

Dictators and their Puppets: Musicians who advocated for musical integrity in twentieth-century  
regimes

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A dissertation  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

University of Washington

2018

Reading Committee:

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Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Music

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**Abstract**

Dictators and their Puppets: Musicians who advocated for musical integrity in twentieth-century regimes

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In the ruthless dictatorships of the Twentieth Century, specifically Hitler's Germany, Stalin's USSR, and Mao's China, musicians maintained a high degree of social and political influence. From a musical standpoint, interaction between despots and musicians had a profound impact on the quality and quantity of music created during these eras. What do societies owe musicians in order to facilitate their creative output, and, in return, what do musicians owe society as artists? Personal accounts from Winifred Wagner, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Arnold Schoenberg, Dmitry Shostakovich, Yin Chengzong, and those who knew them, exhibit direct interactions between dictators and musicians. This focus on specific relationships demonstrates the extent of political control. Although viewing these regimes' atrocities as bygone history is convenient, oppressive governments continue to blight humanity today, and musicians have a unique ability to respond.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to offer, with deep gratitude, special thanks to Dr. Robin McCabe, for guiding and challenging me both in musical instruction and in developing my professional skills. I left every lesson and meeting with a renewed confidence in how to address any difficulties. Your immense knowledge and passion for music inspire me profoundly.

To my dissertation committee, Michael Shapiro, Craig Sheppard, and Judy Tsou, thank you for your support and patience while I navigated my doctoral degree requirements. Your enthusiastic reception of my topics has been very encouraging.

To Sarah Stark, who has accompanied me on my entire collegiate journey and inspired me with her indomitable work ethic, thank you for bolstering my confidence through this process and encouraging me to persist!

To my parents, Richard and Julie, I am grateful for your support of my decision to pursue music and to take worthwhile risks. And to my older brothers, Tyson and Tony, thank you for showing me how to be independent and find levity in complicated situations. To my cousin, Jesse, thank you for attending all of my performances, and continuing to support my educational pursuits.

## Try to Praise the Mutilated World

By Adam Zagajewski

Try to praise the mutilated world.  
Remember June's long days,  
and wild strawberries, drops of wine, the dew.  
The nettles that methodically overgrow  
the abandoned homesteads of exiles.  
You must praise the mutilated world.  
You watched the stylish yachts and ships;  
one of them had a long trip ahead of it,  
while salty oblivion awaited others.  
You've seen the refugees heading nowhere,  
you've heard the executioners sing joyfully.  
You should praise the mutilated world.  
Remember the moments when we were together  
in a white room and the curtain fluttered.  
Return in thought to the concert where music flared.  
You gathered acorns in the park in autumn  
and leaves eddied over the earth's scars.  
Praise the mutilated world  
and the gray feather a thrush lost,  
and the gentle light that strays and vanishes  
and returns.<sup>1</sup>

Written a year and a half before the tragedy of September 11, 2001, this poem became emblematic of many sentiments that challenged Americans.<sup>2</sup> It serves a reminder that there is beauty in life beyond the atrocities committed by mankind.

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<sup>1</sup>Adam Zagajewski, "Try to Praise the Mutilated World," in *Poems of Gratitude*, tr. Clare Cavanagh, ed. Emily Fragos (London: Everyman's Library, 2017), 79.

<sup>2</sup>Matthew Kaminski, "Adam Zagajewski: The Poet of 9/11," in *Newsweek*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://www.newsweek.com/adam-zagajewski-poet-911-67385>.

## Introduction

There was a famous joke in post-war Germany about the Reich Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels. Its popularity may have been due to a need for brevity when the country was facing consequences for political atrocities.

Goebbels is sent back at the gate of heaven: he should go to hell. In order to incite him to go, Saint Peter allows him a gaze at hell through binoculars. What Goebbels sees is a beautiful, elegantly decked-out bar with fancy drinks and beautiful women. When he finally arrives in hell, however, he finds something completely different: a place of horror, suffering, and pain. Quite annoyed, he complains and asks whatever that was he had seen. The devil answer[s]: ‘Propaganda.’<sup>3</sup>

Humor was abundant in the dictatorships of the Twentieth Century. Such dark sardonicism demonstrates to what degree oppression harshly influenced these citizens’ lives.

I became interested in this topic because of my final doctoral piano recital. Its program featured two pieces composed under strict oppressive governments: Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 31 in A-flat Major, op. 110, and Prokofiev’s Piano Sonata No. 7 in B-flat Major, op. 83. I was fascinated by the ways that governments influenced these pieces and by the potential covert sentiments that the composers may have expressed therein. I have always been intrigued by the tours that the U.S. Department of State sponsors to cultivate international relations. At the 2012 Music Teachers National Association Conference, pianist Jody Graves presented on her state-sponsored tour of concerts promoting peace in the Middle East. Her stories were deeply moving, and I became captivated by governmental involvement in music, as well as music’s role in politics.

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<sup>3</sup>Barbara Mittler, “Popular Propaganda? Art and Culture in Revolutionary China,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 152, no.4 (Dec., 2008): 466, accessed April 27, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40541604>.

Twentieth-century dictatorships had a complicated relationship with music and musicians. In Hitler's Nazi Germany, Stalin's Soviet Union, and Mao's Communist China, leaders valued music both as a political tool and as an artistic ideal that could unify and motivate the people. However, these despots did not view these two aspects, utilitarian and spiritual, as separate. All three utilized music's ability to inspire as a means to indoctrinate their citizenry. They each had different approaches in implementing music as a political strategy, so the resultant music and creative atmosphere greatly varied. In studying this topic, it becomes clear that the degree of control each dictator seized over music was inversely proportionate to musical output both in quality and quantity; the higher the censorship, the more that artistry and musical production suffered.

Ironically, it was Hitler's love of music itself, along with musician-targeted anti-Semitism, which caused a stifling creative climate. In Nazi Germany, strict censorship forced emigration on many composers, conductors, and instrumentalists, and there exists a wealth of scholarship on how Hitler's leadership affected music and musicians. His adoration of music was so great, in fact, that Hitler's aspirations to restore the German Empire and to eradicate Jews grew out of musical philosophy. His idolization and interpretation of Richard Wagner's musical works and essays motivated him to commit some of the horrible acts for which he is infamous. This raises many questions about morality, music, and accountability. How much blame can be attributed to music, or Wagner himself, for Hitler's actions, and how much culpability is Hitler's alone?

During his rise to power and throughout his rule, Hitler was very close with the Wagner family. There is a trove of information written about them, even by them, and much is specifically about their relationship with Hitler himself. Winifred Wagner, Richard Wagner's

daughter-in-law, facilitated most of the family's contact with Hitler. Some have even tried to find evidence of an affair. Over his career, Richard Wagner himself published essays promoting anti-Semitic philosophy, and the family became renowned for their candid and fervent anti-Semitism. This philosophy attracted Hitler to them, but it was Wagner's music which captivated him. He esteemed Wagner's operas as the pinnacle of German art, and his fanaticism for them led Hitler to espouse Richard's lofty ideals. Winifred's and her children's accounts, though, offer a unique, somewhat saccharine, picture of Hitler's character. As leader of the only German opera company that ran consistently through the war, what exactly was Winifred's responsibility to music as Hitler's confidante?

Such an adoring impression of Hitler as the one Winifred related is a striking rarity, but also scarce are accounts of people who were willing to resist and defy him. Most of those who confronted Hitler were killed within the first year of his rule, but renowned German conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler was refractory for Hitler's entire tenure. The amount of bravery this man showed is remarkable. He was in direct contact with Hitler, and they met numerous times with constant hostility. Furtwängler was persecuted simultaneously by the international musical community for staying in Nazi Germany and by the German musical community for insisting that the Jews in his orchestra be granted protection. Despite his contentious relationship with the Nazi regime, Furtwängler was the Nazis' only hope for garnering legitimacy in the field of music. Hitler knew this, and that is why Furtwängler was able to successfully oppose him so openly, their conflict lasting over a decade.

Arnold Schoenberg was a key Jewish-German composer who struggled under Hitler's regime. He was a victim of constant marginalization by the Nazis until he escaped to the United States. There, he watched in horror as Hitler gained power and as countless refugee musicians

flooded into America. Because of his indignation for these occurrences, Schoenberg musically renounced Hitler and found a new patriotism for The United States. He struggled with having no true homeland, and although he was much happier in America, he still felt marginalized. What did Germany owe Schoenberg? Certainly, it was not to have him forcibly removed from every post because of his race. What did the U.S. owe Schoenberg? At least in America, he had the freedom to compose as he wished, but there was an unfortunate cultural disconnection between Schoenberg and most of his new American audience. He never garnered quite the same level of popularity in the United States as he celebrated in Europe

Although the Soviets' political views differed greatly from those of the Nazis, they ran an oppressive dictatorship that produced a similarly stifling environment for musicians. Their approach to totalitarian governance, however, was quite different. Like Hitler, Stalin adored music. He was much more willing to admit that he himself was not a musician, though he enjoyed music thoroughly. Therefore, he created a committee to decide which music was appropriate, with some political guidelines, of course. Professional musicians constituted the committee, and in a way, they policed themselves without the government's direct involvement. This contrasts with Hitler's system, because in Nazi Germany, political officials, not musicians, made decisions about music and censorship. Because the role of Soviet music was governed by a musically proficient committee, there is much more exemplary music from Stalin's rule than from that of Hitler. That said, life for a musician was still extremely bleak. Soviet citizens used to joke that being chosen for execution or internment was less like being a pawn on a chess board, and more like winning a lottery. There was no predictable strategy to it; it just seemed

like Stalin's subjective preference.<sup>4</sup> After a few more years, the reference became much more dismal, with the addition that it "used to be like a lottery, now it's a queue."<sup>5</sup>

Composer Dmitri Shostakovich's experiences are crucial to understanding the Soviet attitude towards music. Stalin himself spoke directly to Shostakovich at times. They were both socially cautious and monitored each other closely, so their conversations were short, direct, and surprisingly civil. Stalin was quite petty in the types of psychological schemes wherein he would ensnare Shostakovich, such as banning his music out of spite, or calling him into the Kremlin to denounce him, just to observe his reaction. Despite Stalin's constant attempts to assert dominance, he knew that he needed Shostakovich, much like the Nazis needed Furtwängler.

It proved very challenging for Shostakovich to have the erratic dictator obliged to him, placing him in conflict between patriotism and artistic integrity. He suffered immensely from the pressure of his music receiving critical and arbitrary judgment. Because he was superstitious and paranoid, Stalin's close watchfulness caused him constant anxiety and instability. Stalin would send him on state missions to show off the greatness of the Soviet regime, and for Shostakovich, these trips worked both as a source of inspiration and as a reminder of the bleakness of his life in Moscow. Despite this, he never defected because he was a deeply patriotic man, and he could not bear the thought of leaving his homeland. Although Shostakovich was a victim of the Soviet leader's cruel Machiavellian machinations, Stalin's exploitation allowed him to survive while fellow artists fell victim to the dictator's murderous decisions.

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<sup>4</sup>Soloman Volkov, *Shostakovich and Stalin: The Extraordinary Relationship Between the Great Composer and the Brutal Dictator* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 159.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 213.

Under Mao Zedong, China modeled Communism after the Soviets. China was an Eastern dictatorship built upon Western political philosophy and displayed a unique musical climate. For most of the first two decades of Mao's rule, music was a free and open subject. The government welcomed composers to study abroad and then return to implement the knowledge that they had acquired. Musicians were encouraged to perform the classical repertoire and synthesize foreign styles with Chinese styles. Mao's strategy was to combine foreign and domestic art in order to create superior art. The more powerful that Mao and China grew, however, the more Mao became suspicious of foreign influence. This mistrust culminated in the Cultural Revolution, a movement that aimed to reform all societal channels in order to eradicate any non-Chinese elements in every field. Chinese musical output suffered greatly, especially in the Western tradition, as Western instruments were banned and destroyed, and listening to Western music was punishable by death. The same composers that were sent by the government to learn foreign musical techniques were tortured and sometimes killed for the knowledge they had gained. Mao was almost completely successful in eradicating all Western music until internationally celebrated pianist Yin Chengzong boldly fought to reestablish its legitimacy. His successful advocacy for the piano eventually allowed China to garner its current prestige in the field of classical music.

Despite their intricately developed oppressive regimes, Hitler, Stalin, and Mao failed to exert total dominance over music and musicians. To survive, each musician showed a remarkable resilience as he or she navigated life under a totalitarian regime. In Germany, the Wagner family and Furtwängler were key figures in the Nazis' accepted musical culture, whereas Schoenberg undermined it. In China, Du Mingxin and Wu Zuqiang helped pioneer the Communist Chinese image, while Yin Chengzong challenged it. Shostakovich alternated

between submission and covert rebellion as the threat of Soviet repudiation waxed and waned.

These complicated relationships shaped the music composed in this era and demonstrate some of the similarities and differences between politically-diverse, totalitarian environments.

## Hitler, the Weimar Republic, and Nazi Germany

Adolf Hitler was an ardent music enthusiast from a young age. Well into his career as Führer, Hitler attributed his political ambitions to the first opera he attended at age sixteen: Richard Wagner's *Rienzi*.<sup>6</sup> *Rienzi* is based on the life events of Cola da Rienzi, a medieval Roman populist figure who overthrew the Roman government and established himself as sole dictator in order to restore the glory of the Roman Empire. One can immediately see the parallels with Hitler. Twenty-four years later, in 1939, at the famous Bayreuth Festival, Hitler told Winifred Wagner, Bayreuth's director and the late Richard's daughter-in-law, that "in that hour [that he first saw *Rienzi*] it all began."<sup>7</sup> From that first viewing in 1915, Hitler based his entire career on 'the last of the Roman Tribunes.' Later in life, he owned the original manuscript of the opera among other Wagner original manuscripts which all burned in his bunker upon the allies' seizure of Berlin. At one point, Robert Ley, a Nazi leader, suggested that Hitler open his Party Rallies with newly composed music (a lacking commodity in Nazi Germany for reasons discussed later); to this request, Hitler responded:

You know, Ley, it isn't by chance that I have the Party Rallies open with the overture to *Rienzi*. It's not just a musical question. At the age of twenty-four this man, an innkeeper's son, persuaded the Roman people to drive out the corrupt Senate by reminding them of the magnificent past of the Roman Empire. Listening to this blessed music as a young man in the theater at Linz, I had the vision that I too must someday succeed in uniting the German Empire and making it great once more.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, Hitler had modeled his life after *Rienzi*'s story. In this quotation, the 'corrupt Senate' refers to the liberal leftist Weimar Republic, and the 'glorious Roman Empire' refers to its

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<sup>6</sup>Dorothy Lamb Crawford, *A Windfall of Musicians: Hitler's Emigrés and Exiles in Southern California* (Yale University press: New Haven, 2006), 1.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Albert Speer, *Spandau: The Secret Diaries* (London: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1976), 88.

predecessor, the German Empire or Second Reich, which had formally abdicated its authority upon its defeat in World War I. Hitler eventually succeeded in achieving his goal of reinstating the German Empire as the Third Reich, and he established Germany as a major power for the first time since World War I.

The irony with *Rienzi* is that while Hitler adored it, Wagner himself had despised it because of its Jewish influences. *Rienzi* was Wagner's first successful staged work. French Jewish composer Giacomo Meyerbeer was pivotal in getting then-unknown Wagner's opera staged at all.<sup>9</sup> The opera was written so much in the style of Meyerbeer that Hans von Bülow, the first husband of Wagner's wife, Cosima, joked that *Rienzi* was Meyerbeer's best opera.<sup>10</sup> As Wagner became more well-established in the field of composition and more anti-Semitic, he was increasingly embarrassed about Meyerbeer's influence on the work.<sup>11</sup> He grew ashamed of *Rienzi* and resented that his entire career was owed to a Jew. How ironic then, that this opera was thus heavily influenced by a Jew in its conception and production, and yet it was the basis upon which Hitler built his anti-Semitic empire.

Music's impact on Nazi Germany is undeniable: Hitler's plot to overthrow the Weimar Republic and reinstitute the German Empire was modeled after an opera. What does this mean about morality in music? If credit is given to music for inspiring people to act altruistically, should blame be given to music when it inspires corruption? Because music held such an important role in Nazi Germany, the ways that the musical climate corresponded to the political

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<sup>9</sup>Giacomo Meyerbeer to August Freiherrn von Lüttichau, March 18, 1841 in *Giacomo Meyerbeer: Briefwechsel und Tagebücher III, 1837-1845* Giacomo Meyerbeer, Heinz Becker, and Gudrun Becker (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1975), 341.

<sup>10</sup>Ernest Newman, *The Life of Richard Wagner I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 212.

<sup>11</sup>Barry Millington, "Rienzi: an opera in the grand style," program notes for *Wagner: Rienzi*, Staatsoper Dresden, Heinrich Hollreiser (London: Warner Classics, 2012).

climate are notable. In the Weimar Republic, music was experimental, minimally regulated, and of an international style, but when the National Socialist Party took control, music became rigidly controlled and highly censored, with the requirement that it must be German, without foreign influence. Likewise, in the Weimar Republic, politics facilitated diverse opinions, and politicians came from varied ethnic backgrounds, but later, in Nazi Germany, there was no representation of any other ethnicity than Aryan Germans, and the policies derived therefrom benefitted only this narrow demographic. A huge portion of German musicians before the Nazi Era were not from a Germanic-Aryan background, but this diverse representation was Hitler's exact problem with German music at the time. Therefore, in studying music from this period, it is essential to discuss these musicians' experiences, from the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich.

As stated before, many other important Nazi figures also highly esteemed music. Reinhard Heydrich, the Nazi elites' most fearsome leader and a founding architect of the Final Solution to the Jewish Question, was from a family of musicians.<sup>12</sup> His maternal grandfather was the director of the Dresden Royal Conservatory; his father was a composer, opera coach, and founder of the Halle Conservatory of Music, Theater and Teaching; and his mother was a piano teacher there.<sup>13</sup> The name Reinhard came from the hero in his father's opera, and his middle name, Tristan, was after Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*.<sup>14</sup> Heydrich himself played the violin from

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<sup>12</sup>Robert Gerwarth, *Hitler's Hangman: The Life of Heydrich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 14.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

childhood into adulthood.<sup>15</sup> Hermann Göring, founder of the Gestapo and Hitler's preferred successor, was also a noted music fan, especially of opera.<sup>16</sup>

These powerhouses of the Nazi machine were avid music fans, and perhaps their musical passion was a major component in their obsession with restoring traditional German culture and extinguishing any other culture they saw as a threat. One can argue that Hitler was not so much interested in music itself as much as in the storytelling quality of music, which he used as a political tool. Without delving into the inner-workings of Hitler's mind, this cannot be proven, because he consciously viewed himself as Wagner's biggest fan, and the most important patron to Wagner's estate. He saw himself as a noble curator of music, saving a threatened art form, and more universally, a threatened culture. The anti-Semitic circle of German philosophers maintained that Jewish culture was compromising the integrity of German art.

This begs the question: what defines music as German? Music's characteristics can only be imagined as German through subjective interpretation; they can never be German by inherent quality. If a German citizen composes outside of the 'national style,' is that piece German or not? Is *Madama Butterfly* not an Italian opera? It is composed of 'Japanese' and 'American' musical stylistic elements. To the Nazis, blending international and multi-cultural styles was abhorrent and required eradication. They viewed German compositions by Jews as a paradox, unable to exist; to them, this music could never be German and only ever be Jewish. There is one challenge to thinking on these philosophical terms: however subjective the Nazis' musical opinions seem to an outsider, to the Nazis' they were fully objective. They deemed music as

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<sup>15</sup>Mario R. Dederichs, *Heydrich, The Face of Evil* (London: Greenhill Books, 2006), 28.

