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The Practice and Politics of Children's Music Education  
in the German Democratic Republic, 1949-1976

By

Anicia Chung Timberlake

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

Doctor of Philosophy

in

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University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Richard Taruskin, Chair  
Professor Mary Ann Smart  
Professor Nicholas Mathew  
Professor Martin Jay

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## Abstract

### The Practice and Politics of Children's Music Education in the German Democratic Republic, 1949-1976

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This dissertation examines the politics of children's music education in the first decades of the German Democratic Republic. The East German state famously attempted to co-opt music education for propagandistic purposes by mandating songs with patriotic texts. However, as I show, most pedagogues believed that these songs were worthless as political education: children, they argued, learned not through the logic of texts, but through the immediacy of their bodies and their emotions. These educators believed music to be an especially effective site for children's political education, as music played to children's strongest suit: their unconscious minds and their emotions. Many pedagogues, composers, and musicologists thus adapted Weimar-era methods that used mostly non-texted music to instill what they held to be socialist values of collectivism, diligence, open-mindedness, and critical thought. I trace the fates of four of these pedagogical practices—solfège, the Orff *Schulwerk*, lessons in listening, and newly-composed “Brechtian” children's operas—demonstrating how educators sought to graft the new demands of the socialist society onto inherited German musical and pedagogical traditions.

I argue that this marriage of old ideas and new aims was often fraught, as pedagogues and even state officials proved reluctant to interrogate fully the possible political uses of an art form which, in the Romantic tradition of Hoffmann and Hanslick, was held to be autonomous and stubbornly intractable to worldly purposes. Accordingly, music education in German socialism proceeded from a vision of aesthetic education that privileged the freedom of the individual—an ideal that proved loyal less to the beliefs of Soviet communism than to the fundamental ideologies of German liberalism. More generally, the dissertation shows how even the most fervently socialist didactic ideals and practices often broke down on the issue of music. Children's music pedagogy represents, then, a moment in which developing human bodies and beliefs can be held up against the “real existing socialism” that the GDR claimed to have achieved: it exposes both the ideological underpinnings of German socialism and the halting practical steps that educators took to build it.

For Harold Chung

1921 – 2015

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## Abbreviations

DPZI	Deutsches Pädagogisches Zentralinstitut <i>Central German Pedagogical Institute</i>
DZL	Deutsches Zentrum für Lehrmittel <i>German Center for Teaching Material</i>
FDJ	Freie Deutsche Jugend <i>Free German Youth</i>
MfK	Ministerium für Kultur <i>Ministry of Culture</i>
MfV	Ministerium für Volksbildung <i>Ministry of Education</i>
POS	Polytechnische Oberschule <i>Polytechnical Secondary School</i>
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands <i>Socialist Unity Party of Germany</i>
SH	Staatssekretariat für Hochschulwesen (renamed Staatssekretariat für Hoch- und Fachschulwesen in 1958 and Ministerium für das Hoch- und Fachschulwesen der DDR in 1967) <i>Department of Higher Education</i>
VDK	Verband Deutscher Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler (renamed Verband der Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler der DDR in 1973) <i>Union of German Composers and Musicologists</i>

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## Introduction

Tucked into the margin of a draft of a document titled “Einige Thesen zu den Aufgaben und zur Lage der Musikerziehung,” next to a sentence deploring the lack of new songs for pre-school age children, is the following fretful comment:

I myself heard how a kindergarten group (4-5 years) “sang” “Bau auf, bau auf, Freie Deutsche Jugend bau auf” on their walk. Similar examples are being reported from the most diverse quarters (including the national anthem and “Für den Frieden der Welt”!!) Aside from the fact that the children can’t understand the content in the slightest, the range and the melodic shape are just impossible for this age group to master. It is necessary for the [composers’] union to get involved with the curricula for the kindergarten teachers’ training, and with the corresponding methodological tips.<sup>1</sup>

The song itself was unimpeachable, as it was one of the most frequently sung songs of the GDR youth organization Free German Youth (FDJ).<sup>2</sup> Instead, the anonymous commenter was concerned about the timing: the children were made to sing a song that was musically too difficult, and one whose content was not comprehensible at their tender age. It was not just the songs themselves that were important, but how they were taught and performed.

This dissertation focuses on the “how” of music education (*Musikerziehung*) in the German Democratic Republic, investigating practices, theories, and politics.<sup>3</sup> I argue that

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<sup>1</sup> “Erster Entwurf. Einige Thesen zu den Aufgaben und zur Lage der Musikerziehung,” [1960], SA-AdK VKM 3099. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>2</sup> The FDJ was a state-run extracurricular organization for youth aged 14 and older; membership was possible through the mid-20s, and ended when the young person started working or finished university. Younger children could be members of the Pionierorganisation “Ernst Thälmann” from the first grade onwards. These were the only state-recognized and state-funded youth groups; they functioned as a type of education system parallel to the school. Though membership in these organizations was not mandatory, it was expected, and youth who were not members were often disadvantaged in schools, and in their choice of future career or schooling. For more information on the FDJ and the Thälmann-Pioniere, see Alan McDougall, *Youth Politics in East Germany: The Free German Youth Movement, 1946-1968* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004); Barbara Felsmann, *Beim kleinen Trompeter habe ich immer geweint: Kindheit in der DDR, Erinnerungen an die Jungen Pioniere* (Berlin: Lukas, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Over the history of the GDR, the school subject of music education bore several official names: *Musikerziehung*, *Musikunterricht*, and (for a short period of time) *Gesangunterricht*. As Bernd Fröde notes, these names were often used interchangeably in both unofficial and official writing and speech. Bernd Fröde, *Schulmusik in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone und in der DDR bis Anfang der 1960er Jahre: zwischen fachorientierter Tradition und ideologischer Okkupation* (Hannover: Institut für musikpädagogische Forschung, 2010), 61–62. The most commonly used term for the subject was “*Musikerziehung*,” a word that indicates that the education’s goal is to transmit character and behavioral norms as well as musical abilities and theory. In East German educational policy more generally, the words “*Erziehung*” and “*Bildung*” [henceforth in Roman] were frequently used to denote, roughly, “knowledge” and “political education.” According to Sieglinde Siedentop, “*Erziehung* was always understood to be a political-ideological affair. Institutions of *Erziehung* included the family, preschool, school, further educational institutions, societal organizations, political parties, the army, etc.” Sieglinde Siedentop, *Musikunterricht in der DDR: musikpädagogische Studien zu Erziehung und Bildung in der Klassen 1 bis 4*

alongside the famously patriotic ideological education of songs and educational policy, Musikerziehung as practiced in GDR schools offered a space for musical and political education of a different sort: a pedagogy that, primarily by using non-texted music, aimed to cultivate the child's supposedly natural bodily movements, instincts, and emotions. Although much of children's schooling was designed to prepare them for a technologically modern age, this form of education was guided by an implicitly anti-modern vision of childhood, one that posited an essential child-ness that existed unchanged across history—not exactly an orthodox Marxist point of view. Indeed, many of the techniques that Musikerzieher used—especially the belief that children were best educated through their bodies—were rooted in the ideologies and practices of so-called progressive education (*Reformpädagogik*), developed before World War I and in the Weimar era. In this dissertation, I trace the genealogies of solfège, the Orff Schulwerk, lessons in listening, and newly-composed “Brechtian” children's opera, and examine how Musikerzieher, composers, and musicologists reconceptualized these earlier practices—and thus the children who would learn from them—for a socialist purpose. Anti-modernism aside, these were by and large people with a commitment to (or at least a stake in) a socialist future; they were not “dissidents.” Instead of articulating a position for or against the state, their pedagogical methods, their practical and ideological discussions, and their ideas about the future of their young charges reveal the unusually plural ways in which educators conceived of, and sought to create, an ideal society and its model citizens.

It comes as no surprise that such fraught ideological questions about how a socialist citizenry could be produced and sustained ultimately focused on the education of children. Indeed, it was no accident that this education was to take place through music. Following the beliefs of progressive education, most GDR Musikerzieher promoted the idea that children had a special relationship to music, one based on a similarity between the intrinsic qualities of each: music was an emotional rather than an intellectual art, and children had weak rational but strong emotional faculties; children existed “at one” with their bodies, which were organized by a natural rhythmic play, as was music; children instinctively used song in their daily lives, as shown by the instantly recognizable “children's call” (the falling minor third). Moreover—and this is the crucial point—as both children and music operated outside of the strictures of adult logic, neither was completely knowable or manageable. The kind of education that music provided was thus particularly potent—even as it eluded, to some degree, the rational systems of grown-up control. The notions of aesthetic education that shaped East German Musikerziehung were hardly consistent with the orthodox Communist educational ideals articulated in many public policy documents. Indeed, this Musikerziehung tended to perpetuate ground-up conceptions of innate and individual freedom that had their roots in long-standing tradition of German liberalism.

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(Augsburg: Wißner-Verlag, 2000), 18. In contrast, *Bildung* was, in the GDR educational official Werner Dorst's words, the “secure and independent command over the general laws of academic subjections, production, and art, and necessary elemental abilities, skills, and talents; the comprehension of dialectical relationships, and therewith the independence, security, and exactitude of orientation, judgment, and self-education in all questions of quotidian, work-related, intellectual, and social life.” Werner Dorst, *Erziehung, Bildung und Unterricht in der deutschen demokratischen Schule; Grundlagen* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1953), 72. The ideal of artistic [*musisch*] education, as it always involved a combination of learned ability and personality shaping, was a “unity of *Bildung* and *Erziehung*.” I use the German term “*Erziehung*” throughout the dissertation in order to preserve its connotations of character formation, and the word “*Erzieher*” (pl: *Erzieher*) to refer to those who carried it out.

## *Songs and Singing*

Songs, of course, were of central importance to GDR childhood: in schools, in the Young Pioneers, and in the FDJ. From the first grade onwards, singing was most important part of the school music curriculum—so much so that the subject of *Musikerziehung* was renamed *Gesangunterricht* in 1955, until the concerted protests of teachers instigated a change back.<sup>4</sup> Music lessons from the GDR's earlier years were not particularly prescriptive. The curriculum of 1953 allowed teachers to choose songs from within several categories (songs of peace and freedom, folk songs and FDJ songs, and songs about daily life), mandating just four songs: the GDR national anthem in the third grade, the “Weltfriedenslied” in the fifth, the “Weltjugendlied” in the sixth, and the Soviet anthem in the seventh. Starting in 1955, however, a minimum of five mandatory songs were prescribed per grade level. The younger classes were given folk songs, and the older classes increasing numbers of political songs.<sup>5</sup> The propensity towards assigning increasingly political songs to upper grades continued through the curricular and school reform of 1959.<sup>6</sup>

The songs' messages conformed to the state's highest goals for arts education, which, in 1959, were formulated as “all-around personality development, *Erziehung* to solidarity and collective action, *Erziehung* to love of work, *Erziehung* to militant activity, and the relaying of a high-level theoretical and artistic [*musisch*] general education.”<sup>7</sup> In addition, education in the arts was to have a specifically patriotic function:

Through the examination of works of socialist art and literature that reveal the hostile intentions of the imperialists and the militarists, the pupils will be brought up to hate the shameful deeds of the exploiters and the warmongers. This strengthens their awareness of the necessity of defending the socialist fatherland against the attacks of the imperialists.<sup>8</sup>

The “Song of the Leading Role of the Working Class and Its Party” is one of many songs that attempted this sort of education:

Uns Arbeitern gehören die Maschinen,  
uns Bauern hier gehören Stall und Feld  
Und was wir schaffen, können wir verdienen,  
das ist Gesetz in unserm Teil der Welt.

(Chorus) Wir sind die Klasse der Millionen Millionäre,  
die eigene Diktatur erst macht uns frei.

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<sup>4</sup> Fröde, *Schulmusik*, 89. The 1959 curriculum changed the name back to “Musik” for the upper classes (5-12), while renaming the subject “Singen” in classes 1-4.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. This reform took place in the “Mittelschule,” a short-lived ten-class school that was the precursor to the ten-class polytechnical school (POS), a secondary school with vocational training. Songs with “political content” refer to traditional revolutionary and workers' songs such as “The Internationale” and “Warszawianka,” young pioneer and FDJ songs, and new mass songs about GDR socialism.

<sup>6</sup> Fröde, *Schulmusik*, 98.

<sup>7</sup> Rieger, *Schulmusikerziehung*, 89.

<sup>8</sup> “Grundkonzeption für das Lehrwerk,” 1959, quoted in Fröde, *Schulmusik*, 97.

Bei uns ist gute Arbeit Pflicht und Ehre.  
Und jeder von uns ist ein Stück Partei.<sup>9</sup>

[The machines belong to us workers  
to us farmers belong the barn and the field  
We earn what we create  
that's the law in our part of the world.

(Chorus) We are the class of a million millionaires  
only our own dictatorship makes us free.  
Here, good work is our responsibility and our honor  
and each of us is a piece of the Party.]

This is a particularly unsubtle example of the genre, and not all patriotic songs—or even songs with texts about socialism—were this extreme.<sup>10</sup> However, Musikerzieher themselves had misgivings about the efficacy of such blatancy: after all, they were the ones who, unlike bureaucrats, had to teach the children. As Kuno Petsch, the secretary of the Union of German Composers and Musicologists (VDK) had argued in a discussion about children's song texts,

We must be especially careful that the “raised finger” does not come into the text, because when people notice that they're being edified [*erzogen*], the effect is usually the opposite of what is intended. Slogans [*Phrasen*] are the worst method of Erziehung: they lead to hypocrisy.<sup>11</sup>

Educational discussions dealt carefully with the issue of words in children's music. The blatant messages of propaganda songs, which governments (and other institutions as well) assumed would imprint themselves on children's minds through repetition, seemed, to GDR teachers, to apply to children only partially. Erzieher called into question what the state represented as a direct relationship between the message of a song's text, and the message that children would learn from it. Petsch believed that overt propaganda would have the opposite effect; he and other composers called for songs with new texts “appropriate for children.” The professor of Musikerziehung Siegfried Bimberg focused on the tendency to use diminutive language in children's songs, railing against preschool songs that encouraged a cutesy vision of childhood. Having children sing these baby-talk words would cultivate unserious character incompatible with the responsibilities of the new society.

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<sup>9</sup> “Lied der führenden Rolle der Arbeiterklasse und ihrer Partei,” quoted in Erich Neitmann, *Das politische Lied im schulischen Musikunterricht der DDR* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1982), 212.

<sup>10</sup> Both Juliane Brauer and Joy Calico have documented how singing in the GDR served a socialist politics that, true to its name, served a community as well as a government. See Juliane Brauer, “‘...das Lied zum Ausdruck der Empfindungen werden kann’: Singen und Gefühlserziehung in der frühen DDR,” *Jahrbuch für Historische Bildungsforschung* 18 (2012): 126–45; Joy Calico, “‘We Are Changing the World!’ New German Folk Songs for the Free German Youth (1950),” in *Musical Childhoods and the Cultures of Youth*, ed. Susan Boynton and Roe-Min Kok (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> “Protokoll über die Arbeitstagung der Kommission Jugend- und Schulmusik am 13. und 14. April 1957 in Petzow,” SA-AdK VKM 602.

When considering preschool songs, it is especially important these days to eliminate “auntie-German.” The existing literature contains many small and cute additions to words [*Verniedlichungs-floskeln*], which often come, for example, from Southern German parlance, but which can also come from a misunderstood childishness [*Kindertümlichkeit*]. It is necessary to improve this, and enforce a modern stance.<sup>12</sup>

The song “Was ist das für ein Vögelein?” was a particularly bad offender, as

the content and also the linguistic design convey a romanticization of children [*Kinderromantik*] that does not exist. This is not to say that a loving and heartfelt *tone* cannot be a part of a children’s song; but cutesy add-ons like little birdie, little tailsy, little footie, little winglet, little beaklet, little headlet [*Vögelein, kleines Schwänzelein, kleines Füßelein, kleines Flügelein, kleines Schnäbelein, kleines Köpfelein*] are just not acceptable in that abundance.<sup>13</sup>

“Children love flowers and animals even without the artificially applied diminutives,” he reassured his readership.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, Hella Brock, also a professor of Musikerziehung, believed that of the available media, words were simply the least effective way to teach the young:

Children of every age are emotionally very impressionable. Especially in the younger classes, feelings are evoked through immediate sensory perception, and less with the help of images and thoughts as the text conveys them.<sup>15</sup>

There are several ways to read this maneuvering around the issue of words. First, it shows that GDR Musikerzieher enjoyed some influence in educational planning: that the GDR national anthem was to be introduced only in the third grade (not in preschool, as some overeager teachers seem to have done) indicates that the people teaching the children and the people planning the educational system must have communicated with each other. Such songs would have to be sung—and Musikerzieher may well have felt them to be beneficial—but they should only be sung at the appropriate moment, when children were old enough to understand them. Politics and pedagogical practice thus did not have an exclusively top-down relationship; Musikerzieher seemed to have negotiated some compromises between good practice and political necessity. Second, Erzieher took their educational mandate seriously. This is unsurprising—after all, people who become teachers generally do—but the corollary is that they took their young charges seriously as well. Whatever the ideological pressures, they did not want to talk down to children, or offer them educational materials that they wouldn’t understand. Finally, Erzieher clearly believed texts to be of limited use to a rounded education in socialist citizenship. Words were powerful, of course, but not all-powerful: if the child wasn’t of an age to understand them, or if they were too obviously didactic, the message would never arrive. Thus,

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<sup>12</sup> Siegfried Bimberg, *Musik im Kindergarten* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1965), 81.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>15</sup> Hella Brock, *Musiktheater in der Schule* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1960), 163.

according to the standards of most Musikerzieher, “Lied der führenden Rolle der Arbeiterklasse und ihrer Partei,” with its blatant message, was a blunt and useless tool of political education.

