

H53
1995
11-16

University of Washington
THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents guest artist

JOHN COWELL, *COMPOSER-PIANIST*

performing

LUDUS TONALIS

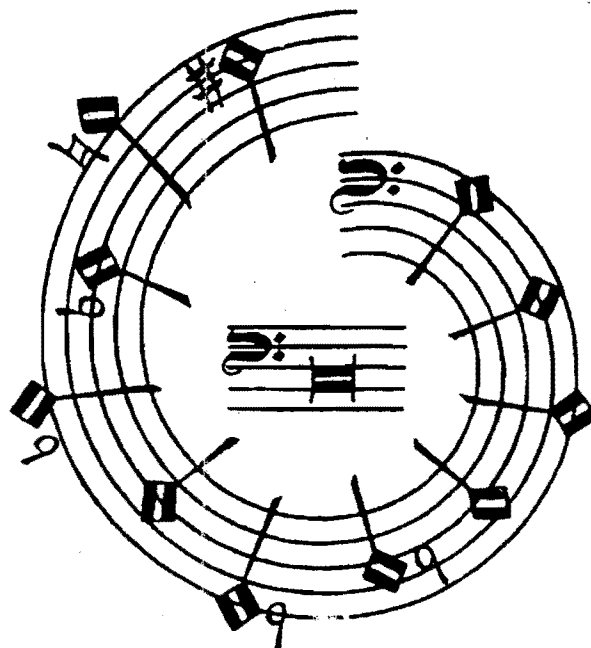
(1942) Studies in Counterpoint, Tonal Organization and Piano Playing
(KLAVIER)

Weiner Urtext Edition - Schott UT 50128 (1989)

in a Centenary Tribute to his former Professor of Composition and Theory

PAUL HINDEMITH

Born November 16, 1895 in Hannau, Germany
Died December 28, 1963 in Blonay, Switzerland



8:00 PM, November 16, 1995

Brechemin Auditorium



School
of
Music

University
of
Washington

DAT # 12,671
CASS # 12,672

PROGRAM

171

Musical Preface - Homage to P. H. 22'08

John Cowell

LUDUS TONALIS (1942) Studies in Counterpoint,
Tonal Organization and Piano Playing

Paul Hindemith

172

TOTAL TIME 57'47

* All dates of composition are in 1942. Ludus Tonalis was composed between Aug. 29 and the beginning of Yale class: Oct. 5. Final remaining work on Interludes and Praeludium-Postludium was done on the following week-end.

(8th) = order of composition

Praeludium- A 3 section keyboard Fantasy.
(See Postludium)

*Sept. 21 - Oct. 10
(19th & 20th)

[See Postludium: Turn this over: See final two bars of Postludium]

173

FUGAE

* Sept. 15 (8th) **Lento** Concise, sober "model" triple Fugue.

175

* Sept. 14 (7th) **Allegro** - Amusing Fugue with overlaps, ostinato.

177

* Sept. 16 (10th) **Andante** - Find Subjects in "retrograde". Cool jazzy.

179

* Sept. 8 (4th) **Con energia** - Double Fugue in 3 sections. 1st Rock hard 2nd Wispy gentle 3rd Combined - Rock-harder!

1711

* Aug. 29 (2nd) **Vivace** - Jolly energetic H. we know. Find inversions.

END CASS SIDE A

To FUGA VI

CASS SIDE B

INTERLUDIA

* Oct. 12 (25th) **Moderato** - Last composed: Very significant

174

* Oct. 12 (23rd) **Pastorale** - A wonderful gentle Prima ballerina

176

* Oct. 10 (21st) **Scherzando** - A wonderful "quirky" Prima ballerina

178

* Oct. 12 (24th) **Vivace** - H. at his most uncompromisingly virtuosic

1710

* Sept. 18 (14th) **Moderato** - Improvisational soaring

1712

453
1995
11-16

Today, November 16, 1995 is Hindemith's 100th birthday!