<sup>16</sup>Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (New York: Avon, 1971), 417.

German, Jewish, or other, and their philosophies had very real manifestations when it cost the careers and lives of Jewish and other composers.

There were many reasons that the Weimar Republic was so odious to right-wing conservative Germans. After Emperor Wilhelm II abdicated his throne because of his defeat in World War I, the terms of the Treaty of Versailles forced Germany to become a republic.<sup>17</sup> This new government was unable to manage Germany's failing economy and social strife.<sup>18</sup> The conservatives both mourned the loss of the monarchy and observed in horror as the new republic sought artistic freedom and heavily advocated new ways of thinking.<sup>19</sup> One particular problem to the conservatives was the Weimar Republic's allowance and advocacy of Jewish leadership. Even the Prussian Ministry of Culture's Chief of Music was Leo Kestenberg, a Slovakian Jew.<sup>20</sup> By 1926, Berlin was renowned as a very diverse and progressive city.<sup>21</sup> In the German capital, there were many new compositions, modern stagings of traditional operas, jazz, cabaret, foreign composers, and Expressionism: this was a nightmare to a conservative like Hitler.<sup>22</sup> To him, and most Austrians, Berlin was a "sinner's tower of Babel."<sup>23</sup> Because Austria was still ruled by a Habsburg Emperor, the national values were extremely traditional, and Vienna was Berlin's conservative counterpart.<sup>24</sup> It was very difficult for composers to get their works played in Vienna because traditionalism permeated art and music. Austrian composers would often relocate to liberal Berlin to boost their careers.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Crawford, *A Windfall*, 2.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

Because of the elitist modernism and progressive liberalism in Berlin, there was a backlash for traditional values throughout Germany, especially among the middle and lower classes. Pragmatism, balance, objectivity, and neoclassicism formed a new movement called *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity).<sup>26</sup> It counteracted the hyper-emotional expressionist modernism popular in Berlin's art scene.<sup>27</sup> *Neue Sachlichkeit* called for community music, workers' choruses, mechanical music, radio, film music, miniature operas, music for children, and music for amateurs.<sup>28</sup> The movement was also generally critical of foreign influences and especially anti-Semitic.<sup>29</sup> One example of the attitudes of *Neue Sachlichkeit*'s followers arose when the above-mentioned Chief of Music, Leo Kestenberg, a converted Lutheran, but ethnic Jew, appointed another Lutheran, ethnic Jew, Arnold Schoenberg, to a teaching position at the Prussian Academy of the Arts in Berlin in 1925.<sup>30</sup> A critic published in Berlin's *Zeitschrift für Musik* (Journal of Music):

A provocation [intending] a contest of strength between Germandom and—and now we must also be quite frank—the specifically Jewish spirit in music....What sort of Judaism Schoenberg belongs to and wishes to be part of he has not only demonstrated with great clarity but also stated in so many words. His appointment...represents...a stupidity of the first order....The days of the current musical regime in Prussia are counted.<sup>31</sup>

Quite apparent is the tense atmosphere existing in Berlin between the government programs to promote new art and the traditionalist backlash to preserve German culture. Thereafter, life would only become more difficult for the ethnically Jewish.

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<sup>26</sup>Crawford, *A Windfall*, 2.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*

By 1930, the Weimar government was failing because it was unable to keep up with the New York Stock Exchange crash, and the Reichstag had been overtaken by the National Socialist Party.<sup>32</sup> The government's attitudes and tactics had entirely changed to conservative and anti-Semitic. One story tells of the newly conservative government planting spies in the audience of successful Jewish cabaret owner Friedrich Hollaender. By 1932, the spies were jumping up on stage to spit on Hollaender mid-performance.<sup>33</sup> By 1933, he returned home with his Aryan wife, from a work trip to London, only to be waved away by his mother-in-law from the upper window of their apartment.<sup>34</sup> Hollaender's wife moved to the driver's seat, while he ducked in the backseat, drove to the train station, and they fled to Paris.<sup>35</sup> Nazi authorities were searching Hollaender's apartment in hope of arresting. Soon after, they publicly beat his Jewish protégé in the street in retaliation for his teacher's escape.<sup>36</sup>

When the National Socialist party gained control over the Reichstag, President Paul von Hindenburg appointed Hitler as Chancellor. This marked an end to any free public musical life for Jews and Gentile modernists. To remain a professional musician at this time, one had to join the *Reichsmusikkammer* (State Music Institution); its only condition for entry was proof of Aryan ancestry.<sup>37</sup> This group was the sole determiner of musicians' salaries and was the only group which appointed musicians to gigs.<sup>38</sup> Many Aryan composers refused to join the *Reichsmusikkammer*, starting a non-musical profession, but some emigrated, including Paul

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<sup>32</sup>Crawford, *A Windfall*, 10.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>Giselher Schubert, "Germany, Federal Republic of (Ger. Deutschland): Since 1918" in *Grove Music Online*, accessed March 25, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*

Hindemith.<sup>39</sup> The non-Jews who refused to write political marches and choruses for the state were forced into isolation, including Alban Berg and Anton Webern.<sup>40</sup> Author Giselher Schubert described this social detachment as *mental* emigration. They were so harassed for studying with Schoenberg, that they retreated internally both socially and emotionally.<sup>41</sup> The government also tried to force emigration on all the Jews, and most were able to do so, especially the more successful composers.<sup>42</sup> If a Jewish musician were unable to emigrate *he*, (no women allowed) would be forced to join the *Kulturbund Deutscher Juden* (Cultural Federation of German Jews) which essentially ghettoized Jewish musicians from the field of music.<sup>43</sup>

In the summer of the following year, 1934, Hindenburg died and Hitler combined the offices of President and Chancellor in order to become the unilateral dictator of the German government. May 1938 saw the Convention of *Entartete Musik* (Degenerate Music) in Düsseldorf.<sup>44</sup> This was an exhibit of all forbidden music, and to be found owning or singing certain music could result in penalty of death.<sup>45</sup> The exhibit was split into 7 sections:<sup>46</sup>

(1) **The influence of Judaism:** This was a ban on any music that had influence from a Jew. Here the irony of Hitler's use of the *Rienzi* overture in party rallies is understood. The ban included music by Mendelssohn, who was born Lutheran, Meyerbeer, and Mahler, a Catholic convert. Mendelssohn and Mahler's religions are highlighted here to show that their condemnation had nothing to do with their religious beliefs, but the ethno-cultural implications

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<sup>39</sup>Schubert, *Grove*, "Germany."

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup>Crawford, *A Windfall*, 17.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup>Anon. 1938. "Musical Notes from Abroad". *Musical Times* 79, no. 1146 (August): 629–

of having Jewish ancestry. The authorities removed Mendelssohn's bronze statue in Leipzig.<sup>47</sup>

Also fascinating was the government's commission to compose a resetting of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to replace Mendelssohn's, though no noteworthy settings were composed.<sup>48</sup>

(2) **Arnold Schoenberg:** despite his candidacy for the first group because of his Jewish descent, Schoenberg was hated enough to earn his own category. His music exhibited three criteria which the Nazis despised: he was ethnically Jewish; he was a modernist composer who wrote atonal, theoretically complex music; and he wrote music that was part of the Expressionist aesthetic.

(3) **Kurt Weill and Ernst Krenek:** These two composers wrote jazz and cabaret music. The Nazis dubbed these styles and any other American music "Negermusik," blaming their popularity on the Jews as a plot to further desecrate German music.<sup>49</sup> This music offended them because it did not derive from the "master race." After World War II, the occupying allied troops found hierarchical diagrams of racial superiority and blacks were in the same lowest category with Jews and Romani people.<sup>50</sup> The cover poster for the whole conference was a defamation of a then-famous 1927 jazz opera, *Jonny spielt auf*, by Krenek about an African-American Saxophone player. The Nazis caricatured Jonny and planted the Star of David on his lapel in their version of the poster.

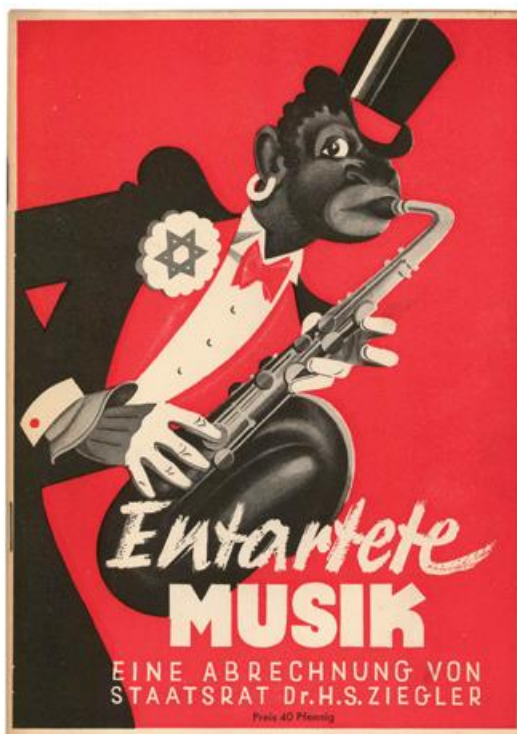
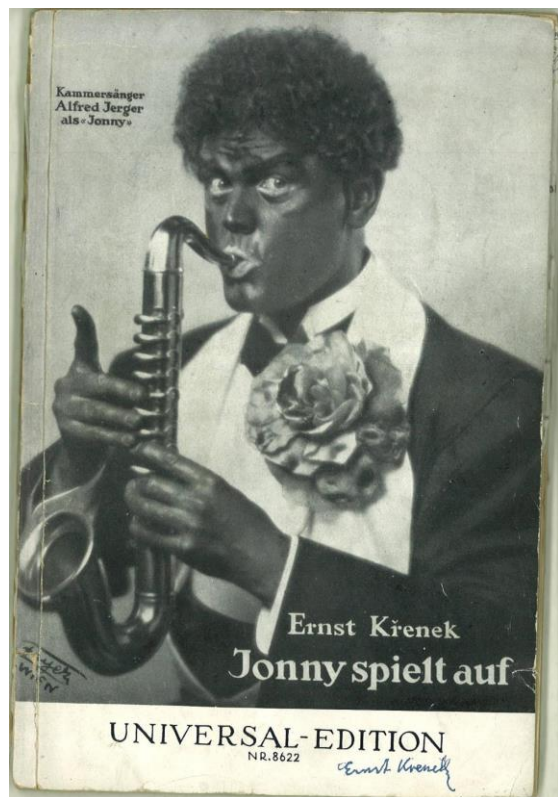
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<sup>47</sup>R. Larry Todd, "Mendelssohn(-Bartholdy), (Jacob Ludwig) Felix" in *Grove Music Online*, accessed March 25, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

<sup>48</sup>Michael H. Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era: Eight Portraits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 125.

<sup>49</sup>Michael H. Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2003), 38.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 32.



Figures 1: Advertisement for Křenek's opera, *Jonny spielt auf*. Figure 2: Nazi adaptation of Figure 1 for use as main poster and program cover for the 1938 Exhibition of Degenerate Music.<sup>5152</sup>

(4) **Minor Bolsheviks: Franz Schreker, Alban Berg, Ernst Toch, etc:** These were non-Jewish musicians that composed in the modern aesthetic. The Nazis found atonal and theoretically complex music to be too contrived and too complicated to have any relevance to modern Germans. They derived this opinion from the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement and

<sup>51</sup> *Jonny spielt auf* Advertisement, digital image, Zentralis Verzeichnis Antiquarischer Bücher, accessed May 2, 2018, <https://www.zvab.com/buch-suchen/titel/jonny-spielt-auf/autor/ernst-krenek/>.

<sup>52</sup> Program Cover for Degenerate Music Exhibition, digital image, Ursus Books, Ltd., accessed May 2, 2018, <https://www.ursusbooks.com/pages/books/164187/hans-severus-ziegler/entartete-musik>.

categorized the style as Bolshevik because it was international and had the influence of Stravinsky. This is ironic because the Soviets to which the Nazis referred also denounced and banned this music. According to Nazis, the modern aesthetic was too ugly, and they felt that there was nothing ugly about life under the Nazi government. The Nazis could not understand why German music should express ugliness, when to them, ugliness was eradicated with the subjugation of the Jews. The intricacies of the Nazi opinion on the modern aesthetic is discussed further in the chapter about Arnold Schoenberg.

(5) **Leo Kestenberg:** As stated before, Kestenberg was a Jewish pedagogue and the Chief of music under the Prussian government. The Nazis abhorred that Germany's cultural head of music was Jewish. That is one reason why the Nazis felt that any music composed or made popular during the Weimar Republic could not be considered German and should be eliminated. Because Kestenberg was Jewish, they viewed all music created under his administrative tenure as influenced by Jewishness. Leo Kestenberg's governmental position contributed to the Nazis' belief that the popularity of Jazz in Weimar Germany was a ploy by the Jews to eclipse German music.

(6) **Paul Hindemith's operas and oratorios:** Before the 1938 convention, the Nazi regime had difficulty deciding if it should allow Paul Hindemith's music.<sup>53</sup> He learned composition and composed during the Weimar Republic in a modernist style, but he had 'pure Aryan-German' blood.<sup>54</sup> Ultimately, the Nazis added him to the list because of his participation in the modern tradition which Nazis believed to be Jewish anti-German propaganda<sup>55</sup>. His main

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<sup>53</sup>Giselher Schubert, "Hindemith, Paul," in *Grove Music Online*, accessed March 25, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*

composition teachers, Arnold Mendelssohn and Bernhard Sekles, were of Jewish heritage, and he married an ethnically part-Jewish wife.<sup>56</sup> This amount of Jewish ‘compromise’ was too much for the Nazis to tolerate in their nation.

(7) **Igor Stravinsky:** This a very interesting case, because the Nazis insisted that he had Jewish heritage.<sup>57</sup> Scholars today widely consider Stravinsky’s whole career to transcend any national affiliation, though he was born and raised in Russia. From the beginning of his career he was an international artist, but his largest fan base and most success had been in Germany.<sup>58</sup> The Nazis were also hesitant to add him to the list because at first, they promoted his music, but eventually they decided that his music was so ugly, and so modern, that he must have Jewish heritage.<sup>59</sup> Despite Stravinsky’s multiple attempts to prove his Aryan ancestry by submitting his genealogy to the Nazis, they insisted that he was a Jewish Bolshevik and banned his music.<sup>60</sup> Unfortunately for Stravinsky, he thus lost his largest source of income.

This history is complex, but it is important to know in order to understand why Nazis chose which music to dub as ‘degenerate’. They claimed it was because its quality was inferior to that of approved German music. This is not a sound evaluation. Understanding Mendelssohn helps to display the Nazi thought process. He grew up as a Reformed Christian German, but ethnically, he was Jewish. That, and Richard Wagner’s criticism of Mendelssohn in his essay, *Jewishness in Music*, was enough for the Nazis to ban Mendelssohn. His music does not contain stylistic elements that are recognizable as particularly Jewish. In fact, most of his music is very

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<sup>56</sup>Schubert, *Grove*, “Hindemith.”

<sup>57</sup>Stephen Walsh, “Stravinsky, Igor (Fyodorovich)” in *Grove Music Online*, accessed March 25, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup>Crawford, *A Windfall*, 16.

much in the German tradition indeed. Perhaps, then, the Nazis' argument is backwards; it is not so much any characteristic or quality that made them decide 'Jewish' music was inferior, it was just the fact that it was created by ethnic Jews. This takes the component of what makes music belong to a nationality out of the argument. In their perspective, a German's clumsiest most unskilled composition would be intrinsically more valuable to German culture than the most artful music composed by a German Jew. It explains why they would ban Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* before ever hearing a superior version by a 'German' composer: no matter what, the German version would inherently be better than Mendelssohn's, due to race. After this point was established, only then would the Nazi leaders pick and choose examples of why Jewish composers' music was inferior in order to justify their claims. This argument is backwards, because the conclusion generated the evidence; the evidence did not lead to the conclusion.

All this aside, the list of banned music includes Aryans as well, so there must be another component besides 'racial inferiority.' Ernst Krenek, Paul Hindemith, and Igor Stravinsky were not ethnically Jewish (though the Nazi government tried many times to prove that they were), but they were on the list because of their music's influences. Krenek's music, which drew from jazz and cabaret, has already been discussed. Paul Hindemith was German, but as a modernist he was artistically 'compromised' by the Weimar Republic. Up to this point, most of Stravinsky's international income came from Germans because his largest fan-base was German, and even most Nazis. But as time progressed, they gradually disapproved, until eventually, they decided his music was tainted by modernism. Therefore, for Aryan composers, the Nazis did take content into consideration more than with Jewish composers because of musical influence. Still,

their decisions had little to do with compositional quality, no matter how much the Nazis tried to argue that it did.

Those who administered the rules surrounding music were politicians, not professional musicians. While the Nazi leaders in charge of the Düsseldorf conference were connoisseurs and heavy consumers of music, they were not musicians by profession. Therefore, the laws created around music were more political in nature, and less about the features of the music itself. These laws were used to isolate the German people politically from foreign influence and to convince them that the Nazi government was upholding the citizenry's best interests.

The list of degenerate composers left few others to be considered acceptable. No new composer was able to champion the Nazi musical aesthetic. The only composer who came remotely close was Carl Orff with *Carmina Burana*.<sup>61</sup> Its medieval Germanic texts were ambiguous enough for the Nazis not to condemn it, but it did not support the Nazi cause.<sup>62</sup> To finish the history, 1938 also saw the *Kristallnacht* pogroms, and 1942 commenced the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question.'<sup>63</sup> By 1945, the allies overtook Germany, ending the Nazi dictatorship and the Holocaust. At least six million Jews had been killed.<sup>64</sup>

The Nazis' musical policies affected numerous musicians because so many of them were not Aryan Germans. Because Hitler valued German culture so fanatically, he sought to 'purify' music to retain only what he considered to be German. This was motivated by a perceived threat to the integrity of German music, owing to the considerably high ethnic diversity among musicians. Because of the varied demographics, even Aryan-German musicians, such as

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<sup>61</sup>Schubert, *Grove*, "Germany."

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*

Hindemith, suffered from the Nazi government's stifling policies. Hitler purged German music to the point that the production of new works nearly ceased and the performance of many established works became stale or threatened.