### *Music, Politics, Pedagogy*

An effective political-musical education therefore had to consist of methods that reached the child through more channels than words alone. Yet, for obvious reasons, words are of great interest to governments: they can be evaluated and controlled for their apparent political content much more easily than, say, instrumental music or classical dance.<sup>16</sup> This is perhaps one reason why scholars have typically understood the politics of GDR pedagogy in terms of the professed aims of the totalitarian state. Bernd Fröde, reading a 1959 planning document issued by the Central German Pedagogical Institute (DPZI), has claimed that

art, here, was completely taken up with and functionalized by politics, if it—as the planning document declared—was to have the job of contributing to the changing of people’s consciousness, of increasing the joy they had while working, and therefore making a contribution to increased productivity.<sup>17</sup>

This was indeed one of the goals of artistic education as laid out by the state. But Fröde’s formulation slips problematically between government planning and reality: he has read the document and the intentions of its authors as commensurate with the lived experience of GDR citizens. His book’s subtitle, “between subject-oriented tradition and ideological occupation” neatly encapsulates the conceptual problem: it assumes there to be a binary division between a tradition of educational practices aimed towards the “subject,” presumed to be apolitical and anti-ideological, and the ideological demands of an outside force, presumed to be very political indeed.<sup>18</sup> Fröde is a proponent of the theory of totalitarianism, the mode of GDR historiography that investigates the structural workings of dictatorship, assuming that the state’s avowed aims and methods provided the dominating—even exclusive—structures of East German life. In Mary Fulbrook’s words, in scholarship made under such premises, “[t]he majority of East Germans are allotted the role of anonymous objects of SED policies, passive victims rather than active subjects.”<sup>19</sup>

In the last decade or so, many historians have called for alternatives to the totalitarian approach to GDR history, offering trenchant critiques of the problems with analyzing top-down power alone, and proposing ways of writing about history that account for the agency of real

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<sup>16</sup> At the same time, as Marina Frolova-Walker argues, the difficulty of assessing the ideological content of instrumental music proved a boon to Soviet officials, who could praise or censure composers as they pleased. Marina Frolova-Walker, “‘National in Form, Socialist in Content’: Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51, no. 2 (1998): 368.

<sup>17</sup> Fröde, *Schulmusik*, 97.

<sup>18</sup> Titles that posit a practice, an institution, or a person as existing between two diametrically opposed poles are a staple of German academic writing. In the case of the GDR, however, these titles are especially problematic, as they unquestioning reproduce the binary with which the state is commonly portrayed.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Fulbrook, “Putting the People Back in: The Contentious State of GDR History,” *German History* 24, no. 4 (2006): 610.



people and the diversity of lived experience.<sup>20</sup> Yet the totalitarian model has proved surprisingly tenacious, especially among studies of GDR pedagogy.<sup>21</sup> On the one hand, this is a source problem. Most readily available documentation from the GDR—the proliferation of published directives, policy announcements, and anxious ideological maneuverings—directs the historian towards the workings of state power. This was a central problem for pre-unification West German scholarship, which could only use published documents. The access to archival sources, however, has not solved the issue entirely. The note with which I began this introduction, for instance, was appended to one of countless documents—resolutions, position papers, “conceptions,” curricula, conference proceedings, meeting minutes—produced about Musikerziehung. It is tempting, when confronted with the vast array of planning documents from Socialist Unity Party (SED), the Ministry for Culture (MfK), the Ministry for Education (MfV), the Union of Composers and Musicologists (VDK), the DPZI, the editorials in *Musik und Gesellschaft*, down to two-page contributions to the journal *Musik in der Schule*—documents overwhelming in their number and intimidating in their homogeneity, for a great deal of effort was put into smoothing and regulating texts—to focus on their clearly stated political aims and allegiances and, reacting to their seeming impenetrability, fold them into a structural history of dictatorship. More significantly, there is also an ethical dimension to documenting the excesses of state control. Faced with the legacy of a dictatorship that censored, spied on, imprisoned, and tortured its citizens, not to mention exercising “softer” modes of power in most areas of private and public life, there is good reason to bear witness to this evil—both to acknowledge what has already happened and prevent it from happening again. This is likely what motivates the totalitarian bent of studies of GDR pedagogy: the idea that dictatorial power should coopt education to seek to control the minds of its youngest and most vulnerable citizens seems especially horrifying in the post-Cold-War West, which values “freedom” above all.

Of course, as Mary Fulbrook has pointed out, a state that aims for complete control of all aspects of life—a “durchgeheherrschte Gesellschaft”—must necessarily fail in its ambitions. Thus the flip side of the totalitarian historiographical model would relegate these far-reaching political aims to the land of dictatorial fantasy, pointing to their obvious limits—an approach that nonetheless preserves a binary division between state politics and people. Siegfried Bimberg took this line when he argued in his 1994 memoir-cum-apologia *Nachhall* that pedagogy and

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<sup>20</sup> Some particularly useful analyses of this situation include Mary Fulbrook, “The Concept of ‘Normalisation’ and the GDR in Comparative Perspective,” in *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: The “Normalisation of Rule”?* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 1–30; Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

<sup>21</sup> See, for instance, Oskar Anweiler, *Schulpolitik und Schulsystem in der DDR* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1988); Lars Knopke, *Kinder im Visier der SED: eine Untersuchung zur marxistisch-leninistischen Ideologisierung von Kindern und Jugendlichen im DDR-Schulwesen und darüber hinaus* (Hamburg: Kovač, 2007); Lars Knopke, *Schulbücher als Herrschaftssicherungsinstrumente der SED* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften / Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden GmbH, Wiesbaden, 2011); Christoph Lüth and Klaus Pecher, *Kinderzeitschriften in der DDR* (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 2007); Ulrike Mietzner, *Enteignung der Subjekte - Lehrer und Schule in der DDR: eine Schule in Mecklenburg von 1945 bis zum Mauerbau* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1998); Neitmann, *Das politische Lied im schulischen Musikunterricht der DDR*; Benjamin Schröder and Jochen Staadt, eds., *Unter Hammer und Zirkel: Repression, Opposition und Widerstand an den Hochschulen der SBZ/DDR*, Studien des Forschungsverbundes SED-Staat an der Freien Universität Berlin, Band 16 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2011); Sieglinde Siedentop, *Musikunterricht in der DDR: musikpädagogische Studien zu Erziehung und Bildung in den Klassen 1 bis 4* (Augsburg: Wissner, 2000). A view that considers both pupils’ experience and educational diktat can be found in Sonja Häder, *Schülerkindheit in Ost-Berlin: Sozialisation unter den Bedingungen der Diktatur 1945-1958* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1998).

Marxist science were inherently incompatible, and that educators could take one of three tactics to deal with this fact in their writing:

Adding the adjective “Marxist” to aesthetic or even music-aesthetic Bildung and Erziehung proved to be very difficult... [and] it will be worthwhile, when reading pedagogical or aesthetic texts, to examine how the unavoidable communication of allegedly weighty educational-political aphorisms transpired in essays and in books. [These aphorisms] could (1) ride in on a high horse, accompanied by blaring trumpets and fanfares, serving to identify the [politics of the] author in an unmistakable fashion. They also appeared (2) in the context of strictly academic writing, as part of an objective analysis of reality, and not as a matter of declaring Party allegiance. Another variety of communication could also be observed, in which (3) authors wrapped the unavoidable positioning and unpopular requirements that came “from above” in larger contexts, and packed the regulation phrases and the political stances into quotations. The GDR reader would notice that the book could not have been published without these mandatory quotations, and that the author’s ideas would not have been accepted without such obeisance, without bowing to such coercion.<sup>22</sup>

Bimberg thus drew a strict division between the orthodox users of “trumpeted” Marxist language on the one hand, and reluctant Marxists (real pedagogues) on the other, arguing that “real” pedagogical methods are apolitical (or at least incompatible with Marxism), whereas blatantly Marxist pedagogical texts cannot be taken seriously. He proposed that pedagogical texts could easily be assessed for their value based on their size of their “socialist appendage.”<sup>23</sup> This is the real danger of totalitarian readings of history: they establish, in Fulbrook’s words, a “dichotomous model of ‘state’ versus ‘society,’ ‘régime’ versus ‘people,’” a list to which I might add collaboration and resistance, “political” pedagogy (and art) and “real” pedagogy, evil and good.<sup>24</sup> This binary reproduces the dualistic terms in which the totalitarian state (and, in some cases, democratic capitalist states as well) attempted to represent the Cold War world: socialist or capitalist-imperialist, progressive or decadent, folksy or formalist.<sup>25</sup> Thus, as Alexei Yurchak points out in his meta-critique, totalitarian historiography cannot escape its Cold War perspective: the categories it assumes as givens—collaboration and resistance, truth and lying—rely on an understanding of the language of its sources that assumes stable and unchanging definitions of concepts such as “truth.”<sup>26</sup>

To return to Bimberg’s example, while texts can be (and were) assessed according to their adherence to or deviation from a party line (however this is defined), one should resist the

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<sup>22</sup> Bimberg implied that he belonged to the third group of authors. Siegfried Bimberg, *Nachhall: 44 Jahre Schulmusik nach Marx und Lenin. Reflexionen zur Musikpädagogik in der DDR*, vol. 1 (Essen: Verlag Die Blaue Eule, 1996), 35.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Fulbrook, “Putting the People Back in,” 618.

<sup>25</sup> Though George Orwell’s *1984* is fictional representation of the dualistic language of totalitarian states, it is not far off the mark. For a scholarly study of this topic, see Mikhail Epstein, *Relativistic Patterns in Totalitarian Thinking: An Inquiry into the Language of Soviet Ideology* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, Kennan Institute of Advanced Russian Studies, 1991).

<sup>26</sup> Yurchak, “Introduction” to *Everything Was Forever*.

notion that the degree of Marxist-Leninist rhetoric in a text is inversely proportional to that text's intellectual viability or pedagogical credibility. It hardly needs saying that pedagogy is political even when it does not preach economic ideology or fervent patriotism. Given the volume of literature that considers pedagogical politics exclusively from the side of policy, however, this point bears repeating. Indeed, an overt politics of citizenship is readily legible even in Bimberg's own pedagogy: his screed against the "romanticization of childhood" indicates that the citizen he wishes to raise is a sober one, not one who performs a "misunderstood childishness." Over a period of many years, he advocated a concept he called "melodic consciousness," for which he was apparently criticized as it "over-intellectualized" music. His response tells us that, for him, the ideal listener-citizen was a thinker: "because we are people, we cannot turn off the intellect. To have a feeling does not mean shutting off consciousness. Understanding emotion and thought as separate indicates an elementary and mechanical basic approach to the laws of psychology."<sup>27</sup>

In short, as Fulbrook has argued, in dismantling a state-vs-people construct, scholars might attend to how these entities interpenetrated and were frequently indivisible: "the complex ways in which GDR citizens and the structures within and through which they lived their lives were mutually constraining and constitutive."<sup>28</sup> This would open up space for a variety of ways to understand cultural and political action, including the possibility for a genuine commitment to socialist ideals rather than to the state that purported to be their manifestation. It is this sort of politics, the kind that are conceptualized and put into practice in addition to the well-documented and state-mandated patriotic programs and utterances, that this dissertation seeks to investigate: the visions of a socialist society that music teachers developed and attempted to implement.

### *Studying Children*

Luckily, many studies of life in the GDR have left the totalitarian model behind, even if work on GDR pedagogy seems to focus, still, on government diktat. In music scholarship, specifically, Joy Calico, Elaine Kelly, Maren Köster, Nina Noeske, Uta Poiger, Laura Silverberg, Martha Sprigge, Gilbert Stöck, Matthias Tischer, David Tompkins, and Johanna Yunker have all authored and edited works that address the agency of citizens, and read GDR sources—including those that communicate governmental aims—to examine the ways that that composers and scholars negotiated with and used state power to shape musical life.<sup>29</sup> Sources about children's

<sup>27</sup> Siegfried Bimberg, "Kann man Melodie- und Rhythmusbewußtsein trennen?" *Musik in der Schule* 1956/3, 123.

<sup>28</sup> Fulbrook, "Putting the People Back in," 618–619.

<sup>29</sup> Joy Calico, "The Trial, the Condemnation, the Cover-up: Behind the Scenes of Brecht/Dessau's 'Lucullus' Opera(s)," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14, no. 3 (2002): 313–42; Joy Calico, *Arnold Schoenberg's A Survivor from Warsaw in Postwar Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); Elaine Kelly, *Composing the Canon in the German Democratic Republic: Narratives of Nineteenth-Century Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Elaine Kelly, "Art as Utopia: Parsifal and the East German Left," *The Opera Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (2014): 246–66; Elaine Kelly and Amy Wlodarski, *Art Outside the Lines: New Perspectives on GDR Art Culture* (New York: Rodopi, 2011); Maren Köster, *Musik-Zeit-Geschehen: zu den Musikverhältnissen in der SBZ/DDR 1945 bis 1952* (Saarbrücken: Pfau, 2002); Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Laura Silverberg, "The East German Sonderweg to Modern Music, 1956-1971" (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2007); Laura Silverberg, "Between Dissonance and Dissidence: Socialist Modernism in the German Democratic Republic," *The Journal of Musicology* 26, no. 1 (2009): 44–84; Martha Anne Sprigge, "Abilities to Mourn: Musical Commemoration in the German Democratic Republic (1945-1989)." (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2013); Gilbert Stöck, *Neue Musik in den Bezirken Halle und Magdeburg zur Zeit der DDR: Kompositionen, Politik, Institutionen* (Leipzig: Gudrun

music and music-making offer yet more opportunities for creative analysis, as pedagogical methods represent moments in which developing human bodies and beliefs are held up against the “real existing socialism” that the GDR claimed to have achieved. Archival sources about children’s music demonstrate that educators felt comfortable expressing doubts and criticisms about the premises and methods of children’s ideological education through music; they may have felt that to express similar sentiments when discussing adult ideological education would be to call attention to the elaborate and pervasive mechanisms controlling (their own) adult speech, and in so doing, to question dangerously the political structure that established those mechanisms. Sources relating to children, therefore, provide unusual insight into individual thought and agency under totalitarian socialism—and come to stand in for the elusive, and perhaps ungovernable, realm of lived experience.

Records of children, in their particular way of bringing together the real and the desired, may also prove a useful way of understanding grown-up musical knowledge. Children’s music education may seem a marginal way of viewing musical life in East Germany, a state that, for all its political change, was in many respects a familiar *Kulturnation* that valued the depth, profundity, and inwardness of its music. The simple musical fare offered to East German children—sing-song ditties and pedagogical chestnuts such as Schumann’s *Kinderszenen*—was to be quickly supplanted by the serious music of Bach and Beethoven as the child matured. Children’s music was quintessentially *Gebrauchsmusik*, and would seem to have nothing to do with any of the grown-up grand narratives attached to German music-making in the GDR. Yet music pedagogy teaches children more than singing: it teaches them, as well, to grow into their role as listeners. Thus pedagogy can reveal not just what music once meant, but the institutional and ideological processes by which it acquired its meanings: how young performers and listeners were taught to tell good music from bad, how they learned to interpret sounds in terms of nations and politics, how they came to create and parse musical styles with their attendant historical and political narratives. Music pedagogy thus offers a window into the musical value systems of a society, showing how they (and we) conceptualize musical expertise and participation in musical life. In addition, children’s *Musikerziehung* in the GDR—as in many other places—was a process of learning through the body, through the physical activities of singing, doing solfège, sensing and tapping rhythms, playing drums, xylophone, piano, and accordion.<sup>30</sup> Along with skill acquisition comes a host of other lessons in ways of understanding the body of the musician and its role in a musical community: ideas about natural talent versus learned ability, musical emotion and how it is communicated, and which scale systems are considered natural and easily learned. Music pedagogy, then, is embodied politics: it inscribes lessons about how to be a citizen in the child’s body.

A number of scholars have done valuable work on children’s music in recent years. Much of this work, most notably Amanda Minks’s “Growing and Grooving to a Steady Beat,” Kyra Gaunt’s *The Games Black Girls Play*, and the fine volume *The Oxford Handbook of Children’s Musical Cultures*, edited by Patricia Shehan Campbell and Trevor Wiggins, are ethnographies of their young subjects, an ambiguous word I use intentionally: they situate children as musical

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Schröder, 2008); Johanna Frances Yunker, “Socialism and Feminism in East German Opera: The Cases of Director Ruth Berghaus and Composer Ruth Zechlin” (PhD dissertation, Stanford, 2012).

<sup>30</sup> Some excellent work has been done on music pedagogy, especially as it pertains to early music. See Russell Eugene Murray, Susan Forscher Weiss, and Cynthia J. Cyrus, eds., *Music Education in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010).

*subjects*, as agents of musical culture rather than mere passive recipients of adult pressure.<sup>31</sup> This is part of a larger movement to give children, perhaps the most universally disenfranchised group, both a musical and a political voice.