Almost exactly 50 years ago, World War II had just ended, and I was at a fever pitch planning several career-resuming possibilities to follow my imminent release from over three years' service in the U. S. Army Engineers. I obtained an appointment for an interview-audition with Professor Paul Hindemith at Yale university (my first choice). I traveled to New Haven on a short leave in mid November, 1945, and was given a generously long interview with the Master himself taking long quiet minutes going through each composition I brought with me. He asked me many penetrating questions. Apparently I satisfied him for he ended the interview saying he would accept me beginning in the Winter Semester. So, I joined his large and brilliant class of about twenty in January 1945. I was one of five Composition majors, the rest being Theory majors. We five had to provide new music for the Master's ruthless critiques before the class every Tuesday and Thursday morning—a stressful assignment, I remember. For the next five semesters (until June '48), I was in the Master's presence nearly 15 hours per week. (As I found out later as a Department head, professors expect to limit their "contact" time to nine hours per week as a maximum). It was the most intense, demanding and magnificent learning experience possible. As it turned out, we were all far luckier than we even knew, because the year after I left, and in each year until his resignation to move back to Europe, Hindemith taught only one semester per school year. He moved to Switzerland in 1953, purchasing a beautiful home in the village of Blonay overlooking Lake Geneva and Vevey where he would reside for his remaining years concentrating on composing and orchestral conducting.

In Hindemith's view of himself and his mastery of Theory of Music as he had developed it, he was convinced that he could define everything (once and for all). This made for very powerful, heady stuff, but it also made him vulnerable to criticism. He went about defining tone relations and analysis as didactically as if they were phenomena of physics in his first volume of the "Craft of Musical Composition." The second volume, called "Two Part Writing," was a great teaching manual we all went through in the greatest detail. I gained and still use the great insights I gained from it. A third volume was being written and tried out in the class - called "Three Part Writing." It was not completed before his career took a different path to full time composing and orchestral conducting. His books were misunderstood. They pretended too much, and too much was expected of them.

But what remained steady for me and other former Hindemith students who went on to become university professors was not anything specifically codified. Rather, it was the grand example of Professor Hindemith day after day showing us or

drawing out of us multiple solutions to the myriad of compositional and arranging problems that appeared in daily work. We and he together filled the lined blackboards around that Yale classroom with wonderful compositions that were nonchalantly erased at the end of class. He never failed to be able to explain with the utmost lucidity the workings of his mind as he considered each problem and presented solution after solution.

I have chosen to play *Ludus Tonalis* (about an hour long) because: 1) It was composed at Yale not long before I entered; 2) It relates directly to his teaching preoccupations in that period in several ways: a) it is intentionally a magnum opus on the order of Bach's "Well Tempered Clavier" or "Art of Fugue"; b) it achieves the goals of "Well Tempered" in creating a work out of the two opposed materials in keyboard music which are engineered contrapuntal (fugues) and keyboardistic improvisational (Interludes), and c) composing in each tonality with a Hindemith twist, for he declared the major-minor approach to tonality in traditional harmony dead and key signatures dead. His tonal style of Pan Modality consists of the modality changing every few notes, resulting in a Hindemith style that is constantly fresh but visits excruciating problems upon the traditional pianist schooled in all the major and minor scales and arpeggios. In place of presenting the sequence of tonality alphabetically as Bach did from C to B, or as Chopin or Shostakovich did following the circle of 5ths, Hindemith evokes his own theory of ever-distancing tonal relationships from a center [C] (Craft of Composition I.) Each is ever more distant: 1.C; 2.G; 3.F; 4.A; 5.E; 6.E Flat; 7.A Flat; 8.D; 9.B Flat; 10 D Flat; 11.B; 12.F Sharp. On each tone of this succession, he composed a very different three voice Fugue. Between each he composed eleven very pianistic and inventive *Interludia*, each linking to the next fugue. Then came a ferociously difficult compositional challenge (even for him) with his determination to frame the work with a *Praeludium - Postludium* (to carry out the erudition of Latin titles throughout) in which the *Praeludium* would travel the full tonal range of C to F Sharp in a three-section *Fantasia* sort of keyboard form, and then having engineered the *Praeludium* cunningly, it would be possible to perform the same music by turning the *Praeludium* upside down and playing from the last measure to the first. This is a technical impossibility with traditional harmony because of what happens to basic chords in such an inversion. Note that in the program I have inserted the order of composition and the date of each composition. Whereas he several times composed two pieces in the body of the work on the same day, it took him from September 21 to October 10 to complete the *Praeludium - Postludium*, albeit, in the week of October 5, Yale classes began, and he probably met