## Winifred Wagner

It is a well-known fact that Hitler was close to the Wagner family, but his relationship with Winifred Wagner offers a fascinating insight into a rare type of relationship with one of these dictators. To her he was a kind, sensitive, misunderstood friend who could do no wrong. Such an idea seems confusing and even uncomfortable, but as Hitler had a tendency to assign his more incriminating tasks to his officers, it was easy for him to deny accountability for the Nazis' major transgressions. Winifred was very fond of him. She never spoke ill of him, not even at the denazification trials after World War II.<sup>65</sup>

Hitler came to *Wahnfried*, the Wagner family villa in Bayreuth, for the first time in 1923.<sup>66</sup> Siegfried and Winifred, Richard Wagner's son and daughter-in-law, had invited him.<sup>67</sup> During this visit, Hitler met Siegfried's brother-in-law, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, an Englishman, Germanophile, and the leading anti-Semitic philosopher of the time.<sup>68</sup> He was Cosima Wagner's favorite Wagner-historian and advocate.<sup>69</sup> Chamberlain was so passionate about German culture that he refused to speak in their native English when conversing with Winifred, who was also English. Chamberlain immediately took to Hitler, proclaiming him as the Messiah of German culture, saving it from the hands of the Weimar Republic.<sup>70</sup> Hitler learned much about his own stance on anti-Semitism from Chamberlain and the Wagner family, who supported him through his rise to power.<sup>71</sup> Of course, this tradition of anti-Semitism from

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<sup>65</sup>Peter Oswald and Leonard S. Ziegans, eds. *The Threat to the Cosmic Order: Psychological, Social, and Health Implications of Richard Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung* (Madison, CT: International Universities Press, Inc., 1997, 133.

<sup>66</sup>Crawford, *A Windfall*, 2.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*

the Wagners dates back to Richard's publication *Das Judentum in der Musik* (Jewishness in Music), written in 1850 and expanded and republished in 1869.<sup>72</sup> This article attacks the general Jewish presence in German art, and specifically criticizes Felix Mendelssohn and Giacomo Meyerbeer.

After this first meeting, Hitler became like part of the family. They were some of the very few people, a class unto themselves, who were allowed to use the familiar *du* to address Hitler.<sup>73</sup> He even asked them to call him by his nickname, 'Wolf.' It was through this familial acceptance, that Winifred developed an unconditional bond with Hitler. In his autobiography *Acts*, Winifred's son, Wolfgang recalled that

...for her, Hitler was first and foremost the private individual with whom she got on well, to whom she felt bound by ties of friendship, and for whom she preserved a 'Nibelung loyalty' to the bitter end....She enjoyed the special status of someone with direct access to the seat of power.<sup>74</sup>

Hitler reciprocated this strong loyalty. Even in 1942 after their friendship began to diminish, Hitler still spoke devotedly of the Wagners: "It wasn't just the others, but Siegfried too who stood by me in my worst hour. Chamberlain's letter came while I was in prison! I was on "du" terms with them, I love those people and *Wahnfried!*"<sup>75</sup> Winifred was able to call upon Hitler throughout her life for certain favors, and he always made certain to respond. This mysterious friendship has caused much intrigue for historians. It is difficult to pinpoint what exactly about their friendship that allowed Hitler to be a noble and gallant hero to Winifred and which brought Hitler back to *Wahnfried* every year. Perhaps Winifred's unconditional acceptance of him

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<sup>72</sup>Todd, *Grove*, "Mendelssohn."

<sup>73</sup>Oswald, *The Threat*, 133.

<sup>74</sup>Wolfgang Wagner, *Acts* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd, 1995), 25-6.

<sup>75</sup>Brigitte Hamann, *Winifred Wagner: A Life at the Heart of Hitler's Bayreuth* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006), 93.

brought him comfort and compelled him to reciprocate, despite pushing away other devoted figures in his life. After all, many other people cultishly followed Hitler, offering him their devoted attention, but few gained as close of access to Hitler's inner workings as did Winifred.

Winifred's and Hitler's relationship provoke ethical evaluation. In some situations, Winifred used their friendship to save jobs and lives, but on the other hand, it can be viewed as yet another outlet which enabled Hitler not to feel accountable for his misdeeds, nor for those of his government. Even as late as 1933, Winifred was able to leverage two Jewish singers to remain in the Bayreuth Festival, Alexander Kipnis and Emanuel List.<sup>76</sup> Although, this action was done for business reasons, not out of compassion for Jews, of which Winifred had none. Nonetheless, both artists were able to escape the Nazis' persecution, partly because of Winifred's need for them, and because of her strategic position with Hitler. For Winifred, there was nothing at all unseemly about her friendship with Hitler, especially because she preferred to dismiss his responsibility for nefarious Nazi actions, and find faults with his subordinates instead. Regardless of her opinions, Winifred did stand up to Hitler for colleagues. She very well could have discontinued Kipnis's and List's contracts on the principle that they were Jews, so at least her neutral business decisions had a positive effect.

That said, Winifred was very outspoken in her disapproval of Jews. In a letter to her friend, Lene Roesener, she wrote: "That's what these fine fellows are like. First of all they boast about their student dueling fraternity etc. etc., and then they go off and marry some full-blooded Jewess. Ugh!"<sup>77</sup> She clearly viewed them as a nuisance:

One visitor, who arrived twelve hours too late for lunch at Wahnfried, explained that on the express train at Breslau "a whole Jewish family" had got into his carriage, and "he was so annoyed by this that he got out, travelled to Leipzig,

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<sup>76</sup>Wagner, *Acts*, 168.

<sup>77</sup>Hamann, *Winifred Wagner*, 39.

caught a slow train and only arrived here at 9 in the evening!"...You can imagine how pleased I was to see all my menu-planning going to waste.<sup>78</sup>

The openness of her annoyance at the Jews in this story for merely existing, not even committing any transgression, exhibits that she did not save Jews out of any altruism. The fact that she was upset with the Jews in the story for ruining her dinner, when it was the guest's choice to leave the carriage, demonstrates her petty willingness to reproach Jews.

One might question whether allying with Hitler was even a smart business choice. It cost a lot of ticket sales from denouncers of anti-Semitism, although Winifred's opinion was that people like them should not be welcome at Bayreuth anyway. However, Hitler later became the Bayreuth Festival's main patron when, because of low ticket sales, the festival faced financial difficulties.

Siegfried was the first to develop a relationship with Hitler, though it was much more short-lived. Siegfried raised money for Hitler's campaign in 1924.<sup>79</sup> In an interesting short episode, Siegfried actually traveled with Winifred to America to convince Henry Ford to donate to Hitler's campaign, though their mission proved unsuccessful.<sup>80</sup> After losing the Presidential campaign of 1932, Hitler wrote one of the longest letters of his life to Siegfried wherein he thanked him for his support, told him how disappointed he was in the loss of the election, and expressed that he felt gratitude for, honor from, and devotion to the Wagner family.<sup>81</sup> The foundation Siegfried laid allowed Winifred to become close with Hitler. Siegfried was a political advocate for Hitler, and Winifred was ever the supportive wife, making sure Hitler felt

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<sup>78</sup>Hamann, *Winifred Wagner*, 39.

<sup>79</sup>Frederic Spotts, *Bayreuth: A history of the Wagner Festival*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 139.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Hamann, *Winifred Wagner*, 92.

welcome and even nurtured. Over time, however, Siegfried seemed to waver in his enthusiasm for Hitler's company. Already in the year 1924, he grew concerned about *Wahnfried's* affiliation with the Hitler and the Nazi party, so he began to spread his resources.<sup>82</sup> He took down the imperial banners flown above *Wahnfried* and refused Hitler's plea to stay with the Wagners after his release from jail.<sup>83</sup> He also stopped all public politicized statements and hired Arturo Toscanini to conduct the festival.<sup>84</sup> In such a polarized political climate, Siegfried's appointment of Toscanini decisively opposed the xenophobia prevalent in conservative German circles.<sup>85</sup> The Nazis would have definitely noticed Siegfried's choice to employ an Italian conductor to direct the German festival, despite the prestige that such a figure as Toscanini offered.<sup>86</sup> Continuing his goal for Bayreuth's independence, Siegfried changed his will so that his children would inherit the Wagner estate, including the festival, in the event of Winifred's remarriage.<sup>87</sup> This would prevent the family's holdings from being acquired by her hypothetical new husband. Bayreuth scholar Frederic Spotts infers that Siegfried's decision was to prevent Hitler himself from inheriting the Wagner family holdings and businesses should the two wed after Siegfried's death.<sup>88</sup> This testifies that, not only did Winifred and Hitler cultivate a close relationship, but also, that Siegfried felt threatened. Another theory for Siegfried's decisions to give Bayreuth more independence from the Nazis is that he was attempting to avoid outraging the ruling republican government. Alternatively, perhaps he saw in Hitler a personal reason to falter in his friendship. Whatever his motivation, there was plenty of financial justification for

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<sup>82</sup>Spotts, *Bayreuth*, 158.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*

Siegfried to distance himself from such a politicized figure. Although the festival was not affiliated with the Nazi party, Siegfried's public connection with Hitler marginalized much of his audience-base.<sup>89</sup> Such a large loss of audience did not daunt Winifred later, when she was director, though perhaps it should have.

At the festival of 1924, the year after Hitler's first attendance, there were a number of boycotters.<sup>90</sup> The specific reason for it was the Wagners' close association with Hitler.<sup>91</sup> As hinted above, Winifred had a dismissive attitude about the protesters; she cared about supporting Hitler more "than whether fewer *Nagods* come to the Festival...Anyone who really feels and thinks like a German, will come anyway...If we became completely free of *Nagods* here, we would practically have achieved the impossible without even trying."<sup>92</sup> *Nagods* was a word Winifred invented to mean Jews.<sup>93</sup> Her words reveal that she in fact welcomed the boycott as it meant that there would be no Jews in the audience. On an artistic level, it is generally immoral to marginalize an audience, especially based on race. Should art not appeal to a diverse audience? Winifred certainly disagreed with such a sentiment. It is morally questionable that there was a specific audience that Winifred aspired to alienate. On the other hand, the opera company was a private institution, and it did not discriminate to whom tickets were sold. The Wagners marginalized the Jews only through the company they kept, but that was enough to cause an entire ethnic group to react negatively towards them. Audiences of the time could vote with their money, so to speak, and they did so by declining to buy tickets to the festival.

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<sup>89</sup>Spotts, *Bayreuth*, 158.

<sup>90</sup>Hamann, *Winifred Wagner*, 93.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*

Another reason for the boycott was hypocrisy. The idea that the Wagner family employed Jews, while keeping company with Hitler and openly supporting the Nazi party, was interpreted by many people at the time as highly immoral.<sup>94</sup> Winifred reacted again in 1925 in a demeaning and spiteful way: “The Jews have succeeded in trumpeting it about to the whole world that artists are exploited here for political purposes, and they prove it by pointing to our friendship with Hitler etc.”<sup>95</sup> At this point she was growing more aggravated because the financial consequences of the boycott were becoming threatening.<sup>96</sup> With this kind of open acrimony, working at an anti-Semitic opera company which employed Jews, must have been problematic. Needless to say, the Jews working there must have been of a certain caliber for the Wagners to have hired them. What was it like for a Jew to be in such an openly racist working environment? It would have been difficult no doubt, perhaps some even had to grapple with feelings of betrayal. There were even some Jews of which the Wagners were fond, and they even made the hypocritical excuse for them of ‘not being like those other Jews.’ Regardless, the Wagners were able to keep Jews in employment until 1933, one season past when it became illegal. These explanations could be why Winifred would stand up to Hitler to retain Jews in her productions.

As for Hitler, he was infuriated that the Wagners employed Jews. When he saw the celebrated Friedrich Schorr sing the role of *Wotan* in 1925, he spat “That Jew Schorr.”<sup>97</sup> Hitler never would have considered admitting to Schorr’s talent; Schorr could do nothing to impress him. Hitler would never let politics be compromised by music in this way. He cared more about

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<sup>94</sup>Hamann, *Winifred Wagner*, 104.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup>Oswald, *The Threat*, 134.

Aryanism than about the quality of the music, and this was a difference even from the Wagners. They were willing to admit talent if it came from a Jew, although they would find a way either to excuse it or begrudge it.

Despite their minute differences of opinion, Hitler and the Wagners seemed to be blind to any faults in one another. This was especially true from Winifred's point of view. One example pertained to the fateful Röhm massacre of 1934, also called 'Night of the Long Knives,' in which Hitler astonishingly played the victim, and Winifred pitied him for what happened.<sup>98</sup> Many considered Röhm to be Hitler's best friend.<sup>99</sup> He was the only official who dared to use *du* with Hitler, and even called him *Adi*. This event is often discussed in homosexual studies because Ernst Röhm was openly homosexual and there were many rumors at the time that Röhm and Hitler had homosexual relations.<sup>100</sup> Röhm was trying to consolidate power as leader of both the army and the police in a unified force.<sup>101</sup> Hitler viewed this as insubordinate and a betrayal.<sup>102</sup> Though Hitler never publicly admitted to giving it, the order went out across the nation to arrest and execute any enemies of the state that would challenge Hitler's power.<sup>103</sup> It was a common occurrence for new dictators to have a mass killing within their first year of rule to establish control and eradicate competition. This type of crime is dubbed 'political extra-judicial execution' and it was one of the biggest blows to Hitler's international reputation. There were eighty-five to two hundred casualties: some were officers, some were in the army, and some

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<sup>98</sup>Hamann, *Winifred Wagner*, 223.

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup>H. R. Knickerbocker, *Is Tomorrow Hitler's? 200 Questions on the Battle of Mankind* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1941), 34.

<sup>101</sup>Chris McNab, *Hitler's Elite: The SS 1939-1945*, (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2013), 16-17.

<sup>102</sup>Hamann, *Winifred Wagner*, 223.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*

were even innocent.<sup>104</sup> It was an event that shook the German nation because of its seemingly random spontaneity. At the next Bayreuth cast party after the mass killing, Hitler appeared dejected.<sup>105</sup> When Winifred inquired what had happened, Hitler spoke about how Röhm had betrayed him and so he had to arrange for the execution of his best friend.<sup>106</sup> Winifred immediately took pity on Hitler for his tribulation and also spoke with indignation about how Röhm could be so cruel to poor ‘Wolfie.’<sup>107</sup> She blindly overlooked that he arranged for the mass murder in the middle of the night of at least 85 people without any trial. To her, all that mattered was that someone had betrayed her friend, and so whatever his reaction, it was justified. In her opinion, Röhm had only himself to blame for his death.

Because Röhm was homosexual, Hitler began a campaign against all homosexuals after the massacre. Like with the Jews, some of Bayreuth’s musicians came under attack.<sup>108</sup> Max Lorenz was to be tried for his open homosexuality until Winifred called Hitler and convinced him that without Lorenz, Bayreuth would have to close.<sup>109</sup> As a testimony to Winifred and Hitler’s relationship, the trial was immediately cancelled.<sup>110</sup> Göring even drew up fake Aryan papers for Lorenz’s Jewish wife.<sup>111</sup> Phony documentation was quite a common occurrence, and Winifred would say about it “I’ll tell you who’s a Jew or not.”<sup>112</sup> This anecdote demonstrates the kind of clout that Winifred had with Hitler, he would do just about anything she asked.

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<sup>104</sup>Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1889-1936: Hubris* (New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 517.

<sup>105</sup>Hamann, *Winifred Wagner*, 223.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

However, because of their natural affinity and similarities, she rarely felt the need to request his intervention. Winifred can be criticized for not trying to do more for the suffering people in this time of persecution, but at least for the sake of Bayreuth, and for the sake of continuing Wagner's music, she did save a number of lives in order to protect the festival.

Like Hitler's attitude about the Röhm massacre, his attitude about *Kristallnacht* was similarly pitiful and irresponsible. Historians say that Hitler never stated anything official that would claim ownership of that night, and it was even not his typical strategy.<sup>113</sup> *Kristallnacht* was much too messy to be the work of Hitler, and it is unlikely that Hitler would have executed it in that way. It was Goebbels who gave the police the order to stand down if crimes were being committed against the Jews. Therefore, Goebbels did not order *Kristallnacht*. Rather, he ordered vigilantes not to be prevented from any vandalism, looting, arson, murder, destruction, and general terrorism across Germany (then, including Austria) in retaliation for Ernst vom Rath's assassination.<sup>114</sup> Nazi diplomat vom Rath's murder was committed by Polish-German Jew, Herschel Grynszpan.<sup>115</sup> Hitler was initially unaware of Goebbels's order, which was an attempt to appeal to the Führer's good graces for a previous mistake.<sup>116</sup> The following morning, Hitler gave an hour-long public address, in which he mentioned nothing of the pogrom.<sup>117</sup> The international community was scandalized by Germany's acts of terror; the press called the event so horrible that even *anti-Nazi* propagandists could not have made it up!<sup>118</sup> According to

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<sup>113</sup>Eugene Davidson, *The Unmaking of Adolf Hitler* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1996), 325.

<sup>114</sup>Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, Volume 1: The Years of Persecution 1933-1939* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998), 113.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., 272.

<sup>117</sup>Davidson, *Unmaking Hitler*, 325.

<sup>118</sup>Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, L.L.C., 1986), 41.

Wolfgang, even the Wagner family was upset about the event.<sup>119</sup> And the next time Hitler visited, “when we vented our indignation at the anti-Semitic outrages committed on 9 November 1938, the so-called ‘Night of Broken Glass’, he [Hitler] told us that it was an independent initiative on Goebbels’s part and had come as a surprise to him.”<sup>120</sup> Because Hitler did not give the order, he was able to deny responsibility. Yet again, Hitler dejectedly acted as the victim of his own government’s corruption, shirking any accountability for the situation. This was easy to do because of his constant measures to delegate incriminating acts to his subordinates.

It is interesting that the Wagners never joined the Nazi political party, nor officially aligned the Bayreuth festival with it. This kept them fairly safe from becoming entangled within Hitler’s politics. For Hitler, it meant that *Wahnfried* and the Wagners could continue to provide a retreat when politics grew too overwhelming. It can be assumed that they never joined or declared affiliation to save ticket sales. Perhaps it was also to protect the neutrality of the music; hopefully, they understood that to declare Wagner’s work to a political party would be to compromise its integrity. Whatever the reason, there were several incidents with the children participating in government-sponsored programs, wherein Winifred called for favors from Hitler. Because her upbringing was so rigid, Winifred had a very non-authoritarian approach to raising her children.<sup>121</sup> She was unable to cope with the hive-like activities of the Hitler Youth, and was horrified at the thought of her children having to participate in drill squads.<sup>122</sup> The notion that the *Hitler Jugend*, or HJ, forced children to exercise, militantly, until they failed of exhaustion, was against Winifred’s principles.<sup>123</sup> Did she blame Hitler for her dissatisfaction with how the

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<sup>119</sup>Wagner, *Acts*, 46.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>Hamann, *Winifred Wagner*, 231.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

Hitler Youth was run? Of course not, she blamed only Baldur von Schirach, organizer of the Hitler Youth.<sup>124</sup> Yet again, Hitler's constant delegation meant that he could deny culpability for whatever happened inside the HJ. The young von Schirach wanted to host an event for his program at the Bayreuth Theater.<sup>125</sup> Again, Winifred would not stand to have the theater used for political reasons, to avoid any official affiliations.<sup>126</sup> She reported to her close friend, Lene, how Hitler had

...been gloriously helpful in getting me out of a fix: on 5 January Schirach made a big fuss here, and even wanted the Festival Theatre. I wasted no time in phoning Hitler, and he ruled it out straight away—'Thanks, that's all I wanted to hear', I said, and the local HJ bigwigs finished up with very long faces.<sup>127</sup>

Here is yet another example of Hitler's willingness to accommodate Winifred. He regularly respected the Wagners' desire to keep Bayreuth unaffiliated with the Nazi party. Perhaps it was because he wanted to keep Bayreuth safe, uninvolved with his government machinations, or perhaps it was out of sheer loyalty. Whatever the reason, it is commendable that the Wagners kept Bayreuth out of the hands of the Nazis as much as they did. The security of the party's supremacy must have been tempting. Although, it was probably Winifred's foresight in this regard which kept Bayreuth preserved from Nazi corruption.