This dissertation is not an ethnography of children. It is much less about children than it is about adults thinking about children. However, it shares some of the motivations as these ethnographic studies. In their introduction to the Oxford handbook, Campbell and Wiggins identify two ways of studying and interacting with children, perspectives that the recent scholarship seeks to correct:

Educationists have traditionally approached children as recipients of knowledge transmitted to them by adults with training in subject matter and developmentally appropriate delivery techniques and systems. Researchers have viewed children as blank slates and have represented children as primitive, as copycats, as personality trainees, as monkeys, and as critics.<sup>32</sup>

In this project, I describe a situation in which the “educationists,” who indeed “approach children as recipients of knowledge,” nonetheless were forced to accord them a great deal of agency in their musical enculturation. The following letter from ninth-grade pupil Wolfgang Wallroth to a GDR youth television program—one of the few instances of actual children’s speech amid the countless records of adults talking about children—reveals the degree to which children, *à la* Petsch, recognized and criticized the limits of education’s “raised finger”:

As it often is, I’m interested in Schlager music, like many of those in my age group.<sup>33</sup> To be honest, I’ve often tuned in to “over there” and know a whole lot of West-Schlager. I’ve also never thought of them as so terribly dangerous for our morals. But now, since I’ve watched your program “Schlager and Politics” with Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler, a few things have become clearer to me. Mostly that’s because of the excellent documentation. But nevertheless I have a few questions that I would like for you to answer. It’s about the fact that I didn’t know most of the Schlager you played at all. In my opinion, absolutely no well-known Schlager were included, except for “Morgen” with Ivo Robić and “Tom Dooley.” [...] That’s why I didn’t find this program entirely interesting. It would interest me much more, if the danger for us youth were to be

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<sup>31</sup> See, for instance, Patricia Shehan Campbell and Trevor Wiggins, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Children’s Musical Cultures*, Oxford Handbooks (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Patricia Shehan Campbell, *Songs in Their Heads: Music and Its Meaning in Children’s Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Kyra Danielle Gaunt, *The Games Black Girls Play: Learning the Ropes from Double-Dutch to Hip-Hop* (New York: New York University Press, 2006); Amanda Minks, “Growing and Grooving to a Steady Beat: Pop Music in Fifth Graders’ Social Lives,” *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 31 (1999): 77–101; Amanda Minks, *Voices of Play: Miskitu Children’s Speech and Song on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013). An excellent bibliography of musical ethnographies of children can be found in Amanda Minks, “From Children’s Song to Expressive Practices: Old and New Directions in the Ethnomusicological Study of Children,” *Ethnomusicology* 46 (2002): 379–408.

<sup>32</sup> Campbell and Wiggins, “Giving Voice to Children” in *The Oxford Handbook of Children’s Musical Cultures*

<sup>33</sup> Schlager are German hit songs, somewhat comparable to American top 40 songs but with a German folk-music flair.

described using actual hit Schlager [*Spitzenschlager*]. I have a few to suggest: [a list of 46 Schlager is appended].

It's a little much at once, isn't it? But 90% are hit Schlager and in my opinion completely harmless. I don't want to deny that the Schlager you presented are malicious. But these hit Schlager are completely harmless and after all are played more frequently. So it's all not quite so violent and aggressive. [...] Couldn't one also read [messages] into, or pull out parts of GDR Schlager in order to prove that they are reactionary, hostile, etc?<sup>34</sup>

Popular music was one of the realms in which Musikerzieher routinely had to admit their inadequate knowledge and methods. A teacher named Erich Kley reported, in a meeting of a local VDK chapter that he had come to give a lecture at the local FDJ on dance music, armed with GDR records produced by the Amiga label. The pupils came with "original English and American dance records," leaving him in the dust: "we were absolutely outdone," he sighed ruefully.<sup>35</sup>

These examples are extreme cases. Only rarely do the voices and actions of individual children come through so clearly—if at all—in methodological guides and in their teachers' accounts. But the negative space they occupy in these pedagogical documents nonetheless shows them always to be subjects in their own right, nothing like the blank slates that GDR educational policy assumed them to be. Even absent children wielded surprising power, whether it was in forcing the Erzieher to organize educational practice around the capabilities of their body, or in pushing the teachers to acknowledge yet again that children won't just do as they are told. All of the methods I describe yielded, at the end, to what the actors involved understood to be a non-negotiable aspect of the child's nature: her affinity for rhythm, her underdeveloped rational faculty, her emotions, her deeply ingrained sense of fairness. Of course, most teachers will already be painfully aware that education can often only take place with the consent—however grudgingly given—of the educated. In practice, children's essential child-ness runs the show: an educational reality far from the patriotic programs of GDR propaganda.

### *Music Education in the GDR*

The story of music education in the GDR begins in privation and confusion, with the Soviet occupying power attempting to rebuild a desperately impoverished Germany on a Communist model. The structure of schools themselves changed radically between the end of the war and the late 1960s.<sup>36</sup> The first school law of 1946 established a "unified school" in which all pupils would learn together from grades 1 through 8. Previously, secondary schools had been "tracked" into a college-preparatory *Gymnasium*, a vocational *Realschule*, and a remedial *Volksschule*.<sup>37</sup> Changes in school structure were accompanied by a quick succession of revisions to the

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<sup>34</sup> Wolfgang Wallroth, *Erweiterte Internatsoberschule Wickersdorf/Bez. Erfurt* to the Jugendfernsehen, [1960-1961], SAPMO-BArch DY 24/3893, Vol 1.

<sup>35</sup> "Protokoll. Mitgliederversammlung vom 24. Oktober 1959," SA-AdK VKM 1465.

<sup>36</sup> This is only a cursory overview of what was a complex set of changes. For a thorough discussion of school structures in the GDR, see Häder, *Schülerkindheit in Ost-Berlin*; Gert Geissler, *Schule, streng vertraulich!: die Volksbildung der DDR in Dokumenten*, 1. Aufl. (Berlin: BasisDruck, 1996).

<sup>37</sup> Fröde, *Schulmusik*, 18-19.

curricula, which, for Musikerziehung, resulted in three significant stages.<sup>38</sup> The first of these, which Fröde characterizes as the “reform phase,” looked to the school reforms proposed by Leo Kestenberg and the artistic Erziehung of the Weimar period.<sup>39</sup> The first curriculum of the Soviet Occupation Zone was issued in 1946, followed by a slightly revised second version in 1947. These post-war documents resemble the curricula of the schools in the era just preceding in their rhetoric and in their goals. From 1952, Fröde identifies a “phase of crisis and of attempts to assimilate,” which saw a turn to Soviet methodology—in policy, at least—and towards using schools for ideological education.<sup>40</sup> A third major reform came in 1959 with the introduction of the ten-grade “Polytechnische Oberschule” (POS) for grades 1-10, which sought to unify physical and intellectual labor and prepare pupils for post-school employment by introducing subjects such as technical drawing, and mandating that pupils spend one day a week in a factory or other partnered institution.<sup>41</sup> At the same time, a new optional secondary school, the “Erweiterte Oberschule” for grades 9-12, prepared pupils for future university study. The 1959 curriculum, which emphasized music’s role in emotional formation (*Gefühlserziehung*) and the development of a “socialist personality,” went the farthest yet in its explicit attempts to use music to shape socialist citizens from the inside out.<sup>42</sup>

Musikerziehung, like all pedagogy, relies on people as much as structures and protocols. The music-educational community consisted of a wide range of professions. Decisions about educational policy, and occasionally methods, were ultimately made by the MfV. However, a great number of people from many professions and backgrounds were influential in developing these policies and in carrying them out. Closest to the children were the Musikerzieher themselves. Musikerzieher were generally trained to teach at least one other subject as well (German, Russian, history, or physical education were common pairings). They were a diverse bunch, and due to the numerous changes in German states and educational systems over the decades before the war’s end, there could be no such thing as a “typical” teacher. Fröde identifies at least six different training systems that a teacher in 1945 could have come through. One of these was the GDR’s “Neulehrer” (new teacher) program. Immediately after the war, all teachers who had been members of the Nazi party were dismissed (in some provinces such as Thuringia, reportedly as many as 95%), and were replaced by a cadre of hastily trained Neulehrer, who underwent a several-month course of study to prepare them for their new job: in 1950, 80% of teachers were Neulehrer—60,000 in total. This shift was short-lived, however, as in 1953, so many of the Neulehrer had quit their jobs that the government quietly began hiring back those teachers it had fired due to their unsavory political pasts.<sup>43</sup> All Neulehrer learned a little about music, but were by no means specialists.

Apart from the Neulehrer program, the training that teachers of music received and the institutions at which they received it changed quite a bit over the first decade of the GDR.<sup>44</sup> In contrast to the centralized primary school curricula, teacher training seemed to be organized in a way designed to maximize inconsistency. Immediately after the war, the Soviet Military

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<sup>38</sup> The following is a list of the curricula for Musikerziehung only. There were also numerous intermediary documents that corrected and updated the curricula, and suggested teaching material such as works of music. For a comprehensive list of these, see Fröde, *Schulmusik*, and Rieger, *Schulmusikerziehung*

<sup>39</sup> Fröde, *Schulmusik*, 176.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. This curriculum was published in 1951 for all other subjects, for reasons that will be detailed in chapter 1.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 94-96

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 39, also 123-133.

<sup>44</sup> For a complete description of GDR Musikerzieher training, see *ibid.*, 119-165.

Administration relocated all teacher training to the universities. But starting in 1950, primary school teachers (grades 1-4) learned their subject at institutes for teacher training (*Institute für Lehrerbildung*, which were vocational secondary schools), where they underwent a three-year course of study. Only a primary school completion certificate was required of these trainees, many of whom were only fourteen years old. These institutes were supervised by the MfV, which also oversaw primary schools and conventional secondary schools. The music instructors at these institutes often had to start from scratch, as their beginning pupils lacked even the most basic musical knowledge. In 1954, Bruno Fritsche, a teacher at the Institute of teacher training in Altenburg, issued a report on his class of 116 pupils, all of whom had begun the first grade in 1945. 41% could read music, 21% could write a major scale correctly, and 7% could sight-sing a five-note motive. “At least,” he concluded, “92% could say who Beethoven was.”<sup>45</sup> Beginning in 1953, Musikerzieher for the middle grades (5-8) studied at so-called pedagogical institutes (*Pädagogische Institute*), post-secondary schools that could not offer doctorates. As Fröde notes, the requirements for becoming an instructor at the PI were inconsistent, as only around half had doctorates. Teachers for some of the middle levels and for the upper classes (up to the twelfth grade) studied at universities—Berlin, Greifswald, Halle, Leipzig, and Rostock had institutes for Musikerziehung—as well as at the University of Music in Weimar: some of the institutes for Musikerziehung at universities were led by musicologists with little knowledge of school practice. In addition, teachers who had already completed their education could earn an extra certification at an institute in Berlin or via correspondence courses. PIs, universities, and continuing education were all managed by the Department of Higher Education (SH).<sup>46</sup> A Musikerzieher could have come from a musical background, or not; she could have attended teaching school instead of attending conventional secondary school; or she could have received training at a university, where she could have been taught by a musicologist with little classroom experience or by a professor for Musikerziehung.

In addition to the practical knowledge exchanged between Musikerzieher and their teachers, Musikerziehung was shaped by research. Students and faculty at the universities carried out research projects in schools, producing both methodological and theoretical work.<sup>47</sup> The DPZI organized a good deal of pedagogical research, though they did not have a music specialist on staff.<sup>48</sup> Lastly, the VDK also had a hand in Musikerziehung: in the commission for school and youth music, as well as in the local and central union meetings, composers and musicologists presented and debated new songs, instrumental pieces, and operas, for children, and discussed the merits of pedagogical techniques.

Thus the methods and relational networks of Musikerziehung were a matter of multi-centered collaboration. It was not just that the quick changes in school structure, educational policy, and teacher training throughout the GDR’s first decade made it impossible for teachers to

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<sup>45</sup> Bruno Fritsche (Dozent für Musikerziehung an Institut für Lehrerbildung Altenburg, Mitglied der Komm. für ME beim DPZI/Berlin), “Erziehen wir ‘allseitig gebildete Menschen?’ Eine kritische Betrachtung zur Musikerziehung in den Grundschulen und in der Lehrerbildung,” 1 January 1954, SAPMO-BArch DR 2/3904.

<sup>46</sup> Fröde, *Schulmusik*, 133-165.

<sup>47</sup> I use “pupils” to refer to those young people attending primary and secondary school, and “students” to refer to university students or those undergoing professional training. These words correspond to the German *Schüler* and *Student*.

<sup>48</sup> Some of these projects are discussed in Chapter 3. The DPZI was also in charge of proposing the curricula, which had to go to the MfV for final approval, as explored in Chapter 1. For a thorough history of the DPZI, see Nicole Zabel, “Zur Geschichte des Deutschen Pädagogischen Zentralinstituts der DDR. Eine institutionengeschichtliche Studie” (PhD dissertation, Technische Universität, 2010).



practice a pedagogy that was both consistent and corresponded perfectly to the demands of policy—though this was also certainly true. Rather, pedagogical knowledge production, from the beginning, was heterogeneous and de-centralized. Personal influence and the traditions of individuals institutions shaped the practices and ideas of Musikerziehung as much as—if not more than—diktat.

According to Mary Fulbrook, GDR society began a period of “normalization” beginning in the late 1960s.<sup>49</sup> This is certainly reflected in the policies of Musikerziehung: between 1946 and 1961, the music curricula were altered or replaced seventeen times, whereas after 1961, the curricula were not changed until 1968. In addition, January 1967 saw the signing of an agreement between the MfK, the MfV, and the VDK that clearly defined each body’s role in determining what went on in music classes. According to Eva Rieger, this agreement marked the end of uncoordinated parallel efforts from all three.<sup>50</sup> It had been, however, precisely this lack of coordination that had made Musikerziehung so pluralistic in its methods and its discourse. For the latter, published articles and unpublished discussions slowly became more homogenized throughout the course of the 1960s. This does not necessarily mean that classroom practice became standardized as well, only that the sources do not reflect such variety. One might suspect that methodological pluralism—in the classroom, at least—continued through the next few decades: like any profession, teachers often prove reluctant to adopt new methods when older ones work just fine. Inertia is a powerful force—it takes a while to change people and systems, and even longer when the efforts to do so are uncoordinated. In other words, a diversity of pedagogical methods, beliefs, and practices continued to circulate, almost all of which had been created before the war in response to a number of different political circumstances and aims. If the 1960s were a period of stabilization and “normalization,” the 1950s were a time of productive confusion, in which Musikerzieher and policy-makers were attempting to re-interpret and re-structure for a socialist educational context practices and materials that had previously been deemed apolitical. This dissertation therefore focuses on those first decades of the GDR, for during that time, the multiplicity of the ideas that circulated—the strange combination of progressive, Nazi, and Soviet pedagogies—was more legible. The chapter on children’s opera extends until 1976, but since the operas were performed as part of extracurricular clubs, they were not standardized along with the school curricula.

## *Chapters*

The four chapters of this dissertation present four methodologies from GDR Musikerziehung: solfège as a first step towards sight-singing, the use of Orff-inspired techniques in so-called rhythmic Erziehung, new Marxist listening lessons, and “Brechtian” children’s opera. Rather than present a history of each method over a forty-year period, thereby attempting an overview of music in schools, I focus on one moment for each—on a central crisis, debate, conference, or performance, situating it within the discourse about the method’s aims and effects. These moments are not meant to represent a totality of educational practice. Rather, I hope to reveal something about the plurality of methods that were current in the GDR, as well as examine the

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<sup>49</sup> Mary Fulbrook, “The Concept of ‘Normalization’ and the GDR in Comparative Perspective,” in Fulbrook, ed., *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: The “Normalization of Rule”?* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).

<sup>50</sup> Rieger, *Schulmusikerziehung*, 120.

particular confluence of and tension between older beliefs and newer aims that shaped each one. Each chapter deals with the specific negotiations of music pedagogy: between the various demands that educational policy placed on Musikerziehung, teachers' numerous ways of conceptualizing and seeking to construct socialist citizens, and their preconceptions about the nature of children and of music. In each of these, it is children's unformed nature, their protean selves, which forces an uncomfortable confrontation with previously unexamined assumptions about the politics of music. The discussions that inevitably arose can often seem trivial—how could one man, for instance, have been willing to risk his career for the sake of banning solfège?—until one recalls the stakes. For pedagogical methods are always more than a set of steps and procedures. They are embedded in ideas about the future society and its ideal citizens; what music is and how it conveys its meaning; and how music and people are believed to come together. Such methods entail a process of becoming a citizen. Pedagogy contains within it both the present and particular, and the future and ideal: it is simultaneously an articulation of fantasy and of resignation. In a certain sense, it points to the moment where children teeter on the edge of what they already are and what they should become.

To be sure, these adults had many ways to conceptualize children, and an even greater number of plans to shape their development. Inseparable from the issue of the child was the problem of her body, believed to be the key to her unconscious self, her emotions, and her character. This is an idea straight out of progressive education. It also recapitulates in miniature an phylogenetic notion of development: as humankind developed from the *Naturmensch*, who was one with and therefore subject to his natural environment, to the man of culture, who acted upon and controlled nature, so the child would grow from a state of naive undifferentiatedness to a state of self-conscious individuality. This progression, like the *Bildungsromane* which it so resembled, seemed fraught with danger—for though children were supposedly creatures of nature, their journey out of nature to maturity was in no way automatic. The very notion of Erziehung, for all that it purported to mirror the child's current state—her essential child-ness—rather than treat her as a small and deficient adult, contained within it an anxiety that children will not grow up without focused cultivation. As the chapters explore different ways in which children were figured as natural, they also simultaneously reveal ways in which this nature could threaten their impending adulthood.