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his classes on at least three days. It is possible to play the *Postludium* by turning the *Praeludium* upside down when you get used to the difficulty presented by accidentals being after notes at the wrong ends of measures, the beats don't line up, and bass clef becomes treble clef, treble becomes bass.

The key fact that makes it possible is the location of all "C's" in inversion. This fits C as the central tonality. Then Hindemith determined the scales that also worked both ways. C major stays C major. A flat major becomes C Phrygian. A major becomes C# Phrygian plus C flat major and C# major scales which are used selectively at needed spots. The thematic material lays out foundational relationships right from the start of the *Praeludium* and hence the end of the *Postludium*. the bold C - F - G at the opening becomes F - G - C at the end: the three prime relationships. That the result should be so artistically satisfying in every way is one of the greatest tributes to Hindemith as both artist and craftsman. I feel he sets an almost mystical atmosphere for the voyage to come in his *Praeludium*. He then leads us to his ideal of pure simplicity of tone relationship in leading from the F# - C# fifth in the low bass of the end of the *Praeludium*, holding the C# to become a Hindemith trademark - D flat as upper or falling leading tone to the C tonality of Fugue I. It works. He really lays it on, this austere purity in Fugue I as a very spare triple fugue with triple counterpoint. He takes us right to Class (we would all put together a fugue like this all around the classroom blackboards in one three-hour class). Then the first Interlude which will lead us to G and establish powerful piano playing also makes salient pitches the basic thematic motto (C-B-F#). Significantly, Hindemith waited to the very last to compose this launching piece. Moreover, Hindemith composed all the fugues before composing the first Interlude. Interestingly, Hindemith, the great omniscient planner, did not hit upon the grand scheme to become *Ludus Tonalis* until he had composed the first scattered group of "amusing little three voice fugues" as he wrote about them to his publishers. They were a little relief-composing, following a massive *Sonata for 2 Pianos* (one of his greatest and least known works) just a day before writing the first fugue of *Ludus Tonalis* (No. 6 in E Flat). The *2 Piano Sonata* had ended in a massive double fugue, far more extensive than anything in *Ludus Tonalis*.

So, the greatness of this work is not in long form but in concept, diversity of inventiveness and piano writing of great scope and diversity. One ends a hearing (or playing) in the same kind of awe over scope of invention as one senses in a complete playing of a number of great sets such as Schuman's "*Carnival*;" Beethoven's "*Diabelli*

Variations;" Chopin's "*Preludes*" or "*Etudes*" or the complete Book I or II of the "*Well Tempered Clavier*."

I am purposely limiting my presentation of Hindemith to the Professor I knew at Yale. I hope you will be inspired to read and learn more about his whole life and work.

JOHN COWELL received a Bachelor of Music from the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music in 1942 where he studied piano with Olga Samaroff-Stokowski, a Bachelor of Music and Master of Music from Yale (1947-1948), and a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Washington in Composition in 1966. He was a member of the faculty of the University of Puget Sound from 1948 to 1959 and resided in Europe from 1959 to 1962. While doing his doctoral work, Cowell was Dean of Music of The Cornish School from 1962 to 1966. Cowell was then University of Arkansas Professor and Chair of Music, 1966-85. He has soloed many times with the Seattle Symphony, and his large body of compositions have received numerous awards.