Yet another story of Hitler's intervention came about during an investigation of a local abbess, a teacher of Winifred's daughter, Friedelind. The abbess's teaching came into question because there was suspicion of her not supporting Hitler's leadership.<sup>128</sup> Winifred was annoyed by the investigation's disruptiveness to Friedelind's education.<sup>129</sup> Once more, Winifred refused

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<sup>124</sup>Hamann, *Winifred Wagner*, 231.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., 234.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid.

to believe that Hitler had any reason for blame. Instead she accused his subordinates. She telephoned Hitler and insisted that her daughter came home from school every day with a newfound love for him and the new German nation, and that there was *no* way she could believe that a teacher had instructed anything but respect for the Führer.<sup>130</sup> Much to the annoyance of Hitler's officers, Hitler had the investigation closed immediately: Winifred's account provided more than enough information for Hitler to decide the outcome.<sup>131</sup> Ironically, Friedelind grew up to be the most outspoken against the Wagner family's support of Hitler and the Nazis. As soon as she came of age, she moved away and estranged herself from the family. In the previous example of Hitler's special favors granted for Winifred, one can see that she really esteemed him as kind and magnanimous, in contrast to the way she viewed his corrupt, despotic underlings. Her opinion of them was that they were conniving and undermined Hitler's heroic vision for the nation. It is a rare and interesting depiction of Hitler, but not very persuasive. With other accounts taken into consideration, it is much easier to think of him as an unlovable demon, than to believe Winifred's bias.

All of these favors are not to imply that Hitler asked nothing of Winifred. For political reasons and the preservation of German music, Hitler asked Winifred to hire Furtwängler to conduct the 1936 Bayreuth Festival.<sup>132</sup> Hitler even stayed at *Wahnfried* for a time when he needed respite. Wolfgang's account of that summer also depicts an uncommon picture of Hitler:

Hitler's presence in the grounds of *Wahnfried* during the festival season meant that he was, in the literal sense, our next-door neighbor. This being so, and the summer vacations being relatively quiet on the political front (as they still are), he extended his bohemianesque sociability to me and my brother and sisters by inviting us over. He was always impeccably polite to my mother, bowing and kissing her hand with all the formal courtesy of an old-fashioned Austrian

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<sup>130</sup>Hamann, *Winifred Wagner*, 234.

<sup>131</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup>*Ibid.*, 235.

gentleman. In conversation he would listen to us attentively, receptively, and without interruption. There were no uncontrolled outbursts in our presence, nor did he devalue any of our carpets by chewing them. One gained the inescapable impression that, in our company, he sought and possibly found some substitute for the family atmosphere that was denied him elsewhere. Because we children could speak out and ask him questions quite openly and uninhibitedly, our relations were uncomplicated and unaffected by that quasi-religious, awe-inspiring gulf that customarily separated him, a man regarded as the divinely appointed guardian of German honour and greatness, from the everyday world.<sup>133</sup>

Not the only account to infer that Hitler found some sort of familial fulfilment when visiting the Wagner family, it is interesting to think how few people would have seen Hitler in such an affable manner. The dictator's more gentle nature in this quotation comes somewhat unexpectedly, but it is from the unbiased perspective of a child. Wolfgang continues later to write critically about Hitler, so there is no agenda to preserve the man's image, as there is in Winifred's accounts. That said, this account gives validity to the way Winifred acted towards and depicted Hitler. He must have really had a gentle side that presented itself when he felt accepted. It is so at odds with many other accounts of him that there is difficulty in accepting that perhaps this docile charm of Hitler did exist in a more relaxed environment.

Because of Hitler's trust in the Wagners, when Wolfgang's brother, Wieland, asked Hitler about the list of degenerate artists, Hitler said that the governmental ban was only a temporary measure. This is surprising, because accounts of the convention convince of its permanence. Wolfgang's account reveals a different perspective.

My brother was greatly concerned about the problem of 'degenerate art' as exemplified by the notorious Munich exhibition of 1937, especially as Goebbels himself had devoted a large-scale exhibition to the painter Edvard Munch a few years earlier. Hitler was evasive on the subject. He said that, after a phase of self-discovery, art of that kind would be able to be shown in Germany once more. It had not been destroyed, after all, merely sold off abroad, and the proceeds used to purchase Old Masters for the benefit of German museums.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup>Wagner, *Acts*, 45.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid.

This perspective is astounding. How many were convinced that it was a permanent ban? How many were privy to the fact that it was temporary? Was Hitler lying to soften his character to gain acceptance from the Wagners? This seems out of character for him, because he was immovable in his principles. The level of blasé candor in the quotation is unlike what Hitler usually projects. One must be careful when analyzing these unique perspectives. It seems so out of character for Hitler, unless it is yet another manifestation of his charisma. It may have been his high level of comfort with the family that allowed him to speak so naturally. It is difficult to say if this is a trustworthy account; however, the fact that there is a possibility in Hitler's mind that the 1938 bans were temporary attests to the viability of such a notion. Assuming that he really felt this way, at what point would Hitler decide that German music had completed its 'phase of self-discovery'? It is interesting to imagine, that if the Germans had not lost World War II, would a German 'perestroika' have gone into effect? If Hitler had succeeded in his plans to eliminate all Jews, it seems silly, that he would then reinstate Jewish music. History tells us that the more power and success Hitler gained, the more fanatical he became, so would there really have been a point at which he would have loosened his extreme control? It is difficult to visualize what sort of event would cause such a drastic reversal in policy.

Wolfgang also tells another story in which Hitler displays a more caring side. There was a bonfire to celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Wagner's birth.<sup>135</sup> The bonfire was quite clumsy, and the rain-soaked wood caused a plume of smoke which permeated through the crowd.<sup>136</sup> "Still wind and a light drizzle carried all the smoke and stench towards the guests and engulfed them in it. Hitler, who was not at all amused, upbraided the luckless master of ceremonies for his

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<sup>135</sup>Wagner, *Acts*, 47.

<sup>136</sup>*Ibid.*

stupidity in jeopardizing the singers scheduled to appear in the following day's performance."<sup>137</sup>

According to Wolfgang, Hitler was hesitant to even participate in the bonfire because he was offended by the crowd's insobriety, but he intervened when he felt that the following night's singers were being compromised.<sup>138</sup> Surely, the upbraiding is characteristic for Hitler, but there is a certain 'fatherliness' about his scolding to protect the singers' voices. What side of Hitler was this, looking out for the well-being of these musicians? It is easy to forget that through all the destruction and havoc, Hitler was in fact trying to achieve protection for the German people, their art, and their music. Although his methods were mad, in this regard, it was in his character to be protective of people he deemed worthy.

On that note, Hitler oversaw that the Bayreuth festival remained operational throughout World War II, even after Winifred's and his friendship greatly waned in 1940. The period of Bayreuth during the war is often called the 'War Festivals.'<sup>139</sup> Due to wartime circumstances, they adopted a very different nature. Hitler remembered how disruptive World War I was to the Bayreuth Festival. Restoring the opera productions that had fallen into disuse required great effort, and there was a large discontinuity between the productions before World War I and those afterwards.<sup>140</sup> The First World War must have been so disruptive that Hitler would have heard about the difficulties, since his first attendance of the festival was not until 1923. Regardless, he insisted on keeping the festival open, no matter the means. He even shortened Wieland's conscription, so that he could return to Bayreuth in case the Wagners needed their heir. As World War II progressed the festival began to fail financially; Winifred made a call to Hitler, and

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<sup>137</sup>Wagner, *Acts*, 47.

<sup>138</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup>*Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>140</sup>*Ibid.*

he was thrilled to back the company with funding.<sup>141</sup> His solution was to buy out tickets for the productions and order his conscripts to attend the festival for a healthy dose of cultural indoctrination, but he quickly learned of the soldiers' utter disinterest.<sup>142</sup> He had no tolerance for their lack of reverence at the performances.<sup>143</sup> Once Hitler saw the problem, he reserved the seats for wounded servicemen in order to boost their morale.<sup>144</sup> They also griped, complaining that they had to convalesce with a dead composer rather than with their families.<sup>145</sup> After that strategy failed, rather than continuing to buy seats, Hitler simply endowed the festival with 500,000 marks, so that the Nazi leaders could cultivate their image as patrons of high culture.<sup>146</sup> He likened himself to King Ludwig II who was Richard's famous patron and avid supporter; he even stated that he saw himself as continuing Ludwig's work.<sup>147</sup> In his own opinion he became the caretaker of the festival, but in many others' opinion he became the puppeteer.<sup>148</sup> Tickets were no longer sold to the public at all because Hitler had full dominion over the sales, and he would pay all expenses for the wounded veterans to rehabilitate in Bayreuth to reward them for their heroism.<sup>149</sup> He also exempted other Bayreuth musicians from serving in the military, to preserve the integrity of the festival.<sup>150</sup> It was Winifred's privilege to decide which musicians were exempt from service: all Hitler required a list of names and it was done.<sup>151</sup> Author Spotts

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<sup>141</sup>Wagner, *Acts*, 57.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid.

<sup>146</sup>Pamela Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 28.

<sup>147</sup>Spotts, *Bayreuth*, 170.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid., 189.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid.

<sup>150</sup>Ibid.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid.

raised some interesting questions on this matter. Even though Hitler was not artistic director, could one say that the productions were free from political influence?<sup>152</sup> They were doubtfully totally free from Hitler's impact. Although Hitler tried his best to stay out of the actual production itself (besides casual musings with Winifred about small musical opinions), it is likely that Winifred nuanced the productions to show gratitude to the Führer for saving the festival. Either way, the government used the festival as clear indoctrination and propaganda, so in that respect, free artistic integrity was compromised.<sup>153</sup> Then would it be better not to have continued the festival given the circumstances? Of course Hitler required a certain amount of respect from the productions, but without Hitler, the productions would have ceased. From an artistic point of view, is the compromise reasonable? Obviously to Winifred it was, because her values aligned with Hitler's anyway, there was hardly any compromise for her. In fact, she likely found the situation preferable to that of selling tickets and producing shows for Jews!

Leading up to the war, Winifred played a special role for Hitler. She often acted as his political ambassador in Bayreuth.<sup>154</sup> She met with English politicians to dissuade English intervention in the wars Hitler had planned.<sup>155</sup> British Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon visited Bayreuth in 1935.<sup>156</sup> Hitler even asked her to invite King Edward VIII to the festival in 1937.<sup>157</sup> She came to receptions for Mussolini in Munich and Berlin.<sup>158</sup> Sir Neville Henderson in 1939 asked to share a box with Hitler, to entreat him not to invade Poland, so that war with England

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<sup>152</sup>Spotts, *Bayreuth*, 188.

<sup>153</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup>*Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>155</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup>*Ibid.*

could be avoided.<sup>159</sup> This was the event that caused the deterioration in their friendship.<sup>160</sup> Hitler refused to share the box, and icily upbraided Winifred for being involved.<sup>161</sup> It seems quite unfair that Hitler would use Winifred for these purposes, but then, when she was simply facilitating further communication with England, he would become upset with her. This was the last festival that Hitler attended, and the last time they saw each other in person. Political and diplomatic demands became too difficult for Hitler to muster a visit and rekindle the friendship, though he always continued to speak fondly of the Wagner family, and he continued to run the festival until his surrender and death in 1945. Their estrangement must not have been the only reason that Hitler stopped visiting, even Winifred still spoke of Hitler with great devotion thereafter, though it pained her not to see him anymore. Winifred may have taken her diplomatic duty too far, but perhaps it demonstrated too much dependence for both parties, and even too close of proximity between musician and politician. They certainly would not have wanted to be responsible for any inadvertent harm to each other's position in their respective domains. This could certainly explain the distance they kept thereafter, and the absence of animosity towards each other.

The final event in the saga between the Wagners and Hitler was Wieland's last attempt to retrieve documents for the benefit of Bayreuth. As stated previously, Hitler owned the original manuscript to *Rienzi*. He also owned the manuscripts to early stage works *Die Feen* and *Das Liebesverbot*, as well as original copies of *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, and original orchestral sketches for *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Götterdämmerung*, and Act III of *Siegfried*.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup>Spotts, *Bayreuth*, 167.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid.

<sup>161</sup>Ibid.

<sup>162</sup>Ibid., 198.

These artifacts would have been extremely valuable, especially to the Wagner estate. In January of 1945, Wieland made the extremely dangerous drive to Hitler's bunker in Berlin, risking bombing and advancing Allied forces.<sup>163</sup> He made it to Berlin, but Hitler refused to relinquish his beloved manuscripts.<sup>164</sup> Wieland made it home safely, though having failed his mission. Hitler and the manuscripts did not fare so well; they were all lost to fire in the destruction of Hitler's bunker.<sup>165</sup> It was irresponsible of Hitler not to yield the documents to Wieland, but he knew well the value of such a national treasure, so he really must have believed they were safer in the bunker than in *Wahnfried*, even with the inevitability of losing the war.

The decades-long saga between the Wagners and Hitler provides boundless insights and bases for discussion. Hitler and Winifred played the full gamut of roles: patron, artist, fan, host, political advocate, neighbor, trustee, loyal subject, and benevolent liege. Sometimes they even exchanged roles, such as when Siegfried and Winifred were Hitler's political patrons, or when Hitler served as Bayreuth's financial patron. Did Hitler have too much influence on the music at Bayreuth? Indeed, he had considerable significance for the festival, but ultimately, it was Winifred who chose to accommodate Hitler's vision. He never forced her to follow his suggestions, and she arguably would have faced no consequences for ignoring them. The fact is, it was she who welcomed them. Any breaches of musical freedom in Bayreuth came more from the laws that Hitler enacted to place theoretical racial superiority as a higher priority than that of musical talent or merit. Even then, Winifred had authority as to which Jews she expected Hitler to allow her to keep at Bayreuth. In many ways, Winifred had political influence on Hitler, especially with her facilitation of diplomatic relations with England.

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<sup>163</sup>Spotts, *Bayreuth*, 198.

<sup>164</sup>Ibid.

<sup>165</sup>Ibid.

Even more fascinating than their changing roles were Hitler's and Winifred's idealized opinions of each other. The Wagner family accounts of Hitler depict a very different man than is given from any other source. They were closer and more candid with each other than almost anyone else in their lives. A kind, warm, sensitive, pitiable Hitler contrasts with the miserly, hot-headed, obsessive, murderous Hitler depicted elsewhere. It emphasizes Hitler's ability to delegate incriminating tasks in order to maintain plausible innocence and shirk responsibility. It also shows the delusion in Hitler's ambition to protect the German people and be a heroic force of cultural peace and harmony. The entire saga unfolds like a disconcerting, saccharine dream with a constant undertone of indirect, peripheral malevolence. Somehow, neither Hitler nor Winifred seemed to detect this undercurrent.

## Wilhelm Furtwängler

A famous champion of conducting, Wilhelm Furtwängler had a career spanning the Nazis' control of Germany. His story provides wisdom through trials of being a patriotic, loyal artist who resisted governmental exploitation. There is debate, today, whether his choice to stay in Germany was brave or ignorant, and this controversy was even more impassioned during his lifetime. It cost him a great deal to be one of the last great musicians to stay in Central Europe during the Nazi era, and he was even prosecuted at the denazification trials for it. Authorities found him innocent, with substantial proof that he was not a Nazi, but he was nevertheless called into question and examined. At that time, he must have been accustomed to having his ethics questioned by both the Nazis and by anti-Nazi Europe.

Whether out of ignorance, bravery, or both, Furtwängler was undaunted by the consequences of defending his beliefs. At great risk, he wrote an openly critical letter in 1933 about the Nazi handling of musicians. In 1934, he publicly defended the politically-condemned Hindemith.<sup>166</sup> These actions could have very easily cost him his freedom, or even his life.<sup>167</sup> Furtwängler set an amazing example in integrity. He did not compromise his beliefs, even if he had to be strategic about when he displayed them. He was constant in protecting and defending the honest people in his professional circle, no matter their background. Commendably, given the climate of the time, he stalwartly viewed music as transcendent of race. For him music should be celebrated or condemned only by inherent quality, not by the race of its creator. He even resigned from his appointment at Bayreuth because he so disagreed with Winifred's

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<sup>166</sup>Hans-Hubert Schönzeler, *Furtwängler*, (London: Duckworth Overlook, 1990), 49.

<sup>167</sup>*Ibid.*

preference for non-Jews in the orchestra, a choice that he insisted on making himself as music director of the festival.<sup>168</sup> He fought against the forces of racism with bravery and conviction.

Nazi anti-Semitism even directly threatened him, but nevertheless, he persisted in his beliefs. In 1933, the governing Nazi party wrote him a letter ordering him to dismiss all Jewish musicians in the Berlin Philharmonic, and, especially, his Jewish assistant, Berta Geissmar, whom they viewed as a nuisance.<sup>169</sup> He promptly ignored this request. Berta played an important role in internationally proclaiming the Nazis' misdeeds after her escape to England in 1935, especially in her autobiographical account *The Baton and the Jackboot*, published in 1944.<sup>170</sup> Furtwängler was extremely fond of Berta, so much so that the Nazis began investigating if they were having relations.<sup>171</sup> Needless to say they were a very cohesive team. He was especially fond of his orchestra about which he spoke as if they were family.<sup>172</sup> He refused to emigrate from Germany because he viewed himself as the protector of his orchestra.<sup>173</sup> He eventually found the Jews in his orchestra appointments outside of Germany for their own safety.<sup>174</sup> This humble man loved his orchestra, and as the saying goes, 'love covers.' He shielded them from as much persecution as he was able.

His motivation was also for the music. He wanted to save the Jews in his orchestra, not only out of pure kindness, but also because he believed these were the top musicians in the world, and no Nazi could convince him otherwise. In his open letter to Göring he stated,

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<sup>168</sup>Hamann, *Winifred Wagner*, 235.

<sup>169</sup>Schönzeler, *Furtwängler*, 50.

<sup>170</sup>Berta Geissmar, *The Baton and the Jackboot: Recollections of Musical Life* (Columbus, MO: Cloumbus Books Ltd., 1988).

<sup>171</sup>Schönzeler, *Furtwängler*, 50.

<sup>172</sup>Ibid.

<sup>173</sup>Ibid.

<sup>174</sup>Ibid.

Ultimately there is only one dividing line I recognize: that between good and bad art. However, while the dividing line between Jews and non-Jews is being drawn with a downright merciless theoretical precision, that other dividing line, the one which in the long run is so important for our music life, yes, the decisive dividing line between good and bad, seems to have far too little significance attributed to it [...] If concerts offer nothing then people will not attend; that is why the QUALITY is not just an idea: it is of vital importance.<sup>175</sup>

Furtwängler demanded that musical integrity be uncompromised by the arbitrary lines of racism. He went on to cite the masters Joseph Joachim and Felix Mendelssohn, of Jewish descent, as fundamental to the development of German musical history. He even went so far as to declare that he would quit music if the Nazis forced out the Jews because “to continue giving concerts would be quite impossible without [the Jews] - to remove them would be an operation which would result in the death of the patient”.<sup>176</sup> This man knew that a huge deficit of musicians would occur if the Nazis expelled the Jews. He believed that the music industry would essentially crumble for lack of exemplary musicians. Herein lay Furtwängler’s naivety: that was exactly Hitler’s point. Both men were interpreting the same fact: Jews represented a proportionally high number of musicians in Germany. The non-racist Furtwängler’s point was that German music would suffer dearly without them. The racist Hitler’s point was that German music was already dying out because it had been overtaken by such a large number of ethnic Jews. Neither seemed to grasp the other’s point.