At the same time, according to some, children could sense adult manipulation: according to Kuno Petsch, they knew when a text was intended to be didactic, and would react with defiance. In that sense, they had an innate skepticism: their naiveté, perhaps, led them to see past artifice to the truth of the matter. In some respects this was a desperately Romantic vision, for in its concern about finding the right ways to reach children, it admitted, sentimentally, to that intuition for truth that adults have lost. In all cases, however, the child was conceptualized as essentially different from the adult: clear-seeing rather than easily manipulated, emotional rather than rational, corporeal rather than intellectual, natural rather than cultured. Ideas of children and childhood, even those focused squarely on education, always also serve adult self-understanding: a picture of adulthood arose in tandem with a picture of childhood. What is more, this difference—an opposition, really—meant that the child, rather than being a *tabula rasa* ready for adult inscription, always already existed as itself, and, in its particular child-ness, was a black box of sorts, unknowable by adults. Erziehung always had to defer to the nature of the child, however that was understood.

The first chapter chronicles how Hugo Hartung, a professor emeritus at the Humboldt University of Berlin, attempted to ban solfège as a tool for teaching music literacy in the music curriculum of 1952.<sup>51</sup> Hartung argued that solfège was a fascist technique and therefore not appropriate for politically progressive GDR schools, pointing out with ruthless persistence the continuity in personnel linking those who had taught solfège during the Nazi period and those who advocated for it in the early years of the GDR. Exploiting a weakness in the educational bureaucracy, Hartung slipped his ban into the curriculum secretly, but his subterfuge was quickly noted and corrected. The story of the ban throws into relief the unexpected and unpredictable confluences of governmental process and personal agency that went into GDR decision-making. More importantly, the hearings that followed the ban reveal the limits to the ways in which many GDR educators and bureaucrats, including those in high positions, were able to conceptualize music education as political: although they were dedicated to improving political and patriotic education, they did not seem to see how “purely” musical technique could possibly be of political value. In this chapter and in the next, the majority of actors—ironically, including those who represented the state—refused to see music in terms of its politics.

Chapter Two examines body politics of a different sort. The mid 1950s saw attempts to popularize Carl Orff’s *Schulwerk*, a percussion-based pedagogical system that the composer and his collaborator Gunild Keetman had developed through the 1930s and had published in West Germany in 1951. The system and its instrumentarium, known as the *Klingendes Schlagwerk*, were believed to activate children’s bodies with their special affinity for rhythm, countering the nervousness and alienation of modernity by producing more “natural” citizens—joyous, intuitive, and in harmony with each other and their surroundings. Following the theories of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, Erzieher believed that bodily attitudes would produce mental and emotional states. The *Schulwerk* was generally well-received in pedagogical circles, with the Ministry for Culture recommending its use. At the same time, some composers and Musikerzieher reacted with suspicion, accusing the method’s focus on rhythm of encouraging “primitiveness” in its young subjects. I trace these fears about rhythm to contemporaneous anxieties about the supposedly decadent rhythms of jazz, uncovering a longer-standing relationship between rhythmic music and the “primitive” and racialized Other—an association that, with the sudden popularity of jazz, assumed critical importance. Children’s (uncontested) natural tendency towards the rhythmic, here, was a key both to a “renewal” of society and to its racial downfall.

Chapter Three explores ways in which young people were taught to listen “actively” to the instrumental music of the German classical heritage (*Kulturerbe*), through a set of pedagogical research projects run through the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg in the early 1960s. Through “active listening,” as opposed to the supposedly passive listening that had characterized the Romantic period, children were to understand music’s “content,” which musicologists had theorized (in the spirit of the new GDR Marxist musicology) to be immanent, objective, and reflect the composer’s political *Weltanschauung*. In order to approach this content, listeners were to synthesize formal and historical knowledge of music with emotional experience within the immediate act of perception. Once again, however, Erzieher had to reckon with the particular affinities of children’s bodies: a biologically determined progression in children’s ability to understand music complicated efforts to teach them about “objective” musical content. Smaller children heard only “superficial” characteristics, such as tempo and volume, whereas

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<sup>51</sup> Solfège systems, of which there are many, set syllables to notes of the musical scale (solmization) and associate them with hand gestures (cheironomy). The combination of vocalization and gesture is meant to activate children’s muscle memory.

adolescents tended to focus on the emotional experience of listening, often interpreting the music in “subjective” terms. The Halle experiments, in their pluralistic, utopian, and sometimes unruly attention to the co-existence and interpenetration of musical notes and historical facts, show the mechanics of canon formation from the ground up: canons, after all, are transmitted via pedagogy far before they are reified in scholarship and concert programming. I argue that the ways that Musikerzieher attempted to bring historical lessons to bear on musical sounds reveal that, for them, listening remained a private and interior act, a kind of emotional Bildung qualitatively different from the collective patriotism that songs were to inspire. At the same time, the musical analyses and lesson plans that Musikerzieher developed to unite “content” and “experience” look remarkably familiar: this familiarity may signal, perhaps, both the impractical nature of aesthetic theory when faced with the stubbornness of practice, and the fact that East German pedagogues were concerned with issues of musical politics similar to those that characterize our own pedagogy.

The last chapter delves into an area of Musikerziehung that operated at the greatest remove from the policy concerns: new children’s operas, to be learned and performed in afterschool clubs. A group of Musikerzieher, which included the musicologist Hella Brock and the composer Kurt Schwaen, championed opera as a particularly effective site of socialist Erziehung, as it would combine the emotional effectiveness of music, the intellectual challenge of narrative, and the collectivizing power of ensemble work. Brock and Schwaen turned to Bertolt Brecht’s epic theater and its pedagogical offshoot the Lehrstück for inspiration, adapting techniques that they believed would teach a process of critical thinking rather than instill pre-digested moral messages. For them, the ideal citizen united emotional knowledge with rational thought; the new socialist society required subjects who could think and act dialectically, steering the course of progress accordingly. Yet their efforts encountered obstacles in the form of other teachers, who clung to the fairy-tale morality of good and evil—a narrative form whose inevitable conclusions and mythic, anti-historical stasis apparently worked against the methods and lessons of dialectical materialism. This chapter, the only one to deal with texted music, theorizes about the multiple levels on which children’s educational materials can function: as speech intended to shape children and speech intended to signal political safety to other adults. This issue is less prominent in previous chapters, which address pedagogical methods that, as they could have been understood as “purely” musical, often went unscrutinized for their politics.

## Chapter 1. The East German *Methodenstreit* and the Politics of Solfège

In August 1949, just before the German Democratic Republic was established, representatives of the newly formed Socialist Unity Party (SED) declared that instructors in all school subjects had to take up the task of Marxist-Leninist ideological education by 1951, and adopt Soviet pedagogical methods.<sup>1</sup> This move to determine specific curricular content and pedagogical methods was one of the first steps in what Oskar Anweiler has called a Soviet “ideological occupation” of East German schools.<sup>2</sup>

East German Musikerzieher, however, had a different idea. Instead of adopting Soviet pedagogical methods—a difficult prospect in any case, as Soviet methodological texts would not begin appearing in German translation until the early 1950s—many Erzieher wished to return to the pedagogies with which they had been trained, those of the progressive education (*Reformpädagogik*) movement. Progressive education, which began in the 1890s and continued through the Weimar era, had produced such famous methods as Dalcrozean Eurythmics, the Waldorf School, and the Orff *Schulwerk*. Self-proclaimed progressives held that education should cultivate the whole child, not just her mind, and should educate her in a way that corresponded to her childlike particularity, privileging those methods that would speak directly to the body and emotions (thought to be the most active faculties) as opposed to imposing the arbitrary discipline of adult intellectual activity. Music and art, as “feeling” subjects, were deemed central to this process of allowing the child to discover herself and the world. From the heterogeneous pedagogical techniques that progressive education had inspired, East German educators adapted improvisation games to teach children creativity in performance and composition, dance and spatial exercises to teach them about rhythm through the medium of the body, and solfège combined with cheironomy to help children develop a “melodic consciousness” and a love of music-making.

By invoking the ideologies of Weimar and before, music teachers hoped to bracket off the Third Reich as an historical anomaly. More practically, they did not wish to learn new methods. The first East German curriculum of 1946, in good progressive style, promised that music lessons would awaken the child’s “artistic” [*musisch*] abilities, allowing her access to the “source of inner joy” and “enrichment of the soul” that music offered. But, as the historian Eva Rieger has pointed out, National Socialist music education had also availed itself of the rhetoric of progressivism. The 1942 curriculum had emphasized, similarly, the joy brought by “happy singing and playing” and the exercise of one’s “musical potency.”<sup>3</sup> The ideologies of progressive education and fascism were uncomfortably intertwined.

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<sup>1</sup> Nicole Zabel, “Zur Geschichte des Deutschen Pädagogischen Zentralinstituts der DDR. Eine institutionsgeschichtliche Studie.” PhD. diss, Technische Universität Chemnitz, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Oskar Anweiler, *Schulpolitik und Schulsystem in der DDR* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1988); Bernd Fröde, *Schulmusik in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone und in der DDR bis Anfang der 1960er Jahre: zwischen fachorientierter Tradition und ideologischer Okkupation* (Hanover: IFMPF, 2010), 17.

<sup>3</sup> The German word “*musisch*” is commonly translated as “artistic,” but the German term emphasizes movement in art (dance, music, poetic meter) more than the English word “artistic” does. Eva Rieger, *Schulmusikerziehung in der DDR* (Frankfurt am Main: Diesterweg, 1977), 16. See also Bernd Fröde, *Schulmusik*, 54.

The Soviet occupiers seem to have believed that fascism had left a permanent stain. In any case, they took the opportunity to wipe the slate clean by transplanting Soviet personnel, systems, and ideologies to East Germany. They were aided in this by a small number of German educators who also felt uneasy about repurposing pedagogical techniques that had already been used for unsavory ends—or, perhaps, these teachers saw a chance for a promotion. The majority of German Musikerzieher, however, touted their methods as inherently apolitical. They argued that the origins of their pedagogies were “clean,” regardless of what the Nazis had done; that the first progressive reformers had conceptualized these methods as a way to encourage the development of the individual’s soul and body, not to influence politics; and moreover, that sound possessed a kind of neutrality and did not participate in any social structure: “Sounding material [*Tonmaterial*] and music theory are indifferent to class, though works of art throughout history are products of the superstructure and are therefore inseparable from class.”<sup>4</sup>

This pedagogical struggle, or *Methodenstreit* as it was known, came to a head in 1952, when Hugo Hartung, a professor emeritus at the Institute of Musikerziehung at the Humboldt University of Berlin, secretly and almost single-handedly enacted a nationwide ban on solfège in a cunning act of bureaucratic fraud.<sup>5</sup> The ban and its subsequent discovery throw into relief the contradictions of authoritarian power in the new East German state. The Soviets marshaled resources and personnel to help the GDR sever its ties to the Nazi past, but the break was hampered by deep-seated and unexpected continuities between past and present. The line of transmission from Soviet-trained pedagogues with their Marxist beliefs to Weimar-trained teachers with their inherited German conceptions of music encountered unexpected detours and obstacles. Though East German Musikerzieher held fast to the idea that their methods were apolitical, that idea proved untenable in the context of the transition to socialism, when any method that posited the citizen as private and possessed of a cherished interiority implicitly contradicted the prevailing political discourse. The ban reveals, more generally, the high stakes of children’s music pedagogy. Educators sought ways to break down class barriers by improving access to high German culture while still taking into account what they considered to be children’s essential nature. They struggled to reconcile the future socialist citizen with the current child. The project of bringing up children into socialism through the precious German cultural tradition was further complicated by the demands that socialist theory placed on the arts—demands that ran counter to an understanding of the *Kulturgut* as transcendent.

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<sup>4</sup> “Arbeitstagung der Brandenburger Kreismethoden für Musik am 18. und 19.1.1952 im DPZI Potsdam,” SAPMO-BArch DR 2/1165.

<sup>5</sup> That the ban was (briefly) put in place is not a secret. Sieglinde Siedentop mentions the ban, as does Eva Rieger, and Bernd Fröde references the arguments that preceded the ban in his edited volume *Gleiches Bestreben in getrennten Ländern*. But these scholars do not detail the process by which the ban was written into law, nor do they analyze the *Methodenstreit* more generally, choosing instead to see both as mere symptoms of the “overpoliticization” of Musikerziehung. Sieglinde Siedentop, *Musikunterricht in der DDR: musikpädagogische Studien zu Erziehung und Bildung in den Klassen 1 bis 4* (Augsburg: Wissner, 2000), 155; Rieger, *Schulmusikerziehung*, 56; Bernd Fröde, Walter Heise, Rudolf Weber, eds, *Gleiches Bestreben in getrennten Ländern. Musikpädagogik in den beiden deutschen Staaten nach 1945—Zeitzeugen berichten* (Hannover: Institut für musikpädagogische Forschung, 2007), 90.

## *Solfège in the GDR*

In demanding that teachers adopt Soviet methods, the SED was taking on an formidable foe: German pedagogical tradition. Most East German Musikerzieher had been trained to teach pupils to sing using one of four solfège systems.<sup>6</sup> Alongside the internationally used tonic sol-fa system (known in East Germany as *Tonika-Do*), which Sarah Glover had developed and John Curwen and John Spencer Curwen had popularized in the mid-nineteenth century, East Germans used systems developed and disseminated by Carl Eitz (1892) and Richard Münnich (1930), as well as a home-grown system devised by Heinrich Werlé (1949).<sup>7</sup> These systems differed in terms of their syllables and the accompanying hand signals, as well as in the ease with which they represented chromaticism and modulations. Yet their similarities outweighed their differences: even the systems that were meant to enable chromatic notes were constructed around the half-step relationships of diatonic music, and all systems relied on entrainment for their efficacy, using the muscle memory of the body to concretize musical relationships.

Official policy committed GDR music education to teaching music literacy and an appreciation for the great works of the German canon. GDR teachers claimed that solfège imparted literacy by first instilling in children a “melodic consciousness”: a sense for the movements of melodies that started with the functional relationships between notes. Based on the fact that nearly all songs for young children were built on a major or a pentatonic scale, a teacher could use solfège to teach children the “rules” of melodies for songs in all keys: the seventh scale degree rises to the tonic, the fourth falls to the third, the sixth generally falls to the fifth, and the fifth is the point farthest from the tonic. After children had acquired a “melodic consciousness,” they could be taught around the fourth grade to read music from a five-line staff. Any earlier attempt was difficult, Musikerzieher argued, as musical notation did not represent the functional relationships that were essential to understanding melodies.

The syllables (*do re mi fa so la ti do*) and hand signals of *Tonika-Do* were the best known and most widely used. East German teachers used a movable-*do* version in which *do* is always the tonic.

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<sup>6</sup> East German educators referred to these systems of solmization and their associated cheironomy in aggregate as *Tonsilbenmethodik*. I will use “solfège” to refer to all of them, despite their differences.

<sup>7</sup> Solfège may have been a bit of a cottage industry in East Germany: at least one teacher, a Kurt Nitzsche from Hohenweiden, had developed his own system that borrowed from Eitz. Nitzsche to MfV, 26 December 1952, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 433/1; Schöne (HU Berlin) to Hruschka (DPZI), 3 March 1953, SAPMO-BArch DR 2/3904.

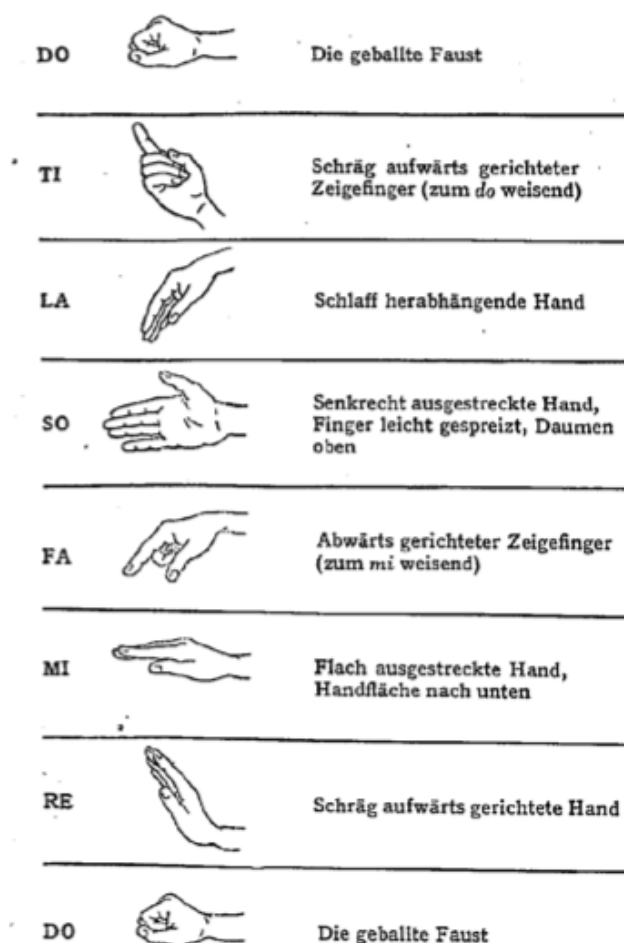


Figure 1: *Tonika-Do, Eitz, Jale*, 8.