Currently he is the organist at University Lutheran Church, teaches privately at his residence in West Seattle, and is active in the Music Teachers Association and American Guild of Organists. In the summers of 1971, 1972, and 1973, he was appointed lecturer and performer in the Hindemith School and gave concerts at Vevey and Bloney in Switzerland, sponsored by the Syracuse University and the Hindemith Foundation. He spent many hours in Hindemith's home, viewing his library, workplace and habitat which are being maintained in perpetuity by the Hindemith Foundation.

See the spiraled logo on the cover. Hindemith chose this for the cover of the published edition of *Ludus Tonalis*, representing a sort of astronomical outwardly spiraling orbit away from a gravitational mass. Stylized medieval notation tells us: C (center) - G - F - A - E - E Flat - A Flat, etc.

Notes by John Cowell

*Aug. 29
(1st)

Suave, lithe- find Subject inversions
Tranquillo-

VI in Eb



ID 13

*Sept. 6
(3rd)
VII in Ab

Notice thematic "hooking-in" from Marcia.
Moderato- Ends in C with real Ab to come in **Molto largo**



ID 15

*Sept. 13
(6th)
VIII in D

Subject clangs like great bells.
Con forza-



ID 17

*Sept. 16
(11th)
IX in Bb

Ear catching characters make inversions
Moderato- work enjoyably.



ID 19

*Sept. 15
(9th)
X in Db

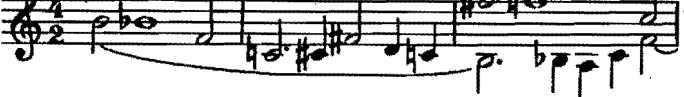
A doubled Fugue, the 2nd a true inversion
Allegro moderato- of the 1st.



ID 21

*Sept. 17
(12th)
XI in H
(Canon)

For the last Fugue composed, H. thought: "Why not an
Lento- accompanied Canon?"



ID 23

*Sept. 8
(5th)
XII in F#

A mystic pinnacle. Perfect ushering back to:
Molto tranquillo-



ID 25

*Sept. 19
(15th)
VI/
VII

Marcia-

The Teutonic side of H. Even bellicose



ID 14

*Oct. 11
(22nd)

Molto largo-

Harmonic-melodic textbook- H.



ID 16

*Sept. 28
(18th)

Allegro molto-

Dazzling virtuosic alternate hands
Toccata-like.

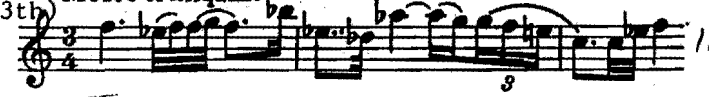


ID 18

*Sept. 18
(13th)

Molto tranquillo-

The exalted spiritual H.

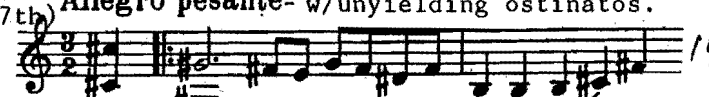


ID 20

*Sept. 20
(17th)

Allegro pesante-

An exhilarating Teutonic war-whoop!
w/unyielding ostinatos.



ID 22

*Sept. 20
(17th)

Valse-

The third character ballet vehicle
for Prima ballerina.



ID 24

ID 26

Postludium

Sept. 21 - Oct. 10
(19th & 20th)
Solenne

The Praeludium literally
upside-down, backwards.
[Can actually be read
upside-down backwards: Turn this over, you have the last two measures of Praeludium.]



Paul Hindemith, Professor, as I remember him



Hindemith in his Sprague Hall classroom at Yale. Photo taken in 1949 by Ben Quashen, one of his students. Paul Hindemith Collection, Yale University.

taken the year after I left.



Hindemith hosting a garden party at his home for ^{P.L.}his degree students at Yale in May 1948. From left to right: Howard Boatwright, Michael Brotman, Harold Blumenfeld, George Hunter, John Cowell, Carl Miller, Hindemith (in front), Robert Hickok (behind), Anthony Barbieri, Alvin King, Leonard Berkowitz, Leonard Sarason, David Krachenbuehl, Francis Widdis, Peter Re. Paul Hindemith Collection, Yale University. No women!