Eleven years later, writings in Furtwängler’s diary show that he staunchly held his beliefs through his long conflict with the Nazis. Many musicians outside of Germany, especially German emigrants, criticized and berated Furtwängler for remaining in the Nazi state. They

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<sup>175</sup>Fred K. Prieberg, *Trial of Strength: Wilhelm Furtwängler in the Third Reich*, tr. Christopher Dolan (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994), 340.

<sup>176</sup>Ibid., 74.

interpreted his choice as advocacy for Hitler and condemned him as a Nazi supporter, or sometimes outright as a Nazi. In his diary he wrote his own reaction to this mischaracterization.

All those who became emigrants or demanded that one should emigrate have relieved Hitler of having to prove one thing: his claim that he was the true representative of the German nation. They thought that one had to leave a Nazi Germany, but just this is wrong. Germany never was a Nazi Germany, but a Germany subjugated by Nazis.<sup>177</sup>

This passage exhibits Furtwängler's deep-rooted patriotism. To contextualize this sentiment, it was not only Jews who left Germany, and Furtwängler's response cannot apply to the Jews who escaped persecution. Because he helped so many Jews flee, this quotation is about the non-Jews who left Germany on principle. He viewed them as unpatriotic for abandoning their country in bleak times, and for not standing up to Hitler, something he proved abundantly that he was courageous enough to do. The following year, after the war ended, he further iterated this notion:

I have tried to examine myself very conscientiously. I am no better than others, but I must say what my own instinct was. And there are two things: love for my country and my people, which is a physical and spiritual matter; and a feeling of being given a task to alleviate injustice. The battle for the soul of the German nation is only fought here [in Germany]. From outside one can only voice protests—anyone can do that.<sup>178</sup>

Perhaps it was this absolute patriotism that emboldened Furtwängler and motivated him to persist in his efforts. He viewed the Nazi control as a long-term nuisance, but thought that its representation of Germany was a lie. This was not the 'true' Germany that the nation's great composers helped to build and develop; it was one of pretenders. Furtwängler decided to remain, so that he could better represent 'true' Germany and continue the great German musical tradition. His dedication and devotion to his beliefs are inspiring and teach a valuable lesson

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<sup>177</sup>Schönzeler, *Furtwängler*, 54

<sup>178</sup>*Ibid.*

about integrity and the strength of the human spirit. The spirit can endure anything, even with difficulty, as long as there is a worthy cause in which one believes.

Furtwängler's critics did not see the situation in the same way. Domestically, he was a pariah for allowing Jews in his orchestra.<sup>179</sup> Through this entire period, the fear of plummeting ticket sales haunted Furtwängler and the Berlin Philharmonic.<sup>180</sup> Fewer people would risk coming to concerts, knowing that the music was banned, because there were protected Jews in the orchestra.<sup>181</sup> Concertgoers were afraid to support an ensemble of this nature, and their fear even drove some to protest at the performances.<sup>182</sup> For the opposite reason, The Berlin Philharmonic concert tours were protested abroad as 'Nazi-loving.' Domestically, Furtwängler was alienated as a Jew-lover, and abroad he was alienated as a Nazi-lover. Even in Antwerp, he had to be secretly escorted by police from the concert to the train station to avoid the riotous crowds.<sup>183</sup> It seemed there was only one place that Furtwängler had support: his orchestra. This may be the reason that he continued to endure with them so loyally. It is hard to imagine that any place felt like home to him; the changes Germany had undergone would be a tragic loss for such a deeply patriotic person. It stands to reason that the only places he had solace were with his family and with his orchestra.

In 1933, Furtwängler met with Hitler to discuss his disapproval of the Nazi government's choices about music. He had an extensive case prepared, with specific musicians in mind, to convince Hitler that there was merit to Jewish musicianship.<sup>184</sup> Again, Furtwängler's naivety is

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<sup>179</sup>Schönzeler, *Furtwängler*, 56.

<sup>180</sup>*Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>181</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup>*Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>184</sup>*Ibid.*, 60.

apparent for having any confidence that Hitler could be reasonable on this issue. One must be careful, though, not to assume that Furtwängler could know about Hitler that which we know about him today. Hitler had yet to commit his greatest atrocities, and Furtwängler had only met him once before this. This encounter did not go well for Furtwängler: Hitler quickly erupted into a one-sided altercation wherein he volleyed insults and admonishments at the conductor who could barely manage to put in a word.<sup>185</sup> Furtwängler was so upset about the ordeal that afterwards, he immediately called Berta, saying that Hitler was not just an enemy of the Jews, but of anything spiritual, calling him a narrow-minded ignoramus.<sup>186</sup> This phone call was not on their private line, so Furtwängler's words were documented by the Gestapo on the other line.<sup>187</sup>

Despite the heated meeting, Hitler still held Furtwängler in high esteem. He respected Furtwängler enough to request that he perform for state events, political rallies, and even insisted that he return to conduct Bayreuth in 1936.<sup>188</sup> Furtwängler refused to perform for any political events, cleaving to his belief that music should be held above the realm of politics.<sup>189</sup> He was also wary of any sort of entrapment from the Nazis.<sup>190</sup> They knew they needed Furtwängler because a large portion of quality musicians had emigrated; his high profile and his resolve to stay in Germany made him of high value to the Nazis. They tried to use him for all he was worth, but they knew there were limitations to how far they could exploit him. This extortionate attitude is highly unethical, but ethics were certainly not their primary concern.

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<sup>185</sup>Schönzeler, *Furtwängler*, 60.

<sup>186</sup>Ibid.

<sup>187</sup>Ibid

<sup>188</sup>Hamann, *Winifred Wagner*, 235.

<sup>189</sup>Schönzeler, *Furtwängler*, 64.

<sup>190</sup>Ibid.

Furtwängler had a much clearer understanding of the Nazi government after his appointment with Hitler. Thereafter, he became openly defiant, an attitude that sometimes caused him trouble, but he was so valuable to the desperate Nazis, that he could be resistant. Furtwängler was wise to this special privilege when he told writer-journalist Curt Riess, “The only one whom everybody expected to open his mouth was I. And I *did* open my mouth, even though I found that it became more and more difficult for me to get a hearing in the places that mattered.”<sup>191</sup> He knew that his situation was unique, and he used it to challenge the Nazi authorities. It was his way of defying their corruption. He was David-like against the Goliathan government that despised him, and yet, needed him.

During the war years, Furtwängler became even more outspoken. Sometimes he would come to rehearsal to see flags with swastikas hung around the rehearsal space. He refused to conduct any sort of work until the flags disappeared, saying “when these rags have been removed, we can start.”<sup>192</sup> He refused to head his letters with the compulsory ‘*Heil Hitler*,’ even when their recipient was Hitler himself.<sup>193</sup> He also refused to conduct the Nazi anthem required at the start of every concert; he always found someone else who would conduct it.<sup>194</sup> There is even a story behind his entry and exit to the stage. He desperately wanted to avoid giving the Nazi salute, so he would walk on stage, baton already in his right hand, and start conducting immediately when he reached the podium.<sup>195</sup> Then, after the performance, he would bow while the orchestra was saluting, and then quickly walk off stage.<sup>196</sup> These were very obvious forms of

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<sup>191</sup>Schönzeler, *Furtwängler*, 65.

<sup>192</sup>*Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>193</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup>*Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>196</sup>*Ibid.*

protest, and everyone knew what Furtwängler was doing: his orchestra, the audience, Nazi officials, even Hitler. It is inspirational that he was able to avoid glorifying the Nazis. Despite his contempt, the Nazis had no other option but to respect his wishes, because of their need for a conductor who could champion the German musical tradition with as much care and quality. In one interesting story, Hitler used cleverness to outwit Furtwängler, not the brute force to which he was accustomed. After he discerned Furtwängler's avoidance of the Nazi salute, one evening, he spontaneously jumped up from his front-row seat after a performance to surprise Furtwängler with a handshake.<sup>197</sup>



Figure 3, Photograph showing Furtwängler's forced handshake with Hitler<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>197</sup>Schönzeler, *Furtwängler*, 75.

<sup>198</sup>Hitler's and Furtwängler's Handshake, digital image, Counter-Currents Publishing, accessed May 2, 2018, <https://www.counter-currents.com/2010/08/wilhelm-furtwangler-music-in-the-third-reich/>.

The press took pictures of the handshake and disseminated the photographs abroad in an attempt to supply fodder to Furtwängler's international critics.<sup>199</sup> Hitler's goal was to isolate Furtwängler further from his connections abroad, so that he would be more reliant on the Nazis for his livelihood. Hitler was limiting Furtwängler's options. The photograph is an awkward one, and it does appear that Furtwängler is the one extending his hand to shake Hitler's. However, the pained expression on his face betrays that it was not his desire to shake the Führer's hand. These anecdotes exhibit the assertions of dominance that alternated between Furtwängler and Hitler. Furtwängler was one of the few men to successfully spar with Hitler, finding many ways to assert his independence. The amount of bravery and cunning that it took testifies to his continued success and upholding of musical standards throughout the Nazi era.

The struggle for dominance came to a heated argument in Bayreuth. The account was given by Friedelind Wagner, who eventually left Nazi Germany, and estranged herself from her Nazi-loving family. At *Wahnfried*:

I remember Hitler turning to Furtwängler and telling him that he would now have to allow himself to be used by the party for propaganda purposes, and I remember that Furtwängler refused categorically. Hitler flew into a fury and told Furtwängler that in that case there would be a concentration camp ready for him. Furtwängler quietly replied: "In that case, Herr Reichskanzler, at least I will be in very good company." Hitler couldn't even answer, and vanished from the room.<sup>200</sup>

It is hard to tell if Furtwängler knew that Hitler was bluffing, or even if *Hitler* knew that he was. Furtwängler continued to refuse party participation, but Hitler never sent him to a concentration camp. How did Furtwängler have the tenacity to speak so defiantly? It is a rare occurrence,

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<sup>199</sup>Schönzeler, *Furtwängler*, 75.

<sup>200</sup>Audrey Roncigli, *Le Cas Furtwängler: Un chef d'orchestre sous le III Reich* (Paris: Editions-Imago, 2009), 53.

surely. How many people would be brave enough to do so? How many could be so resistant without risking arrest, especially in the presence of witnesses?

While Furtwängler was naïve in his determination to see the best in the Nazis, he quickly learned that the Nazis would not listen to reason. He was consistently faithful to his orchestra, family, and beliefs. There were instances when he was forced to compromise, but even in Friedelind's account he was willing to risk everything for his values. His courageous actions demonstrate how someone with enough authority can maintain a defiant relationship with an oppressive dictator. He knew that the Nazis had control over him, but he made sure to cause as many problems for them as possible.

## Arnold Schoenberg

A closer look at one of the composers on the list of degenerates shows a more detailed account of the personal ramifications of an oppressive government. One work in particular, Arnold Schoenberg's *Six Short Pieces* had three demerits from the Nazi perspective: a Jew (who was Lutheran at the time) composed them; one of the pieces was in homage to another Jew (Mahler); and they are atonal and modernist in style. What exactly about this was so offensive to the Nazis, decades after Schoenberg wrote it? At the time of its composition, 1911, Germany was still an empire. Schoenberg had moved to Berlin by that time because of the conservative environment of his native Austria.<sup>201</sup> Although Schoenberg was raised in an Orthodox Jewish home, he converted to Lutheranism in 1898, thirteen years before the work's composition.<sup>202</sup>

Schoenberg composed the set at a time in which he was experimenting with modernism in music and visual art. He was interested in becoming a painter at the time and was taking painting lessons with Oskar Kokoschka.<sup>203</sup> In 1910, he formed a penpal relationship with Wassily Kandinsky who introduced him to *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider), a group of Expressionist, modern painters who began questioning the roles of perspective, audience reaction, and distortion in art.<sup>204</sup> They called themselves *Der Blaue Reiter* after Kandinsky's painting of the same name in which the overarching question is: is the horseman charging towards something or fleeing from something?<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>201</sup>Franz Walter, "Schoenberg [Schönberg], Arnold" in *Grove Music Online*, accessed March 25, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

<sup>202</sup>Ibid.

<sup>203</sup>Ibid.

<sup>204</sup>Ibid.

<sup>205</sup>Ibid.



Figure 4, *Der blaue Reiter*, 1903, oil on canvas.<sup>206</sup>

Schoenberg submitted a number of paintings to this group.

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<sup>206</sup>Wassily Kandinsky, *Der Blaue Reiter*, digital image, Artsy, accessed May 2, 2018, <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/wassily-kandinsky-the-blue-rider>.

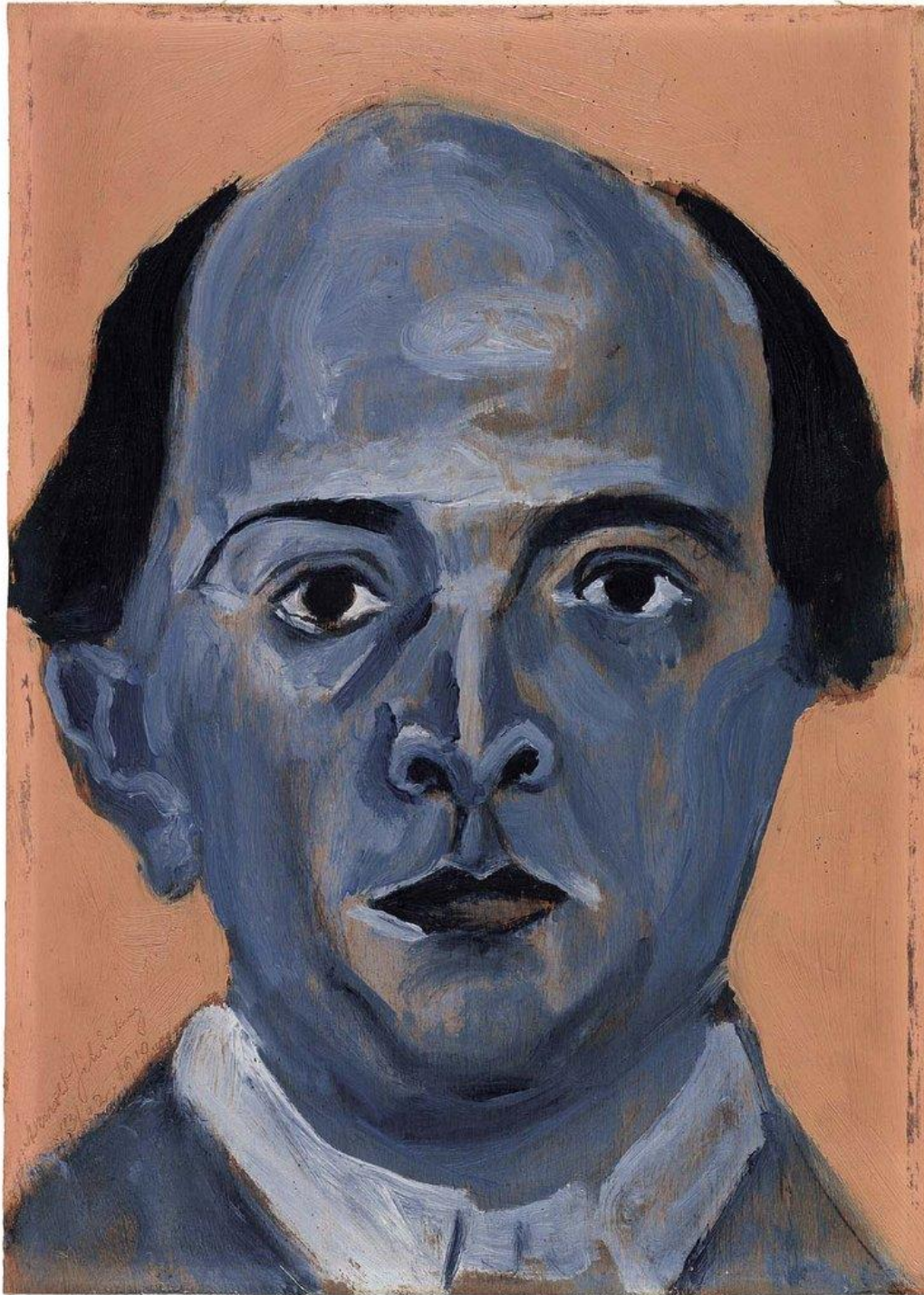


Figure 5, Arnold Schoenberg, *Blue Self Portrait*, 1910, oil on three-ply panel.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>207</sup>Arnold Schoenberg, *Blue Self Portrait*, digital image, WXQR, accessed May 2, 2018, <https://www.wqxr.org/story/arnold-schoenberg-paint-numbers/>.

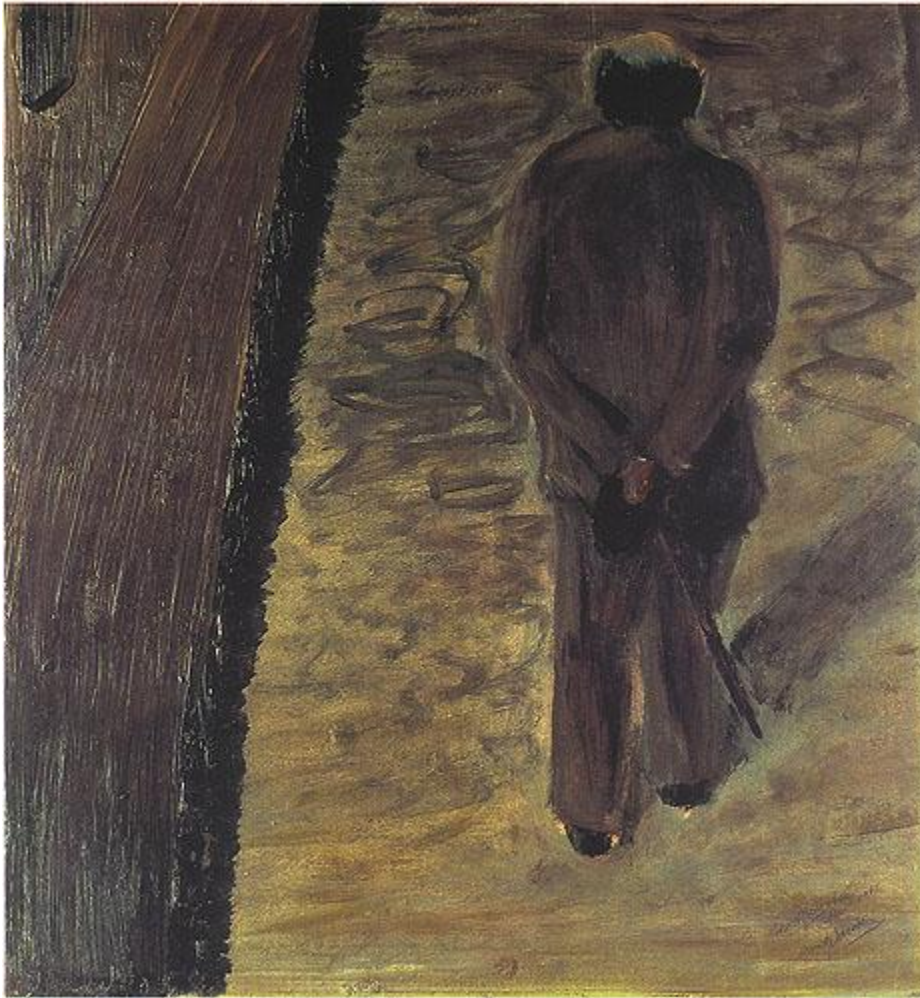


Figure 6, Arnold Schoenberg, *Gehendes Selbstportrait*, 1911, oil on board.<sup>208</sup>

These paintings contain obvious references to the Kandinsky's *Der blaue Reiter*. The images' effects are meant to cause disconcertion and discomfort in their viewers. The blue self-portrait is a reference to The Blue Rider, and Schoenberg's icy and unwell appearance is meant to cause concern for the viewer. The second self-portrait is of Schoenberg walking and again refers to The Blue Rider: is he walking towards something, away from something, or a third option:

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<sup>208</sup>Arnold Schoenberg, *Gehendes Selbstportrait*, digital image, Opus 111, accessed May 2, 2018, [https://benopus111.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/schoenberg\\_gehendes-selbst-portrait-going-self-portrain-1911.jpg](https://benopus111.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/schoenberg_gehendes-selbst-portrait-going-self-portrain-1911.jpg).

meandering with no aim? In the cool, barren, and distorted aesthetic, the priority is to evoke strong reactions and emotions, often negative ones. The Nazis hated this concept and felt there was no room for Expressionism in their country, because they strove to create a society wherein there were no negative emotions. The year that Schoenberg joined the group was the very same year that he publicly presented his first atonal pieces: *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* (The Book of hanging Gardens) and Three Piano Pieces, op. 11.<sup>209</sup> His art helps identify Schoenberg's artistic influences and goals in composing his early atonal music because his musical aesthetic is closely related to that of his visual art.

