unemployed; the heavy burden of the peace treaty and the distressing consequences of internal political strife shake the nation. Naturally, these factors are most felt in the sphere of creative activity where freedom and independence are prime essentials. The clouds have not yet hurled their thunderbolts, however, and it is remarkable and gratifying to see how all who work for the cultural upbuilding of Germany, are cooperating to protect its structure. There is a close bond today between the creative artists and those whose function it is to distribute their work—the publishers, directors, managers, producers, radio people. Rigorous economy alone can assure the maintenance of the German art theatre, and every individual has adapted his personal demands toward this necessity. We follow the precept that one cannot blow eight horns when there are reparations to pay. We try to be satisfied with two horns, we try to reduce orchestral scores, to make possible a

staging which does not rely on the orchestral support and the usual accessories of modern opera. We give important older works new treatments, reducing their orchestras and choruses.

These economic factors are stimulating to artistic production. In this tendency to cut down, non-essentials are sacrificed; things lying only in the periphery of art contract or vanish. Thus with the dance, which received such over-expansive impetus from the tremendous post-war growth of the athletic movement in Germany. This wave is now ebbing. The most severe reduction, often dissolution of the ballets is taking place, and everywhere there is an almost complete decay of ballet production.



Carrying out the tasks that are immanent in this period is more important than we realize and we can only fulfill them if we succeed in interesting the post-war generation in our aims. A spiritual and cultural gulf separates their ideals from preceding generations. We want to find the heart of *these* people, we are growing old with *this* generation. Here then, are the causes which have led our most productive talents away from the norm of art forms in the pre-war world toward new fields. Paul Hindemith and Kurt Weill, in quite different ways, have tried to create for modern youth. It is interesting to see what success they have attained. Kurt Weill and Bert Brecht, the latter one of the most prominent poets of the young German avant-garde, have written an opera for students, *Der Ja-Sager*, to be sung by students and played for students. It has had a tremendous vogue in Germany. In hundreds of German cities young people between sixteen and twenty present this work, discuss it, familiarize themselves with the aims of musician and poet. But that is a path, not a goal. Will it profit us to lead this young generation to the theatre? Do we have works that speak their language?

The struggle about youth has still another aspect. The leading composers in Germany today are thirty or forty years old. Ten years ago when the storm of the world war had blown over, a remarkably large number of rich and gifted young musicians suddenly appeared. The men who were then twenty or twenty-five are now at the peak of their success and of their spiritual

development. (I remember the days at the festivals in Donaueschingen, in Salzburg, when the new music took shape; when we made the acquaintance of Hindemith, Kurt Weill, Ernst Krenek and Ernst Toch; when at the same time in other lands the twenty-year olds, suddenly released from the constraint of war, could freely unfold their production.) These people are now mature men. But in the last few years we have looked for new names among the composers in vain. We are not worried—but the phenomenon is unusual and therefore worth recording. Perhaps a new generation of productive young artists is even now in the process of development and will soon make itself known.

I cannot complete a picture of the spiritual situation in Germany today without touching on the threat to our artistic development through political factors. In the last few months "Wake up, Germany!" the political battle-cry of the Hitlerites, has sounded in shrill discord from the gallery against the voices on the stage of some theatres. We foresee that this cry will grow more penetrating, more dangerous and more effective behind the scenes, among those political bodies whose function it is to grant the budget and determine the destinies of the stage. The political make-up of the city legislative bodies, the strength of the communists, of the Hakenkreuzler (Hitlerites), the timid conscience of the Catholic parties, these are forces which often restrict free consideration in development of plans by the theatrical managements. There are also circumstances which inherently ban some subjects, that may irritate the producing artist, and also play a part in the relations of composer and publisher.

I have spoken so much here of organizations, of economic and sociologic conditions affecting the art of music today, that I must add one other consideration. We all believe that these conditions apply only with reservations. For every economic, every sociologic factor will be crushed and fall to dust before the penetrating flash of genius. To sum up the most fundamental relation between composer and publisher, I should say that it can be fruitful only when the publisher realizes that in the lottery of musical creation, the grand prize must be patiently waited for and cannot be expected to materialize the very next day, no matter how great our need or our longing.