The hand signals make the relationships between the notes visible to children: the half-steps between *mi* and *fa*, *ti* and *do* are symbolized by the finger pointing down from *fa* to *mi*, and up from *ti* to *do*. The notes, syllables, and hand signals, according to GDR pedagogues, would blend into a unified whole within the child's mind.<sup>8</sup>

East Germans used *Tonika-Do* exclusively for diatonic repertoire, “the melodies of simple folk songs”; they did not make use of its possible chromatic alterations, deeming them awkward.<sup>9</sup> Other systems sought ways to represent chromatics, as well as to teach perfect pitch. Eitz's *Tonwort*, a fixed-*do* system, used twelve consonants, alternating between stops and nonstops (*b r t m g s p l d f k n*) and five vowels (*a e i o u*) to represent the twelve pitches and their enharmonic equivalents. In a major scale, whole steps skipped a consonant and used an adjacent vowel, and half steps used the adjacent consonant and the same vowel, such that C major (which starts, somewhat arbitrarily, on the syllable *bi*), would be sung *bi to gu su la fe ni bi*. There were no associated hand signals—perhaps a blessing, given the complexity of the syllables. Eitz claimed that his system required no special accompanying method of

<sup>8</sup> Wilfried Friedrich, Heinrich Martens, Richard Münnich, and Karl Rehberg, *Tonika-Do, Eitz, Jale* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1949), 10.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.



transmission. Simply singing the syllables would impress upon pupils both a sense for absolute pitch and the ability to audiate melodies.<sup>10</sup>

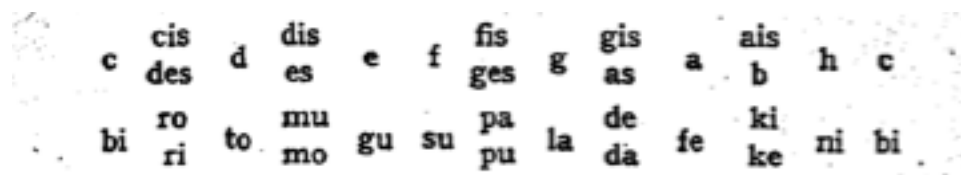


Figure 2: Eitz's *Tonwort*. The upper row is the standard German note naming system (ABC), the bottom is the Eitz equivalent. *Tonika-Do, Eitz, Jale, 45.*

Richard Münnich's *Jale* system, named for its first two syllables, was perhaps East Germany's best-loved solfège system after *Tonika-Do*. Like *Tonika-Do*, it used movable-do syllables and hand signals; as in Eitz's method, half-steps shared a vowel: *ja le mi ni ro su wa ja*.

Diatonische Handzeichentafel	
4.	Daumen ganz seitlich, sonst wie 3 <b>ni</b>
8.	Daumen wieder an 2. bis 5. Finger angelegt; Wiederherstellung der geballten Faust <b>ja</b>
3.	Wenig erhobene flache Hand mit aneinanderliegenden Fingern <b>mi</b>
7.	2. bis 5. Finger wie zur Faust geschlossen, Daumen wie bei 4-6; Handlage wieder waagrecht <b>wa</b>
2.	Spitzen- und Mittelglied des 2. bis 5. Fingers aufgeklappt; Daumen und Handhaltung im übrigen unverändert <b>le</b>
6.	Nach vorn halbgesenkte Hand mit gekrümmten 2. bis 5. Fingern; Daumen wie bei 4 und 5 <b>su</b>
1.	Geballte Faust; die Hand waagrecht, Daumen außen angelegt <b>ja</b>
5.	Aufgerichtete Hand mit gespreizten Fingern <b>ro</b>

Figure 3: *Jale* hand signals. *Tonika-Do, Eitz, Jale, 52.*

Münnich chose voiced continuants (*j l m n r s w*) as the consonants for his system, claiming that these sounds were the most valuable for developing vocal technique, and that the expressive power of German song relied on their sonorities.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the system boasted the supposed physiological advantage that all of the large whole steps of the just-intonation scale (between 1 and 2, 4 and 5) were matched with a “large” change in vowel (*a* to *e*, *i* to *o*), and the smaller whole steps (between 2 and 3, 5 and 6) were matched with a “small” change in vowel (*e* to *i*, *o* to

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 43-48.

<sup>11</sup> These correspond to *y l m n r z v* in English. Richard Münnich, *Jale: Ein Beitrag zur Tonsilbenfrage und Schulmusikpropädeutik* (Wolfenbüttel: Mösel Verlag, 1959), 10.

u). Chromatic tendency tones shared vowels with the notes to which they resolve, such that b5 was *ri* (4 is *ni*), and #4 was *no* (5 is *ro*):

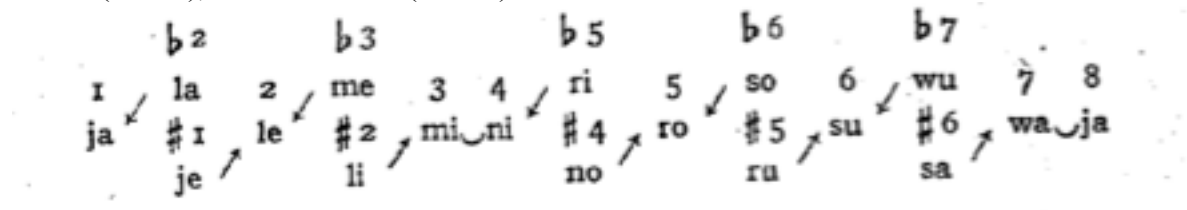


Figure 4: Chromatic relationships in *Jale*. *Tonika-Do*, Eitz, *Jale*, 51.

In developing his system, the music pedagogue Heinrich Werlé started with the assumption that all newborn infants cry at A above middle C. Werlé maintained that up to the tenth year of their lives, all children could effortlessly reproduce the pitch (with some minor intonation problems, of course). A helpful adult could aid their memory and train lifelong perfect pitch by use of a syllable (*fe*) and a mnemonic gesture:<sup>12</sup>

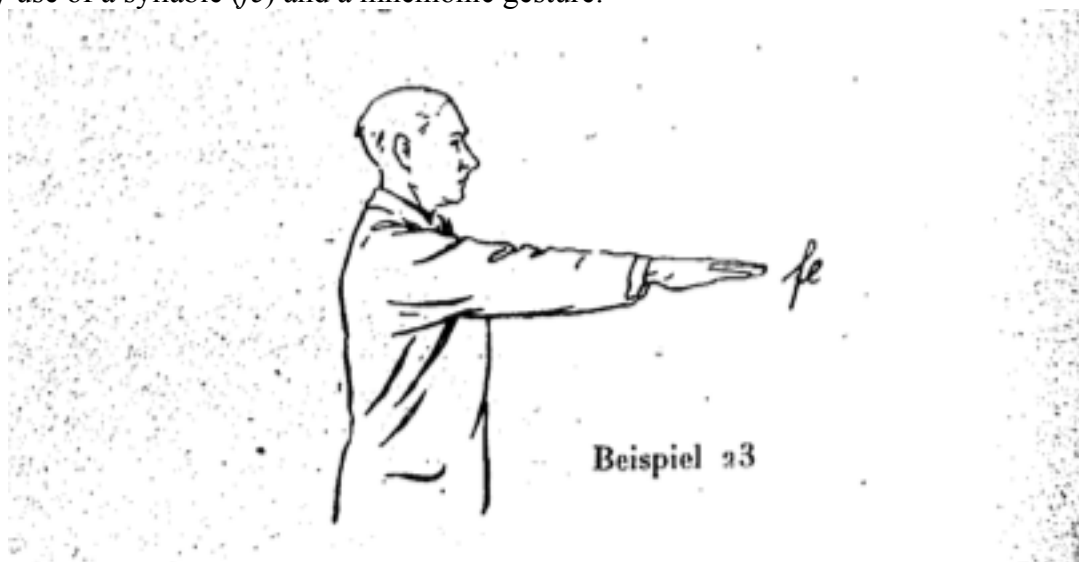


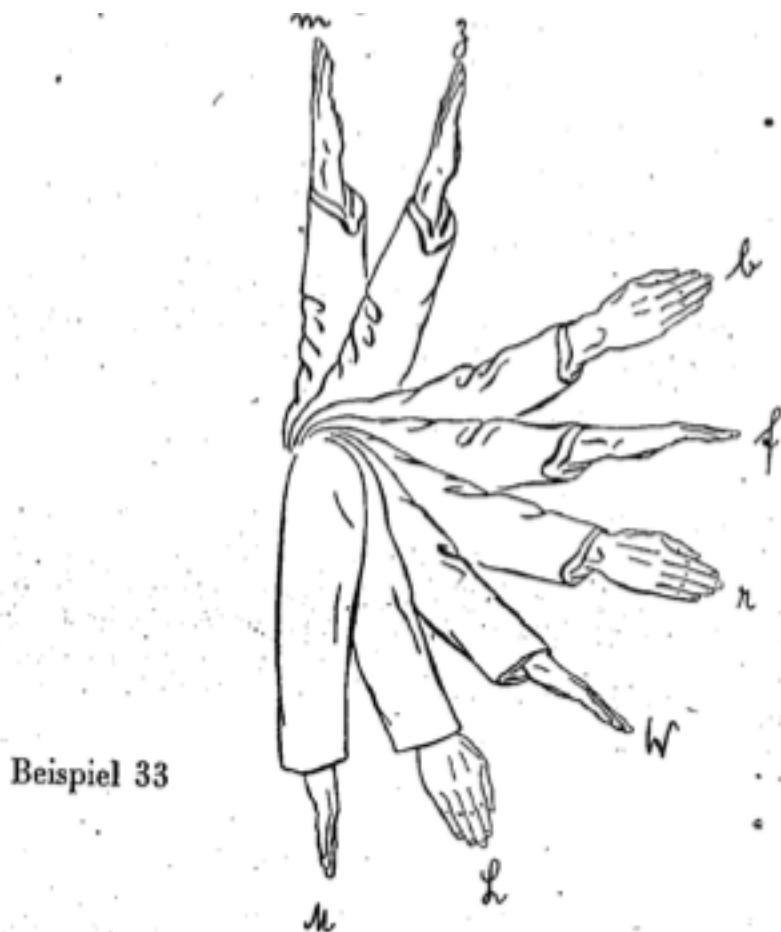
Figure 5: The hand/arm signal for "fe" (a). *Musik im Leben des Kindes*, 52.<sup>13</sup>

Like the *Tonwort*, Werlé's syllables represented absolute pitches. Unlike Eitz's system, however, Werlé's was based in D major, where the "natural" A is the dominant.<sup>14</sup> Werlé also used identical vowel sounds to indicate half steps (*mu ro wa la fe bü zu mu*). The vowel sounds offered a physiological aid to singers: saying the vowel sounds in ascending order (*u o a e ü*) naturally caused the throat to constrict, mirroring the process of singing rising pitches. The rest of the notes were shown by raising the arm through a 180-degree arc, rotating the hand in such a way that it alternated between being held parallel and perpendicular to the ground:

<sup>12</sup> Heinrich Werlé, *Musik im Leben des Kindes* (Dresden: Ehlermann, 1949), 3.

<sup>13</sup> As far as I can tell, this gesture, seemingly reminiscent of the Nazi salute, sparked absolutely no comment among Werlé's contemporaries (though it raises eyebrows among mine). Presumably, people in post-war Germany understood the Hitler-Gruß as a very specific gesture, with the hand held higher.

<sup>14</sup> Werlé, *Musik im Leben des Kindes*, 37.



**Figure 6: Werlé's hand/arm gestures. *Musik im Leben des Kindes*, 63.**

According to Werlé, the easily discernable steps from high to low were more effective at signaling melodic motion to children than other hand signals, which had no fixed height.<sup>15</sup>

*“The front on which the battle against these reactionary elements is being fought is called—Methodenstreit.”*<sup>16</sup>

These methods, beloved though they were by many, were the cause of surprising ire. Early in 1951, Hugo Hartung published his own brief guide to the methodology of Musikerziehung in the pedagogical journal *Musik in der Schule*.<sup>17</sup> Hartung objected vehemently to all of these systems, because, he maintained, the goal of the new socialist school should be to break through the educational privilege that marred the school system of the Weimar Republic. The new school was to give all pupils the opportunities that had once been reserved for the bourgeoisie, including

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 52-63.

<sup>16</sup> Hartung to Dorst, 4 December 1951, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 472.

<sup>17</sup> Expanded guides to his method would later be published in 1953 (at his own cost) and in 1958. Hugo Hartung, *Musikunterricht im ersten Schuljahr. Anregungen und Beispiele in methodischer Stufenfolge gegeben* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1953); Hugo Hartung, *Musiklesen im Gesangunterricht der Unterstufe. Ein Beitrag zur Methodikdiskussion* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1958).

an education in art music. “Primary school must introduce pupils to art music,” he wrote.

It can no longer content itself with folk songs, and it cannot restrict itself to art music made in a “folksy” way, which can be “understood” without education. It cannot offer a surrogate for real music education, but instead must position itself alongside the scientific subjects in its goal and methods.<sup>18</sup>

To Hartung, music literacy was essential to a full appreciation of art. Solfège did not offer an easy transition to staff notation, as it focused on aural, not visual, knowledge. It relied on syllables and hand signs that would be discarded when the staff finally was introduced—therefore, it was at best a detour on the road to literacy.<sup>19</sup> The “success” that solfège proponents attributed to their methods was not due to any special “unity” between the syllables and the notes they stood for—indeed, the syllables smacked of dilettantism—but rather to the fact that the accompanying cheironomy depicted the up-and-down motion of the melody in space. Though solfège systems claimed to foster a “melodic consciousness” by teaching the functions of notes within a scale, they in fact fragmented children’s understanding of music, as children were encouraged to think note-by-note rather than in terms of larger-scale harmonic motion. The functional relationships themselves were also misleading, as a note’s function would be different depending on where it fell in the bar (for instance, an F in the key of C is a suspension when on a downbeat, but can also be a passing tone if unaccented).<sup>20</sup> Finally, there were simply too many solfège systems to be useful.

In place of solfège, Hartung offered his own method, which taught children to read music in the first grade. It was easy, he declared: all one needed to do was make children aware of the differences between high and low pitches by gesturing in the air at differing heights—one could even use a pre-existing system of cheironomy, such as the hand signals for *Tonika-Do*. Children would then be perfectly primed to recognize the difference between high and low as represented on a staff. Next, they were to sing their “children’s call” (*Kinderruf*), the falling third that children “naturally” used to call out names. The teacher would show them those notes (G and E) on the staff; they would also sing the notes by their names, “G” and “E.” The children’s repertoire of notes would slowly be expanded to include A, C, and finally D; after that, it was but a short step to a full theoretical knowledge of the circle of fifths, which children would acquire in the fifth grade.<sup>21</sup> This system, he averred, was already in use in the Soviet Union, and was backed by the theories of leading Soviet psychologists such as Teplov and Pavlov (whom he

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<sup>18</sup> Hugo Hartung, “Zur Methodik des Musikunterrichts in der Grundschule,” *Musik in der Schule* 1951/1, 2.

<sup>19</sup> Some nineteenth-century English educators had criticized tonic sol-fa for similar reasons: the ease with which the syllables could be learned masked the fact that the musical knowledge produced thereby was second-rate. Charles McGuire, *Music and Victorian Philanthropy: The Tonic Sol-fa Movement* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 28.

<sup>20</sup> Hartung, “Methodik,” 10-13.

<sup>21</sup> Hugo Hartung and Richard Wicke, “Entwurf eines Lehrplans für den Musikunterricht in der Grundschule,” *Musik in der Schule* 1952/2, 50. Although Hartung liked to present his method as a unique solution to the problem of combining the aurality of music with the visibility of notation, other, similar systems had also been developed. One such, by a Hermann Oschatz, used pictures much in the same way that Hartung had used the height of gestures: the notes of the “children’s call,” also the same interval played by church bells, were represented by drawings of bells. These concrete pictures would provide a bridge to the “abstraction” of notation. Hermann Oschatz, “Optische Klangzeichen im ersten und zweiten Schuljahr,” *Musik in der Schule* 1950/4, 173-177.

quoted at length): thus, it adhered to the new criteria for the East German school.<sup>22</sup> To drive the point home, Hartung and his colleague Richard Wicke, also a professor of Musikerziehung at Humboldt, proposed a new curriculum—just in time for the upcoming school reforms of 1951—that discouraged the use of solfège: “Until a scientific consensus about the value of solfège has been reached, it is recommended that teachers refrain from using solfège.”<sup>23</sup>

East German Musikerzieher were incensed. In a series of letters to *Musik in der Schule*, they criticized Hartung for misrepresenting how solfège worked. “His explanations are marred by a significant lack of understanding of the material,” remarked the teacher Elisabeth Reefschläger. “All in all, Professor Hartung picks out parts of the *Tonika-Do* method, but distorts them so that they are unrecognizable, as he clearly has no insight into them.”<sup>24</sup> Hartung’s assertion that syllables were a “detour” on the way to note-reading was patently false: syllables expressed functional relationships in all major keys, which graphic notation was ill-equipped to do. Armed with their firm knowledge of the way simple melodies were put together, pupils could learn to sing graphic notation easily.<sup>25</sup> Clearly, Hartung wished only to promote his own pedagogical system, which, Musikerzieher claimed, was constructed in a way that matched up well with the logic of musical notation, but was ill-suited for the needs and abilities of actual children: his method “killed the children’s joy in music-making.”<sup>26</sup> The curriculum was also too difficult: it covered topics such as mixed modes, borrowed chords, and non-diatonic tones in the seventh grade, and mediant relationships in the eighth grade, topics which “exceeded the child’s capacity to understand.”<sup>27</sup> Hartung and Wicke demanded too much not only of children, but also of the adults who would teach them. It was unreasonable to declare that the majority of GDR Musikerzieher, who already taught solfège, should learn a new method.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the material in the curriculum would pose a challenge to the many Erzieher who did not themselves possess such advanced theoretical knowledge. Even the language of the curriculum, teachers complained, was so difficult as to be nearly unreadable.<sup>29</sup> In the fight against unequal class society, Hartung had revealed his own bourgeois privilege.