It is important to note that Schoenberg didn't view his harmonic experimentations as a break from tradition. For him, Romantic music had stretched harmony so far and had obscured the tonic to the point that tonality had become arbitrary.<sup>210</sup> Therefore, he considered his new theories not as a break from tradition, but rather, a continuation of this tradition. He sought to continue the trajectory of complex harmonies and the tonic's irrelevance.<sup>211</sup> In fact, he disliked the term atonal to describe his music; he went so far as to consider his own music as *especially* tonal because it was freed from the rules of dissonance, resolution, and consonance, so that all of the tones have equal importance and none relies on another to exist.<sup>212</sup> Eventually the twelve-tone method was developed to become the most free from tonicization of any methodology.<sup>213</sup> One can hear in these *Six Short Pieces* that, although the harmonies sound very different from traditional Western Music before this point, other components do sound like traditional Western

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<sup>209</sup>Walter, *Grove*, "Schoenberg."

<sup>210</sup>Peter J. Burkholder, *A History of Western Music*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2010): 811.

<sup>211</sup>*Ibid.*, 813.

<sup>212</sup>*Ibid.*, 814.

<sup>213</sup>*Ibid.*, 811.

music.<sup>214</sup> There is often a melody, there is a steady beat, there are distinct phrases, and many of the pieces end with a cadence-like figure. Listening for these details in the pieces emphasizes Schoenberg's point that his music is part of the continuum of Classical Music's historical development. It is only the harmonic language that is new, and even that is derived from the direction towards which musical tradition was already moving.

Another musical aspect that Schoenberg attempted to develop was how music expresses an idea. In the Romantic Era, directly preceding Schoenberg's time, composers sought to create music that depicted emotions and the human experience. Schoenberg wanted to take this notion even further. His goal was to write music that actually *is* emotion, not an expression or description of emotions, but emotion itself. A letter to Ferruccio Busoni in 1909 details this interesting perspective:

My goal: complete liberation from form and symbols, context and logic. Away with motivic work! Away with harmony as the cement of my architecture! Harmony is expression and nothing more. Away with pathos! Away with 24 pound protracted scores! My music must be short. Lean! In two notes, not built, but "expressed". And the result is, I hope, [music] without stylized and sterilized drawn-out sentiment. That is not how man feels; it is impossible to feel only one emotion. Man has many feelings, thousands at a time, and these feelings add up no more than apples and pears add up. Each goes its own way. This multicoloured, polymorphic, illogical nature of our feelings, and their associations, a rush of blood, reactions in our senses, in our nerves; I must have this in my music. It should be an expression of feeling, as if [it] really were the feeling, full of unconscious connections, not some perception of "conscious logic". Now I have said it, and they may burn me.<sup>215</sup>

This quotation defies the common misconception that because Schoenberg's music is highly theoretical and mathematical, it is emotionally barren. This could not be farther from

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<sup>214</sup>Allen Shawn, *Arnold Schoenberg's Journey*, (Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York, 2002), 115.

<sup>215</sup>Arnold Schoenberg to Ferruccio Busoni, August 24, 1909 in *Selected Letters Ferruccio Busoni and Antony Beaumont* (London: Faber & Faber, 1987), 392.

Schoenberg's endeavor. These pieces fit within the goals of musical Expressionism, in that to embody emotion, they offer an entirely subjective perspective by distorting the tonic. Doing so obscures any objective perspective. In Expressionist art, this was done through radical distortion, so that the meaning of emotions could be expressed without the limitations of context and reality. Through Schoenberg's restructured harmonic language, i.e. tonal distortion, he fulfills the Expressionistic goal to convey emotive, subjective, distorted music. The musical material of these pieces acts as a counterpart to Edvard Munch's *The Scream* (1893). It is important to understand this when listening to any of Schoenberg's deeply emotive and spiritual music, so that one can here the emotions that Schoenberg is trying to create, not just depict. It is as if he is trying to condense and express the emotional content developed in an entire symphony down into one four-bar phrase. Schoenberg's point in developing his harmonic language was an attempt to bring Romantic ideals into a new expression of completely subjective emotions. It was the same subjective distortion that the Nazis found so odious, and it is completely contrary to the ideals of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, or *New Objectivity*, which the Nazis held so dear.

Of the pieces themselves: number six is considered by most scholars to be a reaction to the death of Gustav Mahler.<sup>216</sup> The first five pieces were composed in one day on February 19, 1911.<sup>217</sup> The sixth was composed on June 17, 1911 a few weeks after Mahler's funeral.<sup>218</sup> Schoenberg was deeply affected by Mahler's death, as Mahler was one of Schoenberg's few advocates and a strong mentor when Schoenberg was beginning his career. He even loaned

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<sup>216</sup>Shawn, *Schoenberg's Journey*, 115.

<sup>217</sup>Ibid.

<sup>218</sup>Ibid.

Schoenberg money during difficult times, and secured him job opportunities. Schoenberg also painted the scene of Mahler's funeral.<sup>219</sup>

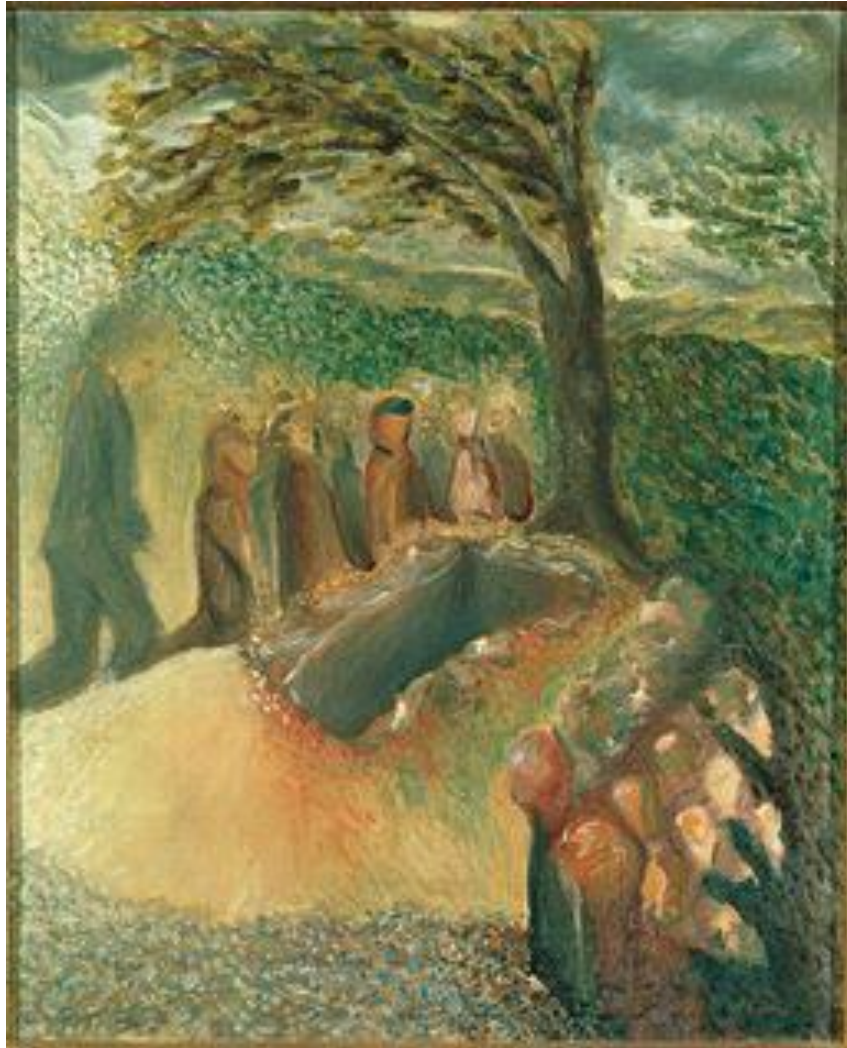


Figure 7, Arnold Schoenberg, *Begräbnis von Gustav Mahler*, 1911, oil on canvas.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>219</sup>Shawn, *Schoenberg's Journey*, 115.

<sup>220</sup>Arnold Schoenberg, *Begräbnis von Gustav Mahler*, digital image, Arnold Schoenberg Center Image Archive, accessed May 2, 2018, [http://archive.schoenberg.at/resources/pages/view.php?ref=8916&search=&order\\_by=relevance&sort=DESC&offoff=144&archive=0&k=&curpos=148](http://archive.schoenberg.at/resources/pages/view.php?ref=8916&search=&order_by=relevance&sort=DESC&offoff=144&archive=0&k=&curpos=148).

VI.

Sehr langsam (♩)

mit sehr zartem Ausdruck

genau im Takt

wie ein Hauch

Musical excerpt 1, Arnold Schoenberg, *Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke*, 1913.<sup>221</sup>

The painting almost foreshadows the eerie winds of change that would gradually affect Schoenberg over the next two decades. In the piece dedicated to Mahler, one can hear the spiritual and reverent shades of emotion. The still, open sonorities evoke an ethereal

<sup>221</sup>Arnold Schoenberg, “*Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke*,” in *Twentieth-Century Piano Classics*, (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications: 1999): 136.

atmosphere. The loudest dynamic marking is *piano*, the last line becomes as soft as *pianissississimo*. The form is a simplistic 5-bar phrase, and Schoenberg's markings, such as *wie ein Hauch* (like a breath) in the last bar, help to signify the mysterious atmosphere of death and spirits. The last phrase progresses downwards in register as if implying the final interment of the body at the funeral service. Even the page itself looks sparse, uncluttered, and out of time, helping to transport the listener to the world of the spirits. While Schoenberg wrote no literal reference to Mahler in the piece, there is historical and musical evidence that he at least had Mahler's death in mind during its composition. The fact that this last piece was in memory of a Jewish composer would have made the set especially offensive to the Nazis, though they probably did not spend much time analyzing Schoenberg's work to make sure they were not denouncing good music. Schoenberg's Jewish heritage and his inspiration from Expressionism and modern aesthetics, exemplified by the Six Short Piano Pieces and their emphasis on complex, esoteric emotions, were overwhelmingly problematic to the Nazi regime. They banished Schoenberg and his music from Germany because of it.

After these pieces were written, there were many more events in which the Nazis drove Schoenberg into difficult circumstances. By 1933, it was increasingly difficult for Schoenberg to find and hold onto a position.<sup>222</sup> This was the year the Nazi party had gained the majority in the Reichstag and Hitler was appointed Chancellor. Schoenberg was dismissed from his teaching position twenty-three months before his contract was over because it became illegal for Jews to teach publicly.<sup>223</sup> That fall, while vacationing in France, he received news that it would no longer be safe for him and his family in Germany, so he remained in France.<sup>224</sup> At this point, in

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<sup>222</sup>Walter, *Grove*, "Schoenberg."

<sup>223</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup>*Ibid.*

his short time in France, he converted back to Judaism.<sup>225</sup> It is a bit unclear exactly why, perhaps to identify with his roots and to relate to the other victims of the Nazi government, or maybe so that he could feel more in control of his identity. Shortly after his conversion, he moved to the U.S., first to Boston, and finally settling in Los Angeles.

Another piece that can provide insights into the ramification of dictatorial politics is Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*, written after the Bombing of Pearl Harbor and Germany's declaration of war on Schoenberg's adopted home, the United States of America. It is a twelve-tone work for piano, string quartet and baritone and based on a poem by Lord Byron. Byron's poem is almost an epic which, through sarcasm and other ironic devices, criticizes and denounces Napoleon. The vocal line in Schoenberg's setting is written in *Sprechstimme*, which is a style of vocal recitation that lies somewhere between singing and speaking. Schoenberg championed *Sprechstimme* in his pivotal work *Pierrot lunaire*. He wrote the baritone part for *Ode to Napoleon* with Orson Welles in mind, hoping it would "capture the 170 different shades of irony, contempt, sarcasm, parody, hatred, and indignation with which Byron treats his victim."<sup>226</sup> Schoenberg adapted *Sprechstimme* into a simplified version so that non-professional musicians could theoretically learn it. After Welles declined to premiere it, Schoenberg approached Basil Rathbone, who learned it, but was unable to perform it. Finally, baritone Mack Harrell from the New York Metropolitan Opera learned and premiered *Ode to Napoleon* on November 23, 1944.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>225</sup>Walter, *Grove*, "Schoenberg."

<sup>226</sup>Sabine Feisst, *Schoenberg's New World: The American Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 140.

<sup>227</sup>Kenneth H. Marcus, *Schoenberg and Hollywood Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 192.

This piece marks an important departure from Schoenberg's heretofore philosophies. Throughout his life, Schoenberg constantly and strongly iterated that musicians should stay out of politics because a musician's duties are of a more elevated spiritual sphere than the lowly affairs of man. However, the political events of Winter 1941-1942 put Schoenberg in a position where he felt he had a duty to react. In a letter to his student, Leonard Stein, he wrote

I had at once the idea that this piece must not ignore the agitation of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, supporting repeal of the *jus primae noctis*, Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, Goethe's *Egmont*, Beethoven's *Eroica*, and *Wellington's Victory*, and I knew it was the moral duty of the intelligentsia to take a stand against tyranny.<sup>228</sup>

The events surrounding World War II and specifically Schoenberg's suffering from the Nazis raised the stakes very high for him. In defense of his philosophy that music should not react to current events, his setting of this poem is ambiguous enough that it applies to tyrants of any time and place. In that regard, the setting itself still does not bow totally to the lowly realm of politics. Schoenberg cited the examples above to justify his need to compose a work in reaction to the Nazis' declaration of war, and in doing so he reiterated both his German heritage and musical lineage as a composer. The Nazis had alienated him from his homeland and made his life very difficult; he really must have felt like he could not escape them. He wrote this piece in defiance of their recent actions, and their actions from over the course of his life.

Within the piece, some interesting components to hear are the Marseillaise and the Beethoven's 5<sup>th</sup> motive at the words "The triumph, and the vanity, the rapture of the strife, the earthquake voice of victory, to thee the breath of life." The fact that he chose such a revolutionary text and that he put these revolutionary melodies in the text's setting demonstrate the scale to which he felt Hitler needed to be stopped.<sup>229</sup> Clearly Hitler is meant to be the subject

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<sup>228</sup>Feisst, *Schoenberg's New World*, 140.

<sup>229</sup>Ibid., 146.

of Schoenberg's work, not Napoleon, and the description fits Hitler well.<sup>230</sup> The poem itself was written after Napoleon had lost his campaign and been exiled in infamy. The poem's descriptions deride Napoleon for his fall from power.

The Desolator desolate!  
 The Victor overthrown!  
 The Arbiter of others' fate  
 A Suppliant for his own!  
 Is it some yet imperial hope  
 That with such change can calmly cope?  
 Or dread of death alone?  
 To die a prince—or live a slave—  
 Their choice is most ignobly brave!

The poem springs undeniably from the perspective that Napoleon had lost everything in utter shame. In 1942 Schoenberg could not have known that Hitler, like Napoleon, would succumb to a shameful fate. Schoenberg's message seems to be that if Hitler was going to attempt to be a Twentieth-century Napoleon, then he would share a similar downfall. It is as if by selecting this poem and directing it at Hitler, Schoenberg was issuing a warning that Hitler's declaration of war on the United States would be his own undoing.

Another interesting element is Schoenberg's tonal final chord. Schoenberg received much criticism for ending the piece tonally. What is the point of ending something tonally when twelve-tone's purpose is to obscure the tonic? His response: "It is true that the *Ode* at the end sounds like E-flat. I don't know why I did it. Maybe I was wrong, but at present you cannot make me feel this."<sup>231</sup> Perhaps part of being an innovative thinker is being the victim of constant questioning. The attitude in this quotation is similar to Schoenberg's attitude whenever his identity as a person, musician, creator, and composer is questioned. Is he a Jew or a Lutheran?

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<sup>230</sup>Feisst, *Schoenberg's New World*, 146.

<sup>231</sup>*Ibid.*, 148.

263 ALLARG. POCO A POCO  
cresc.  
cresc.  
cresc.  
cresc.

264 there was but one  
ALLARG. POCO A POCO  
ff

265 MOLTO RIT.  
266  
267

265 MOLTO RIT.  
266  
267

Bel-1008

Musical

excerpt 2: Arnold Schoenberg, *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*, Op.41, 1942.<sup>232</sup>

<sup>232</sup>Arnold Schoenberg, *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*, Op.41 (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1944).

Is he Austrian or German? Is he an American or not? Is he an atonal composer or not? Part of Schoenberg's eloquence is his ability to remain grounded in his identity without fitting neatly into categories. It is also this complex approach to identity, which Schoenberg learned from the Nazis, through horrible inhumane experiences.

Because Schoenberg was no longer welcome in Germany, which was quickly consuming all of Europe, he attempted to assimilate into American culture without losing sight of his German life before America.<sup>233</sup> 'Americanisms' in this piece show that Schoenberg was proud to be American and made a large effort to acclimate to a culture that was so new to him.<sup>234</sup> The piece's message is political and patriotic. Schoenberg chose to set an English-language poem, *not* a German poem with which he would have been more comfortable. Byron's popularity in the United States was heightened at the time, because it was the 150th anniversary of Byron's birth. Not to mention, anti-Hitler subject matter was very popular among Americans.<sup>235</sup> The style of the piece itself is very straightforward in its declamation: it is motivic, it has some tonality, and the *Sprechstimme* is simplified enough for non-musicians to perform. All this demonstrates that Schoenberg desired to write a piece for the American people, his new compatriots.

Schoenberg had hoped that the U.S. government would use the piece as propaganda music. He specifically wished the Office of War Information, or the OWI, would perform it in military camps.<sup>236</sup> It did not happen that way, but the OWI did make a recording of the work.<sup>237</sup> That said, this burst of patriotism did not prevent his Los Angeles home from being searched by

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<sup>233</sup>Feisst, *Schoenberg's New World*, 148.

<sup>234</sup>*Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>235</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>237</sup>*Ibid.*

the McCarthyist FBI a few years later. In the search, they found two ‘suspicious books:’ *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Kompositionen* and *Anleitung zum Vortrag Beethovenscher Werke* by Adolf Bernhard Marx.<sup>238</sup> These translate to *The Rules of Musical Composition* and *Instruction on the Performance of Beethoven’s Works*. Fortunately, the investigators believed Schoenberg when he explained that musicologist Adolf Bernhard Marx was of no relation to Karl Marx!<sup>239</sup>

Schoenberg struggled his entire life as a marginalized, unaccepted person. There are many difficulties that come with a cruel, unrelenting dictatorial government. Schoenberg demonstrates the pain of losing many positions, being unwelcome in one’s own homeland, and fighting for acceptance in a foreign place. To reject a national treasure such as Schoenberg so forcefully seems extreme, but there was no hesitation on the part of the Nazis. For the amount of suffering that Schoenberg endured, he had an amazing ability to muster his morale and stand bravely against his persecutors. *Ode to Napoleon* is a fascinating defiance to Schoenberg’s enemies and should not become a forgotten work. It is significant and noble that Schoenberg strove to assimilate into American culture while maintaining his own German identity, which differed still from the identity Germany had adopted after he emigrated.

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<sup>238</sup>Feisst, *Schoenberg’s New World*, 149.

<sup>239</sup>Ibid.

## Stalin and the Soviets

While the Germans looked to the past to restore the great German nation, the Soviets looked to the future to achieve the highest level of Socialism: Communism. It is fascinating to compare and contrast the Nazis and the Soviets. Though they were two very different regimes, and had extremely different values, both exerted a high level of government control under a militaristic despot. From the artists' perspectives, the factor of highest importance was how oppressive and involved the regime was. As with the Nazi regime, all Soviet musical life, especially after 1933, became nationalized. The government regulated publishers, theaters, orchestras, operas, conservatories, et cetera. Any and all musical institutions became a part of the state.<sup>240</sup> Similar to the Nazis, music played a pivotal role in indoctrinating the people. Stalin obsessed about music. He attended *Swan Lake* thirty times. He was on speaking terms with Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and other composers. An ardent music-lover, Stalin's vision for the Soviet Union included a rich musical identity.

In 1933, the same fateful year that the Nazis gained total government control, Stalin was closely monitoring music and the arts in his empire. To help him supervise, he founded the Union of Soviet Composers.<sup>241</sup> Its purpose was to accept or reject any music that a composer wanted published. The composers on the committee were trained to make sure that they were upholding Communist values in their decisions.<sup>242</sup> Notice that this government approval committee was made up of qualified, educated musicians, unlike the Nazi arts which were governed directly by political administrators. There was also much more interaction between the

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<sup>240</sup>Burkholder, *A History*, 888.

<sup>241</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>242</sup>Mark Mazullo, *Shostakovich's Preludes and Fugues: Contexts, Style, Performance*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 16.

government and musicians in the USSR than in Nazi Germany. They implemented this approach so that musicians felt they could play a role in glorifying the new nation. In the following year, 1934, the government's Department for the Arts published a document defining the official artistic movement, which was to be adopted by the country's artists, as *Socialist Realism*.<sup>243</sup> This movement is extremely important to understand in order to study any Soviet composer's music. Its values were the rubric by which all music and art were measured. Socialist Realism opposes abstraction, expressionism, and symbolism.<sup>244</sup> It opposed absolute music which can be interpreted different ways, undermining the unity of the state and the indoctrination of the people.<sup>245</sup> Specifically in music, the movement was signified by simple melodies, simple language, folk influences, and subject matter.<sup>246</sup> It was to be constructed so that every member of the Union could understand its meaning, eradicating any elitism.<sup>247</sup> Interestingly enough, it was very similar to the Nazis' *Neue Sachlichkeit*. The purpose was to show off Socialism, the Revolution, and Soviet Heroism, essentially to glorify the state.<sup>248</sup> Music that was not utilitarian for the nation, such as abstract music, was condemned as being *formalistic*.<sup>249</sup> *Formalistic* became the ultimate curse that could end a composer's career, and it was spoken only with extreme gravity.

There is one more component of Socialist Realism, it was a reaction to *Critical Realism*, which came from a literary movement started at the end of the Nineteenth Century in the Russian Empire, i.e. Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, *Anna*

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<sup>243</sup>Burkholder, *A History*, 888.

<sup>244</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>245</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>246</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>248</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>249</sup>*Ibid.*

*Karenina*.<sup>250</sup> These novels described the bleak, oppressed reality of the Russian people under the Tzars' cold rule. The Soviets revolutionized Critical Realism, changing it to Soviet Realism, in order to demonstrate the peoples' liberation from the old regime.<sup>251</sup> By state mandate, there was no longer anything to criticize about the new government. It vowed that any hardships were either for the greater good to achieve perfect communism, or were caused by fascist sympathizers wreaking havoc in the nation.<sup>252</sup> Therefore, this movement did encourage the portrayal of struggle, but it absolutely had to end in the triumph and glorification of the state.

The 1930s were years of high government control, police exploitation, gulags, and disappearances. In 1936, the Soviet government lured Prokofiev, through commissions and the promise of work, back to the USSR.<sup>253</sup> Prokofiev had been living in the United States of America and Europe since the 1917 revolution, touring, performing, and composing.<sup>254</sup> By 1935, when the world economy was suffering from the Great Depression, Prokofiev was being outcompeted for work, by Sergei Rachmaninoff in the U.S. and Igor Stravinsky in Europe.<sup>255</sup> In February 1936, the government had condemned Shostakovich and his compositions, so for Prokofiev the main competition had been debilitated, and the Soviet government began investing in Prokofiev's career.<sup>256</sup> It is difficult to know exactly how much Prokofiev was aware of Soviet corruption and false promises, and scholars can only guess what else may have gone into his

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<sup>250</sup>Christopher Norris, "Socialist Realism," *Grove Music Online*, accessed March 25, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

<sup>251</sup>Ibid.

<sup>252</sup>Ibid.

<sup>253</sup>Dorothea Redepenning, "Prokofiev, Sergey (Sergeyevich)" *Grove Music Online*, accessed May 20, 2018. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

<sup>254</sup>Ibid.

<sup>255</sup>Ibid.

<sup>256</sup>Ibid.

decision to move back.<sup>257</sup> Knowing Stalin's manipulative tactics, it does not seem coincidental that directly after condemning Shostakovich, the Soviets would court Prokofiev. Perhaps Stalin was even attempting to pit the two composers against each other for the position of pet composer. It is easy to say that Prokofiev should have been more wary of the Soviets after their condemnation of Shostakovich, but he did not know Stalin and his tactics well, and there was a certain amount of risk in staying in the West. It is an unfair assessment that Prokofiev should have anticipated what would happen to him in the USSR, because in 1936, the Soviet operations of secret police, purges, and corruption were still in early stages and somewhat covert.

Unlike Shostakovich, whose condemnations were sudden and jarring, the Soviets' mistreatment of Prokofiev came gradually. Keeping in line with Prokofiev's agreement with the state, he was allowed to retain his passport, and continued to leave the USSR on tours.<sup>258</sup> By 1938, the Soviets asked for his passport for routine formality and promised to give it back. This was a ploy, and Prokofiev's passport never returned, so he was never again able to leave the country.<sup>259</sup> For the next ten years, Prokofiev received decent treatment; his works were either positively or neutrally received. He did not suffer much governmental condemnation, especially compared to the many other artists and professionals who were executed or sent to Siberia. By 1948, once the war was over, the government had a second crackdown.<sup>260</sup> One author, Nigel Cliff, describes it vividly:

Once more, black secret police vans mockingly painted with advertisements for scarce meat and scarcer Soviet champagne roamed the streets, and routine torture, forced confessions, sham trials, mass deportations, summary executions, and arranged accidents began all over again.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>257</sup>Redepinning, *Grove*, "Prokofiev."

<sup>258</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>259</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>260</sup>Cliff, *Moscow Nights*, 27.

<sup>261</sup>*Ibid.*, 26.

The climate was once again bleak and oppressive, and they even sentenced Prokofiev's estranged wife Lena to 20 years in the Gulag.<sup>262</sup> She had tried to wire money to her widowed mother who was living in her native Spain.<sup>263</sup> Lena was finally released after eight years, after Stalin's (and Prokofiev's) death.<sup>264</sup>

While Stalin himself was behind the crackdowns, political official Andrei Zhdanov was the executor. Zhdanov enforced strict policies, and brutally removed those who breached Soviet rules.<sup>265</sup> Zhdanov's reforms started in 1946 and targeted specific fields, such as film, science, visual art, and finally focused on music in 1948.<sup>266</sup> For musicians, the purges started because of the Union of Soviet Composers' extravagance. By this point, the composers' union had somehow been able to fund themselves, so the government subsidies were just extra income, and the members (including Shostakovich) were very well-to-do by comparison to the average Soviet citizen.<sup>267</sup> They could afford luxury commodities, such as champagne, drivers, cars, and dachas.<sup>268</sup> In order to make themselves look productive, they strictly followed Soviet guidelines and worked in an effort to find and expel formalistic music.<sup>269</sup>

The official article condemning formalists accompanied a convention, overseen by Zhdanov, which all Soviet composers were required to attend.<sup>270</sup> The article was titled "On the opera *The Great Friendship* by Muradeli."<sup>271</sup> It included a list of composers' works which were

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<sup>262</sup>Cliff, *Moscow Nights*, 27.

<sup>263</sup>Ibid.

<sup>264</sup>Ibid.

<sup>265</sup>Redepenning, *Grove*, "Prokofiev."

<sup>266</sup>Ibid.

<sup>267</sup>Mazullo, *Preludes and Fugues*, 16.

<sup>268</sup>Ibid.

<sup>269</sup>Ibid.

<sup>270</sup>Volkov, *Shostakovich and Stalin*, 226.

<sup>271</sup>Ibid.

to be condemned: Dmitri Shostakovich, Sergei Prokofiev, Aram Khachaturian, Visarion Shebalin, Gavriil Popov, and Nikolai Myaskovsky.<sup>272</sup> It is interesting to note that in Cyrillic this list is not alphabetical, which would read: Myaskovsky, Popov, Prokofiev, Khachaturian, Shebalin, and Shostakovich. There were multiple drafts of this list in Stalin's records with the names in different orders, implying that the order was chosen specifically to show the intensity of condemnation.<sup>273</sup> Those at the front of the list, Shostakovich and Prokofiev, were to be the most shunned and avoided by the musical community. The government's choices about which specific pieces it outlawed were meant to be confusing; they pulled from different genres and even banned pieces that followed the Soviet rubric.<sup>274</sup> This way, producers would avoid programming any of these composers' music just to be safe.<sup>275</sup>

While Shostakovich was able to redeem his music the following year, Prokofiev remained under the ban for the next seven years, until his death in 1953.<sup>276</sup> Prokofiev had a decent twelve years between moving to the USSR and the 1948 purges, but it was all under the same regime, led by Stalin. There was no change of power, so why would Prokofiev's treatment have altered so drastically? It is grossly unfair to lure a composer through the promise of job opportunities, then eventually denounce his work, and disallow him to seek employment elsewhere. Sadly, Prokofiev's last seven years were plagued by disease, hunger, and poverty.<sup>277</sup> He died without much recognition for his work or life, partly because it was overshadowed by Stalin's death on the same day.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>272</sup>Volkov, *Shostakovich and Stalin*, 226.

<sup>273</sup>Ibid.

<sup>274</sup>Redepenning, *Grove*, "Prokofiev."

<sup>275</sup>Ibid.

<sup>276</sup>Ibid.

<sup>277</sup>Ibid.

<sup>278</sup>Ibid.

The results of the Zhdanov purges on Shostakovich were that he was fired from his conservatory position; everyone working at the conservatory was quick to accuse formalism in order to prevent their own work from being questioned. Shostakovich's family lost special privileges and their dacha, and his music was boycotted, but in this instance he knew it was best to appeal to the government at his own expense.<sup>279</sup> He wrote an open letter: "Once again I moved in the direction of formalism and have begun to speak a language the people do not understand...I know that the party is right. I am deeply grateful for the criticism."<sup>280</sup> His apology had no effect, and he became paranoid, synchronizing clocks, obsessively cleaning, and mailing letters to himself to check for government interference.<sup>281</sup> He was a very humble man who was deeply patriotic, and the condemnations caused him intense suffering and instability. Money became very tight, and it became difficult for him to secure food.

But, lucky for him, if one can call him that, he received a phone call from Stalin himself. Stalin had realized that all of his composers of any repute had been condemned, and he needed someone for the Cultural and Scientific Congress for World Peace in New York.<sup>282</sup> The Communist Informational Bureau, a propaganda organization set up by Stalin to maintain international influence, hosted the grand, and controversial, event.<sup>283</sup> It was similar to the United States' anti-communism propaganda offices supervised by the CIA in Western Europe, espionage was enacted by both sides of the Cold War at this point.<sup>284</sup> At the convention, Leonard Bernstein and Aaron Copland spoke out for peaceful relations, while picketers outside

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<sup>279</sup>Cliff, *Moscow Nights*, 28.

<sup>280</sup>Ibid.

<sup>281</sup>Ibid.

<sup>282</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>283</sup>Ibid.

<sup>284</sup>Ibid.

held signs reading “Shostakovich! Jump thru the window!”<sup>285</sup> This implied that death was preferable to living in Stalin’s Soviet Union. At the event’s press conference, Shostakovich was mortified to read an official statement accusing “Western hatemongers of preparing world opinion for the transition from cold war to outright war.”<sup>286</sup> He was unable to finish the prepared statement, and he left the podium, leaving another Comrade to finish.<sup>287</sup> A fellow Russian musician, Nicolas Nabokov, author Vladimir’s Nabokov’s cousin, who had escaped during the Russian Revolution, jumped up and asked Shostakovich if he supported the Soviet vilification of Igor Stravinsky.<sup>288</sup> Shostakovich adored Stravinsky’s compositions, but nevertheless repeated the Soviet government’s accusatory official statement.<sup>289</sup> The audience picked up on the undertones that Shostakovich was both mortified and unable to speak with any freedom.<sup>290</sup> With such a fiasco, the especially sensitive Shostakovich must have been terrified of what repercussions lay ahead, but fortunately there were none.

That year, Shostakovich wrote *The Song of the Forests* to earn back favor from the regime officially.<sup>291</sup> The piece itself won many awards from the Soviet government, and serves as a great example of the type of music the Soviet government sought to be composed. It perfectly fits the values of Socialist Realism. Deep between the lines there is a faint protest from Shostakovich, hidden by the strong praise of Stalin. Therefore the piece also shows a composer’s determined attempt to have his voice heard despite complete pandering to the government. The piece is quite saccharine in its aesthetic, but for following the restraints of a

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<sup>285</sup>Cliff, *Moscow Nights*, 29.

<sup>286</sup>Ibid.

<sup>287</sup>Ibid.

<sup>288</sup>Ibid.

<sup>289</sup>Ibid.

<sup>290</sup>Ibid.

<sup>291</sup>Ibid., 30.

Soviet government crackdown, it is considerably well-written. Its text praises Stalin as the 'great gardener' and glorifies the Soviet government and the citizenry. This is the text for the final movement:

Planted in squares  
On the fields of the collective farm  
Grew the slender birches,  
Soldiers of our homeland,  
Our maples and birches.  
The broad fields and green forests,  
The protective forests of our native land.  
The ash tree and beech,  
Hornbeam and willow.  
Our dear Russian land,  
You will become still more beautiful.  
Our Russian land, our glorious land!  
The field is not afraid  
Of the threatening storm in the sky.  
We will have bread in plenty,  
There will be mountains of bread.  
There is no force on earth  
That can break us.  
The wind abates before our strength.  
The broad fields and green forests,  
The tracts of forests, our Russian land!  
Glory to the commanders  
Of the battle for nature!  
Glory to the field cultivation teams!  
Glory to the agriculturalist,  
Glory to the gardener!  
Glory to our party!  
Glory to all the people!  
Glory!  
The day of Communism is dawning!  
Truth is with us, and good fortune.  
If only Lenin could see  
Our holy motherland now!  
Our party is led by the genius  
Of loyal and indomitable sons.  
We are for the sun,  
For happiness and peace!  
Together with nature,  
We will march into battle  
In the name of our gardens of the future.

The trees rise up majestically  
 Beside the solemn Russian rivers.  
 Glory to Lenin's Party!  
 Glory to the people forever!  
 Glory to our wise Party!  
 Glory!

Its language is anything but subtle. A clear appeal to Stalin, it was an offer on Shostakovich's part to be Stalin's obedient composer, if Stalin lifted the ban on his music. The music Shostakovich set matches the text's pandering attitude towards the Soviet officials with its easy, gentle tempo, consistently clear melody, diatonic harmonies, and simple rhythm.

Shortly before this piece's composition, Shostakovich met an old friend on a train, successful Soviet poet, Yevgeniy Dolmatovsky. He and Shostakovich began discussing the destruction of Russian forests in WWII. In the steppes of Russia, forestation around farmland helps to minimize the harsh winds that cut through the landscape, so that crops can grow more easily.<sup>292</sup> There was a political movement to pressure the government to reforest the steppes for these environmental and agricultural reasons.<sup>293</sup> During this conversation on the train through the Russian countryside, Domatovsky and Shostakovich agreed to write the piece together.<sup>294</sup> So while it sounds as if the composer was complying with governmental pressures, he actually quite boldly challenged Stalin to take responsibility for the reforestation. Because Shostakovich had a heartfelt purpose behind the piece, it should not be dismissed for its compromised compositional style; he really did his best within the parameters. Shostakovich's attempt towards redemption was successful in this instance. The Soviet government did not detect the piece's critical undertones, and it granted Shostakovich the Stalin Award, thereby formally reestablishing his

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<sup>292</sup>Mazullo, *Preludes and Fugues*, 19.

<sup>293</sup>Ibid.

<sup>294</sup>Ibid.

reputation.<sup>295</sup> Shostakovich hated the piece and was mortified at its style and construction, drinking himself into a stupor the night of its premiere.<sup>296</sup> Fortunately Dolmatovsky approved of the piece enough to work with Shostakovich on many more successful compositions.<sup>297</sup>

Unlike *Song of the Forests*, the Twenty-Four Preludes and Fugues for piano by Shostakovich is a work in which Shostakovich made no attempt to relate to the Soviet government. He began writing them the year after *Song of the Forests*, and the subject of the first Fugue is based on the melody from the opening of *Song of the Forests*. This could mean many things. Perhaps he saw enough value in the piece to quote it or thought that since *Song of the Forests* was so successful with the Soviet Regime, any nod to it would help what became a lost cause. Perhaps it is a quirky hint to delight people who might recognize the theme from the other piece, or he could have attempted musical redemption for compromising his compositional voice in *Song of the Forests*. The words sung during this opening melody are “The war came to an end with victory.” He was likely setting a patriotic tone for the entire set. The most prominent musical feature of this fugue is that it uses modal modulation rather than tonal modulation, allowing it to be composed entirely of white keys.