The reactions to the curriculum were so negative that they seemed to have spurred even Wicke to distance himself from the project. In a letter to Hartung, Wicke complained that he had

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<sup>22</sup> Hartung, “Methodik,” 8-9; also Hartung, “Musikunterricht im ersten Schuljahr,” no date, pp. 1-2, SAPMO-BArch DR 2/5974. Pavlov did much of his best-known work before the Soviet period, but that did not stop the Soviets (and Hartung) from claiming him.

<sup>23</sup> Hartung and Wicke, “Entwurf eines Lehrplans,” 50.

<sup>24</sup> Elisabeth Reefschläger, “Muß der Wert des Tonsilbensystems für den Musikunterricht in der Schule noch geklärt werden?” 1951, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 238.

<sup>25</sup> Else Ehrhardt, “Entscheidung in der Tonsilbenfrage!” *Musik in der Schule* 1951/3, 110.

<sup>26</sup> “Bericht über die Musiklehrertagung des Kreises Teltow in Rangsdorf am Mittwoch, den 9. Mai 1951.” SAPMO-BArch DR 2/5434.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> People on each side of the solfège debate claimed that a majority of teachers preferred their method. As one solfège adherent argued, “We must not forget that all of the universities and institutes of higher learning in the GDR that have an Institute of Musikerziehung, 90% of the institutes for teacher training [a lesser degree than the one acquired at university], and the majority of Musikerzieher use solfège methods!” I have not been able to find any reputable data that proves either claim. Through a trick of semantics, it is possible that both are right: the majority of *music* teachers taught solfège (especially as many of them, in 1952, would have been schooled in the Weimar era), but the majority of teachers overall were unacquainted with solfège—or indeed the five-line staff. See, for instance, “Aktennotiz. Betr: Musiklehrplan für Grundschulen, Diskussionsmaterial,” 1953; and Bimberg to Hruschka, 26 July 1952; both in DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 433/1.

<sup>29</sup> “Bericht über die Musiklehrertagung des Kreises Teltow in Rangsdorf am Mittwoch, den 9. Mai 1951,” SAPMO-BArch DR 2/5434.

intended the sentence discouraging solfège to be merely a stopgap solution to a practical problem, not a reflection of his personal beliefs:

With that sentence, I in no way gave up my earlier position on solfège. Instead, I was aiming to elevate the discussion out of the sphere of personal bickering and useless biases in which it has up until now resided, in order to finally achieve a scientific clarification of this extremely important question.<sup>30</sup>

Hartung was thus left alone to defend his position. He fought back furiously. In a scathing submission to the journal, he abandoned the language of Soviet science for overtly political rhetoric, maintaining that the plurality of solfège methods mirrored the confusion of political parties in the Weimar Republic, and that solfège educated pupils incompletely, thus playing into the hands of the Nazis:

The much-praised methodological freedom [of the progressive education movement] was not real freedom, but rather individualistic arbitrariness, and it gave every oddball the liberty to invent his own, even better, solfège system. This led to a jumble of methods equivalent to the multi-party system of the Weimar era. “One of the roots of fascism undoubtedly lies in the coalition movement” (Heinrich Deiters in *Pädagogik* 1947 Nr. 3, pg. 29); in a similar way, the solfège methods found their way into the Nazi school. The education of the masses to musical narrow-mindedness suited the Nazis perfectly. The agents of solfège today are still clinging to this renunciation of equal musical education. They are thus excluding themselves from the fight to dismantle educational privilege.<sup>31</sup>

This incendiary passage was never published. The journal editor Richard Petzoldt cut Hartung’s screed so that, when printed, it argued only that solfège was an unnecessary detour. Hartung was later to complain that every part of his response “in which the question of solfège was viewed politically” had been removed.<sup>32</sup> This, in fact, was a frequent occurrence: all of Hartung’s published documents relied exclusively on claims of Marxist science and somewhat fuzzy logic. But in person, in letters, and in the drafts he wished to publish, Hartung marshaled political arguments and ad hominem attacks that ranged from the banal to the paranoid. After Helmut Kunter, one of Hartung’s own students at the Institute of Musikerziehung in Berlin, criticized the curriculum at a conference in Potsdam that same spring, Hartung accused him publicly of violating the institute’s bylaws, of displaying an “ambivalent” attitude towards West German education, and of falsely passing himself off as a Party member. Hartung banned Kunter from the Institute and subsequently refused all of Kunter’s attempts to speak to him personally. Kunter’s report on the incident suggests that this behavior was common: “Isn’t it typical that Professor Hartung would attempt to attack me politically in order to disqualify my academic opinion (which is obviously uncomfortable for him?)”<sup>33</sup> Yet though Hartung was well known to be fractious and provocative—at conferences, he frequently declared solfège to be a

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<sup>30</sup> Wicke to Hartung, 6 May 1951, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 1125.

<sup>31</sup> Hugo Hartung, “Schlusswort zur Diskussion,” second version, August 1951, p. 9, SAPMO-BArch DR 2/5434.

<sup>32</sup> Hartung to Dorst, 4 December 1951, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 472.

<sup>33</sup> Helmut Kunter, “Bericht an das DPZI,” 23 May 1951, SAPMO-BArch DR 2/5434.

“reactionary” method—editors prevented this side of him from appearing in press, thus keeping his scientific arguments separate in the public record from his personal and political attacks.<sup>34</sup>

### *The Ban on Solfège*

According to the Party mandate, all faculties in the GDR school system were supposed to have developed new Marxist-Leninist curricula by the fall of 1951. The process for educational restructuring was complex and multi-step: the German Pedagogical Research Institute (DPZI), the research arm of the Ministry for Education (MfV), was to convene a committee of experts in each field to draft a curriculum. The draft would be circulated in each subject’s professional journal for discussion. The committee would then meet again to incorporate the changes—which had to be agreed upon unanimously, not by majority vote—and submit a final draft to the Ministry for Education. The Ministry would approve the draft after consultation with their own in-house experts (the committee at the DPZI, having drafted the document, would not see it again), print the curriculum, and distribute it to schools.

This bureaucratic process, which ran smoothly for all other subjects, hit some snags in *Musikerziehung*. Hartung’s and Wicke’s curriculum was already unusual in that it was developed by two individuals, not by a group. Their draft had caused a tremendous uproar: the debates chronicled above, which had taken place during the spring of 1951, were so vitriolic and divisive that it was clear that the draft could never pass through a committee by the fall of 1951. The DPZI let the matter go. In the spring of 1952, it convened a committee—of which Hartung was also a member—to develop a new draft. The second curriculum explicitly allowed for the use of all pedagogical systems for children in the first to fourth grades, noting that those *Musikerzieher* who used solfège should begin teaching notation in the fourth grade:

The assignments... can be understood to enable both solfège and the syllable-less ways of teaching. The teachers of the syllable-less method are thus requested to begin using note names immediately. Those teachers who work with solfège must introduce note names in the fourth class.<sup>35</sup>

One imagines that Hartung’s objections were overruled.

But once again the *Musikerzieher* were behind: it was already mid-June when the draft was completed, and as the curriculum was supposed to be implemented at the beginning of the next school year, there was no time for the customary debate in the pages of the journal. Instead, on 18 June 1952, the DPZI sent the draft—which had been seen only by the committee members, not by the larger teaching community—directly to the Ministry of Education, where it would undergo a final round of editing before being distributed to schools in August. And with that, the matter should have been settled.

As the Ministry did not have an in-house expert for music, they hired an external consultant: one Hugo Hartung. Perhaps this choice was a coincidence, or perhaps Hartung inveigled his way into the Ministry through a personal relationship, or by trading on his

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<sup>34</sup> Schöne to Hruschka, 10 August 1952, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 433/1; Werlé to Dorst, 2 March 1951, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 175/2.

<sup>35</sup> As quoted in MfV (Primary School Division) to Else Zaisser (Minister for Education), 3 July 1952, SAPMO-BArch DR 2/3902.

distinguished record and his excellent command of Soviet Marxist rhetoric. In any case, Hartung seized the moment, alerting Volkmann, the head of the Division for Primary Schools, to the problematic sentence permitting all methods—a clause that Volkmann, who was not a musician, otherwise might have skipped over. This dubious “freedom” had no place in a unified school, Volkmann agreed, and on 1 July 1952 he staged a private debate between Hartung and Else Ehrhardt (a member of the curriculum committee) to help him decide how to “cut through the methodological ‘Gordian knot.’” After the conversation, Volkmann appeared indecisive, asking Ehrhardt to give him her argument in written form.<sup>36</sup> But his doubt—if it was real—was short-lived. Just two days later, before Ehrhardt had had a chance to submit her comments, Volkmann and his colleague Richard Stöhr wrote to the Minister for Education. Parroting Hartung’s arguments, they pronounced solfège a “detour” on the way to real musical understanding, and petitioned the Minister to ban solfège in GDR schools and institute Hartung’s method in its place:

For logistical reasons, it is impossible for our German democratic school to employ two fundamentally different methods in music classes from the first to fourth grades. A change in teachers in those four years would mean that the work would have start again from the beginning. In the interests of the children, and to ensure that our teaching is orderly, it is necessary to use only one method in the classroom.

We believe that the syllable-less method corresponds better to the demands of current reality, and should thus be made mandatory in our schools.<sup>37</sup>

The Minister agreed to the ban. Hartung himself was authorized to make the necessary changes to the curriculum’s preface.<sup>38</sup>

Several people knew that the ban was in the works. The institutions, however, maintained a stony impenetrability, leaving the fate of the music curriculum clouded and secret. Ehrhardt submitted a report to the DPZI, but received no response—perhaps the summer vacation was the reason, or perhaps the DPZI was waiting for a Ministry brief, as once the curriculum had left the committee’s hands, it was officially Ministry business. The Ministry remained silent. Stöhr even told the DPZI’s director that, as far as he knew, the changes had been minor.<sup>39</sup> Hartung had no such scruples. He gloated to numerous teachers that the solfège question had finally been resolved, and that they would lose their jobs if they continued to teach using solfège.<sup>40</sup> He even admitted to the DPZI that the edits had been “thorough,” perhaps believing that the wheels of bureaucracy, once set in motion, could not be stopped.<sup>41</sup> These rumors sparked a flood of letters from Musikerzieher outraged about Hartung’s “undemocratic” attempt to “subjugate the war of

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<sup>36</sup> Else Ehrhardt, “Bericht über eine Besprechung, die Tonsilbenfrage betreffend, im Ministerium für Volksbildung, Abt. Grundschule, am 1.7.52,” 7 July 1952, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 433/1.

<sup>37</sup> MfV (Primary School Division) to Else Zaisser (Minister for Education), 3 July 1952. SAPMO-BArch DR 2/3902.

<sup>38</sup> “Ermächtigung,” 17 July 1952, SAPMO-BArch DR 2/3902.

<sup>39</sup> “Disposition,” 31 October 1952, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 433/1.

<sup>40</sup> Bimberg to Hruschka (DPZI Division II), 20 July 1952; “Protokoll über die Kommissionssitzung für Musikerziehung in der Grundschule am 31.10 und 1.11.1952 im Deutschen Pädagogischen Zentralinstitut Berlin,” 4 November 1952, pag. 16, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 433/1.

<sup>41</sup> Bimberg to Hruschka, 26 July 1952; “Disposition,” 31 October 1952, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 433/1.



opinions about scientific truth and clarity with diktats.”<sup>42</sup> In the face of increasing pressure, the Ministry finally gave in, allowing the committee at the DPZI to offer a final imprimatur on the curriculum—an unusual concession.<sup>43</sup> The committee’s suspicions proved correct: it was an “entirely different curriculum.”<sup>44</sup> That same day, the DPZI wrote to withhold the imprimatur.

Hartung’s involvement in the process was discussed in hints and allegations over the rest of the summer. But it was not until a two-day hearing at the end of October 1952 that the entire story was revealed to the assembled members of the DPZI, the Ministry, and a number of furious Musikerzieher. The hearing was a study in bureaucratic machinery. Ministry representatives threw Hartung to the lions, claiming that he had interpreted too liberally his “very restricted” task to “undertake minor improvements [...] to give the curriculum a consistent and systematic structure”; the Ministry itself claimed to have had no idea that a ban had been enacted.<sup>45</sup> Volkmann was not present; neither was the Minister for Education. Stöhr, who had co-authored the letter requesting the ban, admitted nothing, arguing instead that, for logistical reasons, a curriculum had no business prescribing conflicting methods. Other Ministry officials agreed, thereby shifting the blame to the DPZI—the committee members promptly pointed fingers at a Herr Große, who had “torpedoed” the sentence into the draft on the committee’s last day, right before lunch.<sup>46</sup> The Ministry concluded that “if a different curriculum has emerged from a narrowly conceived mandate, this is to be deeply regretted.”<sup>47</sup> In other words, mistakes were made.

Hartung made a futile attempt to defend himself.<sup>48</sup> DPZI representatives scorned his claims that he was only following orders, and hadn’t planned the act in advance.<sup>49</sup> “Professor

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<sup>42</sup> Fritz Bachmann to MfV, 19 August 1952, SAPMO-BArch DR 2/3902.

<sup>43</sup> The slapstick story of the document’s journey back to the DPZI would not be out of place in a Kafka novel. Perhaps the mishaps, detailed in the following courier’s report, were purely impersonal bureaucratic accident, or perhaps they signaled that the boon was granted only grudgingly: “On August 25, 1952, I betook myself to the Volk und Wissen Press. It was my duty to seek out the office of Herr Ploog and pick up the proofs for the music educators. The office of Herr Ploog sent me to room 414 to see Frau Beuche, who was unfortunately not present. A colleague sitting in room 414 took over the matter. Unfortunately, the curriculum could not be located. He called the DPZI and spoke to Frau Bittner. He searched the documents once more and determined that the curriculum had been sent on to Herr Stöhr at the Ministry for Education. I returned without the curriculum and told Frau Bittner that the curriculum had been given to Herr Stöhr. Frau Bittner asked me to give Herr Mader this information. I called Frau Sinner and told her as well. Then I was given another task: to go to the Ministry and fetch the curriculum from Herr Stöhr. Herr Stöhr said he had already handed the curriculum off to the doorman at the Ministry on Saturday, as a courier from the Volk und Wissen Press was supposed to come to pick up the curriculum. Herr Stöhr spoke to the doorman and accompanied me to an office on the fourth floor, where he asked the colleague if she had already sent off the post from Saturday. She replied in the affirmative, and said she had brought something else down this morning. Then we went down to the mailroom. Herr Stöhr inquired whether the mail had already been sent to the DPZI. The answer was yes, the mail had been sent out early in the morning. Herr Stöhr told me that the curriculum was on its way. I returned to the institute again, still without the curriculum. I called Frau Sinner, but she was not there. Frau Hase picked up the phone, and I asked her to call me when Herr Mader returned. As Herr Mader was not there, Frau Sinner was the one to call me, and I told her that the curriculum was on its way. Whether it was traveling via mail or via courier, I did not know.” Stephan, “Aktennotiz,” 25 August 1952, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 433/1.

<sup>44</sup> Bimberg, “Aktennotiz. Betr: Musiklehrplan für Grundschulen,” 28 August 1952, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 433/1.  
<sup>45</sup> “Protokoll über die Kommissionssitzung für Musikerziehung in der Grundschule am 31.10 und 1.11.1952 im Deutschen Pädagogischen Zentralinstitut Berlin,” pp. 6, 18, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 433/1.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 12-15.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>48</sup> Hartung’s first response in this otherwise meticulously chronicled hearing was left conspicuously blank: his name is followed only by a provocative ellipsis. The blankness of this ellipsis may indicate something about the long reach

Hartung's motives for this behavior are unimportant," they maintained. "It doesn't matter whether his actions were premeditated, or whether he was carried away by his emotions: we're not talking about a young man who is inexperienced in dealing with bureaucracy."<sup>50</sup> After all, as a member of the original committee, he must have known that he was out of line.<sup>51</sup> Other teachers took the opportunity to air a catalogue of complaints about Hartung's dishonesty. His fight against solfège had stretched out over several years: he had lied about the dates of curriculum planning meetings and invented "new discoveries" about children's physiology in order to assert the superiority of his system. He was also criticized for his habit of spreading rumors instead of hashing out problems face-to-face. One instance of this problem had obviously rankled with a Professor Kleest for quite a long time:

Colleague Hartung, we have always gotten along well here in Berlin, and I've never had anything against you. Please take back your statement that all of us teachers from Weissensee are cabbage-heads. Be direct and say, "You're doing this wrong!" After all, we'll hear about it anyway.<sup>52</sup>

Yet throwing around accusations of cabbage-headery was, perhaps, the least of Hartung's sins. Earlier that month, in a frantic effort to save his ban, Hartung had denounced in private letters a number of prominent figures who, he felt, had wronged him. In complaining that the music publisher Friedrich Herzfeld had printed a guide to solfège but had explicitly refused to publish a guide to Hartung's method, Hartung insinuated—in what was becoming a common refrain—that Herzfeld's decision was evidence of continuing Nazi sympathies: "It was clearly his goal to push through the *Tonika-Do* method beloved of his colleague, the former Nazi Provincial Cultural Administrator Dieckermann." Not only did Herzfeld have ties to former Nazis, his decision permitted the National Socialist state of affairs to continue:

In the wake [of his decision], school music teachers can continue unimpeded in their propagation of the methods that had been favored during the Nazi time—the solfège methods—and those music teachers who had been terrorized and excluded from the schools by the Nazis, a "small minority" without support from the Ministry, must defend their syllable-less methods from oppression by the "large majority."<sup>53</sup>

In a letter to the Dean of the Department of Higher Education (SH), Hartung used the pretext of reporting a general bourgeois attitude in the Academic Senate to denounce a series of professors by name.<sup>54</sup> Fritz Reuter, advisor to several of solfège's most vocal proponents, was criticized for having supported a claim with quotations from the Bible. Richard Petzoldt, who had so heavily

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of state power into its own records; more generally, it reminds me of the inescapable opacity and distance of historical documents, even those that seem transparent. Ibid., 6.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 18; also "Protokoll über die Kommissionssitzung für Musikerziehung in der Grundschule am 31.10 und 1.11.1952 im Deutschen Pädagogischen Zentralinstitut Berlin," continuation, 4 November 1952, p. 4, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: 433/2.

<sup>50</sup> "Antrag," 31 October 1952, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 433/2.

<sup>51</sup> "Protokoll über die Kommissionssitzung für Musikerziehung in der Grundschule am 31.10 und 1.11.1952 im Deutschen Pädagogischen Zentralinstitut Berlin," continuation, 4 November 1952, p. 4, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: 433/2.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>53</sup> Hartung to MfV, 10 October 1952, SAPMO-BArch DR 2/4305.

<sup>54</sup> Hartung to SH, 11 October 1952, SAPMO-BArch DR 2/4305.

edited Hartung's rejoinder in the curriculum debate, was accused of a "bourgeois stance," evident in his "occasionally mystical and metaphysical attitude."<sup>55</sup>

Following the hearing, Hartung was barred from further work on the curriculum.<sup>56</sup> A new committee at the DZPI, headed by the doctoral student Siegfried Bimberg, proposed yet another version, which avoided the question of methods altogether. It was ushered into schools the following year.<sup>57</sup>

### *Beyond Personal Politics?*

In the *Methodenstreit*, Hartung had taken on both a bureaucratic apparatus and a community of teachers. It was a bold move, and doomed to failure, though it did reveal the surprising mark that a passionate individual could leave on a political structure—even one that prided itself on being iron-clad and impervious. And, as a reckless gesture, it is easy to dismiss Hartung's ban as the work of an unstable or paranoid person. At first blush, his biography would support that interpretation. During the Nazi era, Hartung had been forbidden to work due to his wife's Jewish heritage and his own political beliefs, and he was briefly imprisoned in a labor camp after a neighbor denounced him. In contrast, many of his colleagues had sailed through twelve years of fascism to prosper further under socialism, an unspoken issue about which he was clearly furious:

Following the motto "Peace is the citizen's first duty," they condemn this "fight," so that they don't have to be disturbed in their possession of tradition. The fact that they have repressed the syllable-less method—the method of thought—through the text *Tonika-Do, Eitz, Jale* is not a fight. It is simply diplomacy behind closed doors. He who examines these machinations of the reactionaries under the lens of progressivism, and who dares to say or write something against them, is denounced as a trouble-maker. Those who maneuvered their way through the Nazi time unscathed—with or without a swastika—are in the overwhelming majority against the few who were so unwise as to declare themselves Marxists, instead of reckoning with the fact "that times can certainly change" (as Herzfeld once put it to me).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Hartung to Dorst, 4 December 1951, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 472.

<sup>56</sup> "Protokoll über die Kommissionssitzung für Musikerziehung in der Grundschule am 31.10 und 1.11.1952 im Deutschen Pädagogischen Zentralinstitut Berlin," continuation, 4 November 1952, p. 14, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 433/2.

<sup>57</sup> Bimberg was a significant choice for this commission. The personal rivalry between the doctoral student and the professor emeritus could take up its own chapter. In the letters in which he denounced Petzoldt and Reuter, Hartung also accused Bimberg of "sabotaging" the publication of Hartung's methodological text *Musikunterricht im ersten Schuljahr*. Hartung had clear reasons for attacking Bimberg's credibility. Yet this does not mean that Bimberg's activities were above reproach: he was skilled in political maneuvering, and, as one of solfège's most vocal proponents, only stood to gain from Hartung's downfall. Letters from Hartung to SH, 29 September, 1 October, and 11 October 1952, SAPMO-BArch DR 2/4305.

<sup>58</sup> Hartung to Dorst, 4 December 1951, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 472. Though the Soviet Military Administration attempted a denazification of East German schools, it was as inconsistent there as it was everywhere else. The ban on former NSDAP members seemed to have been applied more strictly to teachers than to those in higher positions, such that certain higher-level administrators were retained, even as the SMAD brought in a new cadre of Soviet-trained pedagogues to reshape the school system. Fröde, *Schulmusik*, 39.

Yet even though Hartung's experience explains his bitter personal animosity, there is still something about this situation that doesn't make sense. If Hartung only wished to bring down former Nazi collaborators, why focus so closely on pedagogy in addition to personal politics—especially when most people believed solfège to be apolitical? If he wished only to promote his own method, why also discredit himself so thoroughly through underhanded behavior which seemed designed to raise hackles? It seems—as DPZI representatives had pointed out—that a person well enough versed in bureaucracy to insinuate himself into the Ministry would also realize that the GDR did not take kindly to decisions that countermanded committees. At the very least, he should have known not to brag about his coup until the curriculum was safely in print. In short: why did this man care about solfège so much?

Perhaps we might take Hartung at his word—that the *Methodenstreit* was not just the vindictive work of one man with a personal axe to grind, but was motivated by a sincere belief in the political dangers of solfège. Perhaps, as well, we might consider whether he may have been right. After all, the practice of solfège was founded in and perpetuated a set of assumptions about children and the ways they learned that was deeply political, even if not precisely in the ways that Hartung hyperbolically feared. Solfège proposed, in essence, a notion of children's bodies and emotions that competed with the ideals that Soviet education promoted. In forcing Musikerzieher to confront their methods, Hartung also forced a confrontation between Soviet scientific and pedagogical ideologies and inherited German views about music that revealed, in turn, a deep split between musicological theory and pedagogical practice, as well as the surprising limits of Soviet Marxist science in dealing with music.

### *Music and Science*

While East German Musikerzieher continued to look to the progressive education movement to inspire the music education of the new society, East German musicologists eagerly borrowed from Soviet-sanctioned scholarship in articulating music's role in socialism. Early twentieth-century Russian scholars had developed a host of theories to explain what music communicated, how it did so, and why. In their reading, music portrayed reality to listeners through the use of *intonatsiya*: in Boris Asafyev's somewhat cryptic words, “the interpretation of sounds already placed in a system of sound relations precisely fixed by the memory.”<sup>59</sup> Asafyev had written two largely theoretical volumes about this concept; the Soviet and East German exegesis of Asafyev's work attempted to place the idea in a political context.<sup>60</sup> *Intonatsiya*, as the musicologist Walther Siegmund-Schultze explained in an article in *Musik in der Schule*, was the

<sup>59</sup> The German word for *intonatsiya* is *Intonation*, but in order to avoid confusion with the English cognate, I will use the Russian. Boris Asafyev, *Musical Form as Process*, trans. James Robert Tull (Ohio State University, 1976), 543.

<sup>60</sup> See, for instance, W. Wanslow, “Über die Intonation,” *Musik und Gesellschaft* 1953/7, and Sofia Lissa, *Über das Spezifische in der Musik* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1957). Many of the discussions about *intonazia* and the related issues of “reflection” (*Widerspiegelung*) and socialist realism took place in the Union of German Composers and Musicologists (VDK). Laura Silverberg has published extensively about these debates. See Laura Silverberg, “Monopol der Diskussion? Alternative Voices in the Verband Deutscher Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler” in *Art Outside the Lines: New Perspectives on GDR Art Culture*, ed. Elaine Kelly and Amy Wlodarski (New York, Rodopi, 2011); and “Between Dissonance and Dissidence: Socialist Modernism in the GDR,” *The Journal of Musicology* 26/1 (2009): 44-84.

expressive content conveyed by melody, harmony, and rhythm, and it had its roots in speech. Speech could not be translated directly into music, but the “inner being of speech” [*Sprachleib*] determined the content of music, just as it determined the content of poetry. In addition, as *intonatsiya* was derived from language, it was nation-specific.<sup>61</sup> In Siegfried Bimberg’s gloss, *intonatsiya* was the “expression of emotional content through musical process, which relies on objective principles of tension and release.”<sup>62</sup> East German discussions of *intonatsiya* generally reveal that the concept was not well understood. As the musicologist Georg Knepler complained in a meeting of the Union of German Composers and Musicologists (VDK), “the term *intonatsiya* is often used very imprecisely.”<sup>63</sup> The myriad descriptions have in common, however, their belief that *intonatsiya* could convey objective content without the use of words: *intonatsiya* could assign to every musical expression a specific meaning, one derived from the phenomenal world. This faithful depiction of reality was governed by systematic and scientific laws.<sup>64</sup> Music’s ability to “reflect” or depict reality faithfully and exactly was the linchpin of socialist realism as it applied to music.

Despite Siegmund-Schultze’s and Bimberg’s explanations, most GDR Musikerzieher were not particularly conversant in the science-inflected rhetoric of East German musicology; they were more comfortable with practice than with theory. The divide went both ways. In an assessment of Hugo Hartung’s methodology, Knepler asserted that while Hartung’s complaints about the logistics of moving from solfège to notation were reasonable, as was his historical analysis, Knepler himself was out of his depth when it came to actual classroom teaching:

I myself am not a school music teacher and haven’t reached a final decision about these questions [of methodology]. Nonetheless, I can say the following: Hartung’s arguments are likely correct, especially the assertion that we are dealing with methods from the social-democratic school reform. One should use them with caution and—if one uses them—replace them with normal notation in a timely manner. Whether or not they have advantages is something that one should establish through practice, not through theory.<sup>65</sup>

Perhaps due to his position as a professor of Musikerziehung at a university instead of as a Musikerzieher in a school, Hartung claimed to be an expert in both practice and theory. He was a staunch devotee of Soviet science; his writings were exceptional in the degree to which they quoted Soviet musicologists, psychologists, and political theorists.<sup>66</sup> In advocating his system, Hartung explained that not only did it teach pupils more effectively, it was also more scientific, since musical notation was itself an exact scientific representation of music:

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<sup>61</sup> Walther Siegmund-Schulze, “Wir klären Grundbegriffe: Was verstehen wir unter Intonation?” *Musik in der Schule* 1953/1: 20-21.

<sup>62</sup> Siegfried Bimberg, *Einführung in die Musikpsychologie* (Wolfenbüttel: Mösseler Verlag, 1957), 17.

<sup>63</sup> “Protokoll über die Tagung der Kommission „Musikwissenschaft“ am 28.1.1955 in Berlin,” SA AdK VKM 602.

<sup>64</sup> A much clearer English-language explanation of the term in its Russian context can be found in Malcolm H. Brown, “The Soviet Russian Concepts of ‘Intonazia’ and ‘Musical Imagery,’” *The Musical Quarterly* 60/4 (1974): 557-567.

<sup>65</sup> Georg Knepler, “Gutachten über Hugo Hartungs Arbeiten,” no date, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 472.

<sup>66</sup> I use the words “science” and “scientific” to translate the German words “Wissenschaft” and “wissenschaftlich.” “Science” keeps the connotation of objective and observable truth, but is an imperfect translation in that English word is generally only applied to the natural sciences. Other possibilities for translating this word are “logic” and “logical,” or “scholarship” and “scholarly.”

The way motion is symbolized in musical notation already displays a musical quality, as music itself symbolizes motion, and as a form of art, it is a reflection of reality. As notation moves up and down, melody does as well, and this pattern is replicated in the alternation of tension and release in harmony, in rhythm, and, further, in the realm of emotion, and in real life. The value of musical notation, which inheres in the making-visible of thought, in the transferring of the inner world to the outer, is thus greater than any other mode of graphic representation.<sup>67</sup>

Music, to Hartung, so completely depicted real life that even its own visual representation mirrored reality; the sounds were analogous to their pictures. In contrast, syllables and gestures were merely an inadequate substitute for a graphic system that was appropriate to the “essence” [*Wesen*] of music. Hartung’s method sought primarily to develop children’s understanding of music as a system, and only secondarily their ability to sing a song; his position may have been as much a plea for this Marxist science as it was a condemnation of the “reactionary” syllables. In fact, Hartung’s method mirrored the system of the knowledge itself, not the process one might use to acquire that knowledge.

Solfège advocates justified the success of their method solely on its results, not by such far-reaching scientific principles. To them, solfège was simply a system which, in true progressive fashion, spoke to the child in a way that she would understand. Yet at least for some of the more mystical proponents of solfège, the cheironomy and the syllables were more than arbitrary mnemonic devices that signaled, sometimes iconically, the relationships between notes. The *Tonika-Do* hand signs, to music educator Alfred Stier, symbolized but also *were* the essence of the notes’ melodic characters in visual and gestural form. The characterizations seemed nearer to the spiritual than to the merely sonic. The closed fist of *do* was the stability of the tonic, which exuded “strength and calm”; it possessed “a grandeur given by nature.”<sup>68</sup> The “strong, joyful tension” of *so*, “the musical question that releases expectations,” found its expression in the taut hand, held at attention.<sup>69</sup> *Mi*, which “vibrates with a breath of the infinite, of cosmic vastness,” resided in the horizontal palm, which “conveys the purity and the floating character of the major third [...] even if one has never seen the hand signal before.” The limp hand for *la* revealed the tone’s “soul-related [*seelische*] tendency to turn to the minor tonality”; the note possessed “no core of its own,” and one could sense a wish to “leave the reigning tonality and enter into the expanse of another space.”<sup>70</sup> In Stier’s cosmic rhetoric, the tones of the major scale pointed out of this world; they did not represent the current reality *à la* Hartung, but literally transcend it. The gesturing child, then, would not just be reminding herself of tonal relationships, but accessing the infinite through her body.

While only a few educators seem to have seen gesture as a literal embodiment of the infinite, all agreed that hand signals were essential to solfège’s effectiveness. As the teacher Friederun Franke argued, the “bodily depiction of a melody is well matched to the child’s comprehension and her need to play.” Moreover, “children should learn to sing unconscious

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<sup>67</sup> Hartung to SH, 11 October 1952, SAPMO-BArch DR 2/4305.

<sup>68</sup> Stier’s descriptions of the *Tonika-Do* syllables and signs were actually direct translations of tonic sol-fa texts that the Curwens had written. I thank Charles McGuire for this information. Friedrich et al., *Tonika-Do*, Eitz, Jale, 8. Alfred Stier, *Methodik der Musikerziehung* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1958), 27.

<sup>69</sup> Friedrich et al, *Tonika-Do*, Eitz, Jale, 8, also Stier, *Methodik*, 31.

<sup>70</sup> Stier, *Methodik*, 28, 31.

material unconsciously [*Unbewusstes unbewusst singen*].<sup>71</sup> Gesture, in other words, taught children to sing without their even noticing what was happening; music was an “unconscious” phenomenon. Heinrich Werlé echoed her belief that musical relationships should remain the purview of the unconscious mind: “At this point in the instruction [the third grade], it is inadvisable to alert children to the relationships between the pitches and the syllables, and the pitch relationships within songs [...] Every unnatural strain on the memory must be avoided.”<sup>72</sup> Even Werner Dorst, director of the DPZI, agreed, proclaiming that music lessons should not place “any unnecessary mental strain” on the child.<sup>73</sup> These comments implied that for children to be made conscious of any musical process would spoil their intuitive relationship to music. “Melodic consciousness,” then, seemed to have been anything but. In this, GDR solfège adherents were participating in a long tradition of thought that saw the intellect as separate from the body and the emotions. But more significantly, they revealed their belief that children were essentially different from adults—creatures of body, not mind, whose bodies were the paths to their unconscious selves. It was exactly this deep connection between the physical and the unconscious that fascism had sought to exploit.

Hartung himself never explicitly connected solfège’s power over the unconscious to Nazi mass mentality, preferring instead to draw connections to the past through personal history. Nevertheless, the resemblance was clearly on his mind. In his writings, he decried this “unconscious” learning as “playtime”; it was a “waste of time,” and “every waste of time makes people stupid.”<sup>74</sup> His own method, he stressed, taught thinking, which not only helped pupils learn to sight-sing but also helped them understand music. The “whole” of a work of music—the totality of its motives and harmonies—could only be parsed through thought; it was through this intellectual understanding of music that class differences could finally be overcome.<sup>75</sup> Access to the German cultural tradition, however, was not the only advantage that his method offered. It controlled the bodily excess that solfège adherents celebrated: “Music education may not encourage ‘savage emotion,’ but rather must integrate the emotional education within an education to humanity; it must put the soul [*Gemüt*] under the control of clear rationality.”<sup>76</sup> Hartung’s war against solfège was in reaction to solfège’s uncomfortable resonance with fascism, and it also sought to counteract the meta-learning that solfège provided: pupils may have been learning to sing, but they were also learning not to think.

Hartung’s theories reproduced a standard Soviet Marxist educational position from the sciences, and may well have won him his influence in the Ministry for Education. But at the hearing, Werner Dorst, director of the DPZI, took Hartung to task for claiming that music, language, and science were similar:

The comparison is unscientific. It is obvious that there is a difference between language and science on the one hand, and art on the other. Language can be understood as an

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<sup>71</sup> Friederun Franke, “Stellungnahme zu den von Prof. Hartung und Ricjard [sic] Wicke entworfenen Curriculum für den Musikunterricht in den Grundschulen,” 18 April 1951, SAPMO-BArch DR 2/5972.

<sup>72</sup> Werlé, *Musik im Leben des Kindes*, 57.