The inspiration for these pieces was Shostakovich’s Stalin-sponsored trip to Leipzig and Berlin for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bach’s death in 1950. This was only five years after the war was over, and it was a big priority for many nations to show peace and goodwill.<sup>298</sup> By the following March, Shostakovich had written and learned them enough to play the first twelve for the Composers’ Union.<sup>299</sup> Because of the poor reception, he postponed playing the second half

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<sup>295</sup>Mazullo, *Preludes and Fugues*, 19.

<sup>296</sup>Ibid.

<sup>297</sup>Ibid.

<sup>298</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>299</sup>Ibid.

of the set until May.<sup>300</sup> The official published report was that Shostakovich was “guilty of his former, mistaken creative positions,” “repeating old mistakes,” and that the “images of tragic detachment or nervous exaltation, which dominate many of the pieces, in no way can be accepted as typical of the inner world of the Soviet citizen.”<sup>301</sup> This last quotation is obviously untrue. Surely many Soviet citizens would relate to tragic detachment: certainly Shostakovich would. More specifically, they found the fugue in D-flat Major, “intolerably cacophonous.”<sup>302</sup> For the movements they liked a bit more, such as F-Sharp Major, they wrote: “the composer approaches the depiction of lively images of reality.”<sup>303</sup> They ended with a nice, conciliatory attitude: “in all, the discussion passed in an atmosphere of free competition of different points of view”, referring to one composer who, in an outburst, vehemently defended the work.<sup>304</sup> The “free competition of different points of view” earned her a published warning describing her as deranged and vengeful.<sup>305</sup> The accounts differ greatly and so it is difficult to know where the truth lies, but at least he had some advocacy among the composers. It shows how much disagreement was not tolerated, even in government sub-committees. The final consensus by the Composers’ Union was that the set was “nothing but wasted labor.”<sup>306</sup> They neither published it nor banned it.<sup>307</sup> The next year, 1952, Tatyana Nikolaevna, who won of the Bach conference competition, learned the pieces thoroughly, and played them for the Committee for Artistic Affairs, which had higher authority than the composers’ union. She was successfully persuasive,

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<sup>300</sup>Mazullo, *Preludes and Fugues*, 21.

<sup>301</sup>*Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>302</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>303</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>304</sup>*Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>305</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>306</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>307</sup>*Ibid.*

premiered it, and saw it published.<sup>308</sup> The year following its publication, Stalin died, and the ‘destalinization’ process eased the pressures on the arts. After a few years, the *24 Preludes and Fugues* were accepted into the rich canon of Soviet Music.

Shostakovich’s difficult oppression by Stalin, his officials, and his appointed committee of Soviet Composers was almost too much for him to bear. The resilient composer continued to create music, straddling the fine line between submitting his artistic voice to the regime’s protocols and facing persecution for composing how he wanted. The USSR was not a safe place for him and their tactics to exploit him were brutal. Shostakovich had many mixed feelings about his oeuvre. He wanted to find his voice in all of it, but there were times that he was forced to relent to governmental interference. His defiant works tend to be the more known today because a composer’s free choice has a great effect on his or her compositions. Though he often faltered, he persisted in his attempts to keep his creative integrity. His life is emblematic of what can happen to an artist under intense political pressure.

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<sup>308</sup>Mazullo, *Preludes and Fugues*, 23.

## Music in Communist China

One more theater, which provides an understanding of musical life under a dictator, is Maoist China. China has constantly struggled to manage Western influences with its own cultural roots. The country has greatly fluctuated in how 'open' it is to adapting Western Culture, one main difficulty being that Socialism is itself a Western construct. Even when it was at its most anti-Western in sentiment, during the Cultural Revolution, China could not escape that its fundamental governmental structure was built upon Western philosophy.

Like many of the dictators discussed before, Mao Zedong largely advocated for music, and like the other dictators, he wanted to bring music under his control. All three of these dictators viewed the arts as tools for cultural indoctrination and therefore brought all artistic and musical expression under their rigid rule. In China especially, music was a tool to share a common, national experience, so that the Chinese people could unite in a common experience. For Mao, music offered a pivotal strategy in protecting China from Western domination. For most of his rule, he had a fairly free and experimental attitude towards music and the arts. Censorship and indoctrination were not enforced. At this stage, China was still learning from Russia about how to rule in a Communist state, and how to industrialize in order to become a world power. Once China became more established, however, Mao grew suspicious of Western influence. During the Cultural Revolution his policy shifted to one of high control and relentless propaganda.

Before discussing the specific implications of music under this regime, some background on early Twentieth Century China is helpful. After the Qing Dynasty was overthrown in 1912,

China experienced a period of political unrest.<sup>309</sup> The New Culture Movement was prominent through the 1920s and 1930s. It emphasized nationalism, patriotism, freedom, and science. At this time, Western music gained immense popularity with the Chinese. Most people could play the piano or at least had a piano in their home.<sup>310</sup> Also at this time, western philosophy was discussed and eventually criticized, as intellectuals began to learn about the Russian Revolution. The Chinese Civil War ended in 1949 as the Communist Party of China took control of mainland China, with Mao Zedong as the Chairman.<sup>311</sup> After the fiercely long Civil War and the Japanese invasion, it is no wonder that the people entrusted governance to a militant leader such as Mao.

After the Civil War, the 1950s was a comparatively free time. Mao's regime encouraged creativity and the interplay between Western and Chinese musical elements. The year 1957 marked a new experimental period: Mao published a new policy indicating that the past should serve the present, and Western music should serve Chinese music.<sup>312</sup> His goal was to synthesize the elements of Western music, enhancing Chinese music in the creation of a new, improved music for the future.<sup>313</sup> Composers worked diligently to learn Western theory, genres, and forms while preserving Chinese musical language. The government even encouraged study in Soviet Conservatories in order to learn Western compositional techniques. At this point, under Mao's direction, China sought to learn as much as it could from the West. Mao knew that most of the

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<sup>309</sup>Jonathan PJ Stock, "China, People's Republic of (Chin. Zhonghua renmin gonghe guo): Since 1911" in *Grove Music Online*, accessed March 27, 2017, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com).

<sup>310</sup>Richard Curt Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China: Middle-Class Ambitions and the Struggle over Western Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 129.

<sup>311</sup>Chris Cook and John Stevenson, *The Routledge Companion to World History Since 1914* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2005), 376.

<sup>312</sup>Le Keng, "The Development of Chinese Piano Music." *Asian Culture and History* 1, no. 2 (July 2009): 21.

<sup>313</sup>Ching-chi Liu, *A Critical History of New Music in China*, tr. Caroline Mason (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2010), 320.

world's power was concentrated in Europe and North America at that time, and so he wanted the country to modernize and seize a portion of that power. His strategy was to learn from them so that Western countries would see China as powerful and developed. This strategy applied to all fields, including music. China was culturally very 'open' at this point. Like the Soviet Union, China was immense and contained a vast array of diverse cultures. This contrasted the compact and ethnically less diverse Germany. Unlike Nazi Germany, the USSR and China sought to celebrate cultural variety and found power in the idea of various cultures striving together to create a unified nation. As with the Soviet Union, cultural diversity offered infinite inspirations for composers and musicians. Musical culture at this time was very rich, yet not until later, did the Chinese nation impose more control, facilitating less variety of creativity.

Two composers who studied composition abroad were Du Mingxin and Wu Zuqiang. Both had formal theory training at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow between 1952 and 1957.<sup>314,315</sup> After their schooling, Wu was appointed president at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, and Du was appointed head of the Composition Department.<sup>316,317</sup> In 1959 they composed a ballet suite together called *The Mermaid*.<sup>318</sup> Similar to *The Little Mermaid*, the story is about a mermaid who falls in love with a human hunter. She then transforms herself into a human in order to be with him.<sup>319</sup> The composers wrote the piece to exhibit the Western

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<sup>314</sup>Jonathan PJ Stock, "Wu Zuqiang," in *Grove Music Online*, accessed March 27, 2017, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com).

<sup>315</sup>Jonathan PJ Stock, "Du Mingxin," in *Grove Music Online*, accessed March 27, 2017, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com).

<sup>316</sup>Ibid.

<sup>317</sup>Stock, *Grove*, "Wu Zuqiang."

<sup>318</sup>Barbara Mittler, *Dangerous Tunes: The Politics of Chinese Music in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China Since 1949* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997), 66.

<sup>319</sup>Ibid.

Impressionist style within a Chinese context. For example, the four movements of the suite that are commonly grouped together in the piano version are built on pentatonic scales (a Chinese musical structure), but the harmonic language is successive rather than progressive. Such harmonic flow is not a traditional Chinese style, but it was popular with Impressionist composers.

The most well-known movement of the *The Mermaid* is the third of the suite, called “Waterweed,” or “Seaweed.” The opening gesture exhibits the Impressionistic technique of successive harmonies, sounding like the movement of lapping water. At the end of the introduction, the phrase plunges underwater to the world of seaweed. The first theme is in a traditional Chinese folk-song style, but again, the modulations are not those of traditional Chinese style. The second theme evokes the Chinese instrument *pipa*. It is a plucked string instrument, which has a technique of alternating the thumb and forefinger. This colors the main melody, doubling it an octave higher.

These are examples of how *The Mermaid* uses traditional Chinese and Western ideas to create a synthesized new Chinese aesthetic. Much of art from this time operated in this way; artists took Chinese forms, added Western inspiration and created new art that they viewed as a synthesis. In this system, Mao found that the West could serve Chinese purposes. He did not believe that China was falling prey to an invasion of Western culture; he saw it as an opportunity to make China more powerful and legitimate to the rest of the world. It may have been the cultural diversity within China that caused Mao to tolerate foreign diversity as well.

Pianist Yin Chengzong played this suite at the 1962 International Tchaikovsky Competition. He tied for second place with Susan Starr, after John Ogden and Vladimir

Ashkenazy in first place.<sup>320</sup> Yin Chengzong is mentioned later as the composer of the Yellow River Concerto. While Du's and Wu's ballet suite comes from a time when China was open to experimentation from the west, China's cultural 'openness' only lasted until the 1960s. Chairman Mao enacted the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966. This was a difficult period marked by public humiliation, arbitrary imprisonment, torture, hard labor, sustained harassment, seizure of property, and execution. It is nearly impossible to find piano music from this time because the government considered the piano a bourgeois instrument. It was characterized as 'classist,' and it had no place among the communal citizenry. The piano and composers of piano music were considered perpetrators of bourgeois values.<sup>321</sup> This is another instance, like that of Nazi censorship, in which extremely high government control in all aspects of life, including music, caused an atrophy of creativity. Through these examples, one realizes the importance of artistic freedom in creating inspired music. It is the role of government to facilitate and protect that artistic freedom if it intends to reap the benefits of a productive artistic environment.

Author Barbara Mittler interviewed nearly fifty Chinese composers from multiple generations.<sup>322</sup> The Cultural Revolution is often seen as a time of propaganda, censorship, and restrictions, which it doubtlessly was. However, some of the interviews added a little more dimension to the effects of such a controlling government. In a case specific to China, this extreme censorship facilitated the opportunity for these musicians to learn musical skills, because Mao was still directly invested in promoting a rich Chinese musical tradition. The state afforded these propaganda troupes, as they were called, opportunities to learn their crafts:

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<sup>320</sup>Kraus, *Piano and Politics*, 131.

<sup>321</sup>Mittler, *Dangerous Tunes*, 66.

<sup>322</sup>Mittler, "Popular Propaganda?," 467.

conducting, reading music, and learning instruments.<sup>323</sup> Before Communism, the chance to pursue music was almost exclusive to those of the upper class.<sup>324</sup> Now, all social classes were able to pursue these skills. Although it was driven by governmental propaganda, the troupes nevertheless offered an extremely rare and valuable opportunity. Despite the ‘heavy-handed’ political messages prevalent in these artistic endeavors, composers often valued their experiences in developing their craft. To include this is not to belittle the gravity of The Cultural Revolution, but to offer a different dimension to some of the negative trends of strict government control.

Because all Western music was banned during the Cultural Revolution, the only instrumental music allowed had to be based on *approved* traditional Chinese music or propaganda hymns. Compared to the rich repertoire of Western music, this genre was pale. The government controlled production of piano music very rigidly: it had to be commissioned by the government and had to serve a political purpose. Ironically, one of the most emblematic piano pieces from China came from this period. The Yellow River Piano Concerto (1969) originates from a Chinese cantata which praises Mao’s heroism and spirit during the Chinese Resistance to the Japanese invasion. Even the Yellow River Cantata had been banned during the Cultural Revolution. Pianist Yin Chengzong challenged the decision to ban all Western music. He was so disillusioned after the government banned Western music, that he loaded his piano onto a truck and drove it to Tiananmen Square to accompany revolutionary songs.<sup>325</sup> Jiang Qing, or to the West, Madame Mao, heard about this brave stunt and commissioned the Yellow River Concerto to glorify her husband.<sup>326</sup> It was widely successful and served as another template for

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<sup>323</sup>Mittler, “Popular Propaganda?,” 467.

<sup>324</sup>Ibid.

<sup>325</sup>“Bio,” Yin Chengzong, accessed May 16, 2018, [http://www.yinchengzong.com/Yin\\_Chengzong/Yin\\_Chengzong/Bio.html](http://www.yinchengzong.com/Yin_Chengzong/Yin_Chengzong/Bio.html).

<sup>326</sup>Liu, *A Critical History*, 457.

utilizing foreign ideas to serve China. The Yellow River Concerto is famous for its difficulty, and it is widely performed today because of its appeal and its fascinating role in the Cultural Revolution.

The piece itself is four movements and has a programmatic plot. The first is titled “Prelude: The Song of the Yellow Boatmen.” It portrays terrifying waves in the Yellow River.<sup>327</sup> The second movement is called “Ode to the Yellow River” and praises the history of the Yellow river, symbolizing the richness of China’s history.<sup>328</sup> Thirdly, “The Wrath of the Yellow River” is inspired by the famous “Butterfly Lover’s” Violin Concerto.<sup>329</sup> Lastly, “Defend the Yellow River” is the Yellow River melody written in canon, featuring several cameos by the most famous Revolutionary Song “The East is Red.”<sup>330</sup> A setting of leftist anthem *L’internationale* ends the work.<sup>331</sup> This piece is full of propaganda and political references. It was created to be an emotional journey for the Chinese listeners, unifying the people in its references to Chinese historical elements and its trust in the leadership of Mao’s regime.

China’s struggle with the West is apparent in its musical history in the Twentieth Century. The amount of music from the time of the Cultural Revolution obviously pales in comparison to the amount of music composed during the exchange of ideas with the West. Unique to China is the propaganda troupes which cultivated musical skills in those who might not have had the chance to become musicians. Yin Chengzong’s example of bravery and tenacity had a great effect, showing the government that Western-influenced music can hold an

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<sup>327</sup>Liu, *A Critical History*, 457.

<sup>328</sup>Ibid.

<sup>329</sup>Ibid.

<sup>330</sup>Ibid.

<sup>331</sup>Ibid.

important place even in the highly propagandized government. These examples of the Chinese government's ramifications in art and music and the stories of resilience and music-making in severe circumstances illustrate the fascinating, evolving interplay between dictator and muse.

## Conclusion

Having observed the commonalities and differences between these three dictatorships, there are a few notable trends. If the musical regulations by the government were strict, the quality and quantity of musical output therein was likely low. This was partially mitigated in the USSR by the fact that qualified musicians were censorship's arbiters. That is why of the three regimes, Soviet music is the most effective and of highest quality. This is not to minimize the torturous struggle that composers such as Shostakovich endured to produce music. Also, some of Shostakovich's most celebrated music was banned at times, so one should be careful when crediting a government with producing good music. It is the musicians who deserve the credit. Shostakovich's masterpieces are a testament to his tenacity, despite Stalin, not because of Stalin. The confounding detail of this situation is that all three regimes interfered in musical creation so strongly, that their influence is difficult to separate from the music itself. Musical production suffered the most in Nazi Germany when compared to China and the USSR, but that's because the Nazis expelled so many of musicians.

In China, one can see an attitude of openness and experimentation devolve into a smothering atmosphere. The music created in the first period is diverse and unique, and perhaps it would have asserted itself as more of a part of the standard repertoire, had Mao not forced it into obscurity. Fortunately, the tradition of composition is being renewed, but this was not the case when Yin Chengzong boldly drove his piano to Tiananmen Square. Yin demonstrated the power that a musician can have in standing up to a regime's unjust edicts. He revitalized a tradition that was on the verge of being completely lost.

As for the accounts of Nazi Germany, the Wagners give a more contrasting view of Hitler and his government than can be found about any other dictator. Winifred's persistent adoration

almost makes her difficult to trust, but she was such a direct person that there is almost no question that her opinions were sincere. It is important to include this part of Hitler's life in analyses, because it spoke to his overwhelming charisma and his strategy of maintaining plausible deniability.

As for the music, Hitler had the ability to greatly influence the production quality of Wagner's operas at Bayreuth. However, he largely stayed neutral because he viewed the music as greater than himself. It was his reverence for this music that made him disinterested in facilitating the composition of new music, but it also protected the integrity of the Bayreuth festival during the war years. If anything, Winifred's own bias was more of a threat than Hitler's involvement.

Furtwängler championed the role a musician can play as a defiant and humanitarian person, fighting for his musical and ethical values. Astonishingly Furtwängler was able to check Hitler's power. Despite damning criticisms from all sides, Furtwängler's top priority was his loyalty to his family and his orchestra, which in turn protected him from being considered disposable to the Nazis. The Nazis did not grant the same indispensability to Schoenberg, who almost seems like Furtwängler's ethnically Jewish foil. Schoenberg was a complete victim of the Nazi rule. The consistent strength of his compositions show his remarkable resilience, especially because he never felt like a truly accepted member of any society.

The difficulty in analyzing this history is the extreme distortion from propaganda and the obscuration of whatever these countries found undesirable. The Cultural Revolution was effectively a 'dark age' in which almost no Western music was written, and so the effect that regime had on music is difficult to discuss and can be judged more by conjecture than evidence. There is also more work to be done on other composers of the Soviet Union and their

relationships with Stalin. Shostakovich was Stalin's main puppet, but Stalin had an effect on all Soviet composers' lives.

It would also be fascinating to see these events interpreted by a philosopher of ethics. There are boundless moral implications to all of these dictatorships. Where, exactly, did these societies fall short in their responsibility towards musicians? Because they wanted to exploit music and forget the musicians who created it, they ended up disserving themselves. There is no music without musicians. This is especially true in Nazi Germany when almost all of the musicians left Germany a cultural vacuum. Was there anything lacking on the part of the musicians, ethically? This seems trivial to consider because the musicians were hardly the transgressors in most of these situations. However, Furtwängler criticized the Aryan musicians who left Germany for not staying to fight against Hitler. Like Furtwängler, Shostakovich was wary to accept anything from Stalin, so that he could avoid being indebted to him.

These questions and applications may seem irrelevant in the society in which we live today, but there are still dictatorships and infringements on the right to freedoms of expression. No one knows what is in store for the future of the world. Certainly the Weimar Republic did not think the tiny minority of National Socialist rabble-rousers would gain such a following and overthrow the government. While the world needs to continue healing from the Twentieth Century, it must not forget the details of these atrocities, and the strength of those who stood against them. Dictators have been a part of human society since the dawn of civilization, and they are characterized by such a dangerous, gradual rise, that it is important to interrupt the progression before it becomes perilous. Musicians, especially, must continue to express their own artistry and convictions because of the role they play in shaping society and its values.

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