<sup>73</sup> “Protokoll über die Kommissionssitzung für Musikerziehung in der Grundschule am 31.10 und 1.11.1952 im Deutschen Pädagogischen Zentralinstitut Berlin,” p. 21, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 433/1.

<sup>74</sup> Both of the above: Hartung, “Methodik,” 6.

<sup>75</sup> Hartung, “Schlusswort,” 94.

<sup>76</sup> Hartung, “Methodik,” 4.

abstract system, much like science. Music is an expression of the heart, of the emotions; it makes an impact on people, and leads them to insights.<sup>77</sup>

To Dorst, music had the capacity to teach—but it spoke with the language of the heart.

Dorst himself was a “committed” Marxist: after serving as an officer in the war, he had landed in a Soviet prisoners’ camp in 1943, where he experienced a sudden and dramatic conversion to socialism. He then spent three years teaching history and dialectical-historical materialism at an anti-fascist school in Krasnogorsk, which allowed him to return to Germany in possession of a thorough knowledge of Soviet indoctrination pedagogy and close relationships to the leadership of the future East German state, many of whom had also been trained in the Soviet Union.<sup>78</sup> As he was well-versed in the rhetoric and practices of Soviet education, his comment, which refutes what appears to be a serviceable hard-line Marxist position, seems odd, especially as Dorst was not himself a music teacher. It is clear that he would wish to distance himself from Hartung professionally, but he could easily have criticized Hartung on the basis of the latter’s behavior, not on the content of his methods.

Eva Rieger notes that early GDR pedagogical texts, including Dorst’s own, offered numerous suggestions for how literature, the visual arts, and even history could serve ideological education, but tended to leave music out. This omission, according to Rieger, signals that GDR pedagogues—and musicologists—hadn’t yet figured out how to unite Marxist-Leninist aesthetics with Soviet theories of ideological education within the realm of children’s music.<sup>79</sup> The problem, perhaps, was one of faulty communication: while musicologists and composers in the VDK and the Academy of Arts were debating questions of socialist aesthetics, musical content, and the role of music in shaping (adult) society, educational bureaucrats at the DPZI and the Ministry were planning curricula that relied on texts—in literature, in history, and in song. Despite the extended discussions taking place among composers and musicologists about the ideological values of notation, educational bureaucrats did not consider the methodology of music pedagogy, especially for music-making not involving texts, to be a carrier of ideology.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, Dorst’s belief that music and words spoke different languages was typical among his contemporaries. His otherwise orthodox Marxist convictions suggest that he was not trying to rescue music from political appropriation; rather, it seems that he was unsure what to do with it. He thus drew on an older tradition yet—that of German Romanticism, which the rational materialism of Marxism had supposedly long superseded. The Soviet-educated functionary, in using that vocabulary, showed himself to be unthinkingly loyal to the wrong ideology. In this conflict, the languages of Romanticism, progressive education and the Weimar bourgeoisie, fascism, and German-inflected Soviet pedagogy converged, revealing a deeper continuity

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<sup>77</sup> “Protokoll über die Kommissionssitzung für Musikerziehung in der Grundschule am 31.10 und 1.11.1952 im Deutschen Pädagogischen Zentralinstitut Berlin,” 4 November 1952, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 433/1.

<sup>78</sup> Martha Friedenthal-Haase, “Der Pädagoge Werner Dorst, seine Universitätskarriere und seine Auseinandersetzung mit der westdeutschen Pädagogik” in *Hochschule im Sozialismus: Studien zur Geschichte der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena (1945-1990)*, ed. Uwe Hossfeld, Tobias Kaiser and Heinz Mestrup (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007), 2073-2074.

<sup>79</sup> Rieger, *Schulmusikerziehung*, 36. Rieger is referencing Dorst’s book *Erziehung, Bildung, und Unterricht in der Deutschen Demokratischen Schule* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1953).

<sup>80</sup> In fact, during the 1958 “revisionism” campaign several years later, Dorst was accused of allowing bourgeois pedagogical beliefs to flourish unimpeded in the DPZI—and, indeed, that under his direction, the institute had emphasized methods as opposed to fundamental ideological questions. Friedenthal-Haase, “Der Pädagoge Werner Dorst,” 2075.



between those eras and their associated beliefs than contemporary actors would ever have been willing or able to admit.

But behind the communication breakdown between musicologists and bureaucrats lay the deeper problem of the relationship between theory and practice. Their species of Marxism was premised on the unity of theory and practice, a mandate that musicologists, at least, took seriously: as Marxist theory decreed that art was a reflection of reality, musicologists developed ways to hear that reality in music. In instructing adult listeners, musicologists and composers—many of whom did volunteer work in education for adults—could be assured of (the appearance of) this unity: the music possessed an objective content, and adults could easily be taught how to access it.<sup>81</sup> But children's access to this supposed content and its "scientific" relationship to the phenomenal world was entirely dependent on the practical business of teaching them, and was limited by their presumed inability to conceive of art in adult terms. Most classroom teachers abandoned theories about music in the face of this child-centered practice: an understanding of music as a system had to cede to what was perceived as children's natural tendency to privilege performative, bodily knowledge over intellectual wisdom. Their view of children may have been an (unchallenged) holdover from pre-socialist times, but it had concrete pedagogical results.<sup>82</sup> Their quotidian, practical concerns may explain, in part, why music education, despite its widely acknowledged importance in shaping the characters of future socialist citizens, was subjected to fewer political controls than most other areas of cultural life: here, the disjuncture between theory and practice was perhaps too uncomfortably apparent.

In describing the Soviet-initiated restructuring of East German schools as an "ideological occupation," Anweiler grants the Soviets a great deal of influence:

It is possible to say without exaggeration that between 1948 and 1958, the school system of the GDR was radically redesigned, and that the ideological occupation [*Okkupation*] that occurred during that time has been decisive until the present day.<sup>83</sup>

Though one should generally treat pre-reunification West German scholarship on East Germany with skepticism, this idea has had surprising traction. Bernd Fröde, arguably the leading historian of East German Musikerziehung, has taken Anweiler's thesis as the starting point for his recent study on the early years of East German music education.<sup>84</sup> Perhaps the attraction of these ideas is that they outsource agency—or responsibility, even—for the fate of East Germany. Or maybe it is because the notion of occupation, which connotes top-down absolute power, conforms to published sources from the GDR, and thus to the East German state's own self-image: Soviet-loyal, monolithic, ideologically homogeneous. Yet Anweiler's assertion obscures German cooperation in this process, and, worse, takes the East German state at its word, assuming it to be as thoroughly planned and systematic as it purported to be. All occupations, of course, rely on native labor. That a number of the Germans in charge in the GDR had also been members of the Nazi party, or at least had not resisted the Nazi regime, was most likely due to inertia and

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<sup>81</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>82</sup> Hartung, on the other hand, seemed desperately to want to ignore the immaturity that others felt was children's defining attribute. He claimed that his method, tested over several years in Berlin schools at the behest of the DPZI, had had even better success than solfège. Others reported that the children were terrified and learned nothing. Georg Knepler, "Gutachten über Hugo Hartungs Arbeiten," no date, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 472.

<sup>83</sup> Anweiler, *Schulpolitik*, 40.

<sup>84</sup> Fröde, *Schulmusik*, 17.

expediency, not the conspiracy that Hartung so obviously feared. But for every Walther Siegmund-Schultze, who had served in the SA—or even Dorst, whose army career had been truncated by his convenient conversion—there was a Hanns Eisler, a Paul Dessau, or even a Hugo Hartung: Germans whose lifelong commitment to the socialist project was beyond doubt.<sup>85</sup> Their cooperation helped cobble together socialism in East Germany, but it also defined its murky limits: the “occupation,” I would argue, relied, in part, on the degree to which the new ideologies could be grafted onto inherited ideas. In the *Methodenstreit*, the German past rushed in to fill the conceptual gaps in the new order. Dorst and the bureaucrats were practiced in adhering to the party line, but in this case, there was no party line for them to fall back on. Instead, they had to muddle through, relying only on their assumptions and, perhaps, a vague sense of what the party line might be. Ironically, it was Hartung, the less-powerful person, who carried the scientific system of thought to its logical end, even at a cost to himself, while the Soviet-trained government officials abandoned the rationality of science in the face of music, seeming instead to rely on their own backward-leaning hearts.

This may sound like a celebration of the triumph of Romanticism, a story in which the transcendent power of music conquers ideology. Rather than praise or deplore the persistence of a familiarly Romantic view of music, my intention here is to celebrate mistakes. In his book *The Demon of Writing*, Ben Kafka explores how human error—an ink smudge, a lost file, a sick day—throws sand in the gears of even the best-planned bureaucratic machines.<sup>86</sup> The *Methodenstreit* is one such story. The error was twofold. Hugo Hartung saw a gap in the chain of transmission between DPZI and Ministry, and exploited the weakness—though, in the end, he could do little more than cause a brief wobble in the orbit of bureaucracy. But there was a deeper structural error in the system within which Hartung was working, a fault that the awkward encounter between theory and practice had revealed and which prevented a complete importation of the Soviet system. What is more, I would suggest, this fault may have been inescapable. Even the best-planned systems—and Hartung, certainly, was working within an impeccably planned system—must at some point contend with the messy realities of particular human subjects. At the hearing, science collided with Romanticism—a collision that echoed the encounters between the ideal and the real that happened every day in children’s education.

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<sup>85</sup> Maren Köster, *Musik-Zeit-Geschehen: zu den Musikverhältnissen in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1952* (Saabrücken: Pfau, 2002), 86.

<sup>86</sup> Ben Kafka, *The Demon of Writing* (New York: Zone Books, 2012).

## Chapter 2. The Orff Schulwerk, Jazz, and the Racializing of Rhythm

The child should perceive music not only acoustically and visually, but must make it into a bodily experience by truly comprehending it through the body, through the senses of muscles, joints, and touch, and through the breath. Thus a firm basis for deep understanding and making-conscious of musical happenings can be built.<sup>1</sup>

### Mein Wagen hat vier Räder

Gesang oder Blockflöte

The musical score is arranged in three systems, each with five staves. The top staff of each system is for 'Gesang oder Blockflöte' (Song or Block Flute). The second staff is marked with an 'x' and contains chords. The third staff contains a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. The fourth staff uses triangle symbols (Δ) for rhythmic patterns. The fifth staff uses circle symbols (○) for rhythmic patterns. The music is in 2/4 time and G major.

<sup>1</sup> Irene Schubert-Jahnke, "Die Bedeutung der rhythmisch-musikalischen Erziehung und ihre Anwendung im Musikunterricht," *Musik in der Schule* 1955/4, 152.

Mein Wagen hat vier Räder  
Vier Räder hat mein Wagen  
Rolle, rolle, rummerjan  
Das wollt ich euch bloß sagen!

[My car has four wheels  
Four wheels has my car  
Roll, roll, rummerjan!  
That's all what I wanted to tell you.]<sup>2</sup>

The foregoing is an arrangement of the GDR children's song "Mein Wagen hat vier Räder," scored for voice or recorder, xylophone, two sets of rhythm sticks, triangle, and two frame drums, one struck with the hand and the other with a mallet. The song consists nearly exclusively of notes from the tonic triad in rhythmically unvaried two-bar phrases: when sung *a cappella*, it quickly becomes repetitive. The arrangement does not solve this melodic problem. In fact, the constant parallel fifths in the xylophone may even exacerbate it. But the monotony is varied by the expansion of the song from eight to twelve bars via a brief instrumental introduction and a closing statement, by the constantly shifting rhythmic accompaniment, and by the range of instrumental timbres. The arrangement makes a simple ditty challenging: the top rhythm sticks part is quite fast, the bottom rhythm sticks line features syncopation, and even the mallet frame drum, which takes on the function of a bass drum, alternates between playing on the first and the second beat.

This arrangement adapts techniques and instruments from Carl Orff's *Schulwerk*, a method of teaching improvisation on percussion instruments.<sup>3</sup> The *Schulwerk* was to form a central part of the section of GDR Musikerziehung known as "rhythmische Erziehung." Rhythmic Erziehung, which borrowed from the movement-based pedagogical principles of Orff as well as the Swiss music pedagogue, composer, and dance innovator Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, aimed to develop children's innate sense for rhythm through movement. More than accurate performance, its goal was a "natural" relationship to rhythm:

Rhythmic Erziehung is not limited only to the recognition and the exact reproduction of rhythms, but instead seeks to enable the differentiation between the meters through the instinctive movements urged by every person's innate rhythmic feeling, which can be more or less strong. The "arithmetic recognition" follows subsequently. This should never happen first, especially not with children!<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Siegfried Bimberg and Fritz Bachmann, *Musizieren mit Klingendem Schlagwerk: rhythmische und melodische Erziehung im Gruppenunterricht* (Leipzig: Hofmeister, 1958), 59.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Siegfried Bimberg, *Wie studiere ich ein Lied ein?: Arbeitshilfe für Laienchorleiter und Musikerzieher* (Halle: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1953), 106.

In the immediate post-war years, Musikerzieher in East and West Germany championed Dalcroze and Orff as new pedagogical inspirations, “truly forward-looking in the spirit of the new, living Musikerziehung.”<sup>5</sup> Along with the promise of more intuitive rhythm came the promise of a more attuned citizenry. Dalcroze had complained that modern man had strayed far from his natural roots, mislearning a set of bodily attitudes that led to a cramped, nervous mental state. Attention to rhythm, “the natural force that incites and vivifies, unifies and repeats our acts and wills,” could fix the problem, resulting in a more natural man and, by extension, a well-ordered society.<sup>6</sup> It is not hard to understand why, after the catastrophe of the previous twelve years, Germans in both states would be interested in personal and social “renewal.” Their common interests resulted in a cross-border pedagogical cooperation: East German Erzieher turned westward for information on Orff and Dalcroze. Orff’s friends and disciples had published a number of works on the Schulwerk, and the journal *Musik in der Schule* frequently recommended Wilhelm Keller’s *Einführung in “Musik für Kinder”* (1954) and Hans Bergese’s and Anneliese Schmolke’s *Schulwerk für Spiel/Musik/Tanz* (1951) for East German teachers.<sup>7</sup> A Musikerzieher named Other recommended to the Ministry of Culture two West German texts about education based on Dalcrozean movement: Elfriede Feudel’s *Durchbruch zum Rhythmischen* (1949) and Hildegard Tauscher’s *Praxis der rhythmisch-musikalischen Erziehung* (1952).<sup>8</sup> Whereas Feudel’s book was a theoretical excursus into Dalcroze’s belief that rhythm structured the universe, the many exercises in Tauscher’s guide were mirrored in GDR practical guides, suggesting that an exchange of information was taking place. Reports submitted to the Ministry indicated that people circulated between the two countries as well: Other had been permitted to attend a conference in Lindau to report on the demonstrations of rhythmic Erziehung there.<sup>9</sup> And sometimes the border-crossing was more permanent, as the rhythmic Erzieher Irmgard Wolff complained:

As I have heard, two interested parties have again already gone over to West Berlin to study rhythmic Erziehung, as they learned that our training in the subject was not to take place. A woman from Halle has been studying the subject there since September.<sup>10</sup>

Though East Germany may have been losing personnel to the West, the exchange as a whole was seen favorably, both pedagogically and politically: the Musikerzieher Christian Lange touted the Orff method as a “possible common way towards a unified German Musikerziehung.”<sup>11</sup> Rhythmic Erziehung, more than any other educational practice, was an area in which the Germanys could bridge their differences—or claim to, at least.

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<sup>5</sup> Christian Lange, “Schulmusikstage 1956 in Leipzig,” *Musik in der Schule* 1956/5, 211.

<sup>6</sup> Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, “Preface” in *Eurhythmics, Art, and Education*, ed. Cynthia Cox, trans. Frederick Rothwell (Salem, N.H.: Ayer, 1985), v.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, also Karl Kleinig, “Arbeit mit Rhythmusinstrument in der Grundschule,” *Musik in der Schule* 1957/3.

<sup>8</sup> Other to Müller (MfK), 17 Feb 1955, SAPMO-BArch DR 1/663.

<sup>9</sup> Other, “Bericht über die 8. Hauptarbeitstagung neue Musik und Musikerziehung vom 31. Mai bis 5. Juni 1955 in Lindau,” 25 July 1955, SAPMO-BArch DR 1/663.

<sup>10</sup> Irmgard Wolff to Müller (MfK), 8 Feb 1956, SAPMO-BArch DR 1/663.

<sup>11</sup> Lange, “Schulmusikstage in Leipzig,” 211.

In some respects, the aims of this *Erziehung*, with its pre-war and West German affiliations, was well adapted to the goals of the new East German state and a concomitant new “socialist personality.” True, the idea of joyous renewal through a return to a more natural state was not typically socialist in its adherence to an idea of essential, ahistorical “nature” rather than progress. Nevertheless, it had a precedent in Marxist thought, resonating with a Lukácsian concept of alienation as a problem unique to modern society.<sup>12</sup> Similarly Lukácsian, like much of GDR arts policy, was *Musikerziehung*’s reluctance to jettison the artistic and pedagogical traditions of high bourgeois culture, preferring instead to adapt them to a new context.

The touted “naturalness” of the methods of *Musikerziehung*, in these accounts, was not just a vague stand-in for the word “better,” but referred instead to the unique relationship that children and music were believed to share. The child existed in a state of unity with nature and her environment: therefore, rhythm, as the “life force” of nature, was integral to the child’s essence and was the most important aspect of the child’s life.<sup>13</sup> Crucially, this was also a quality of the *Naturmensch*, the “primitive” man: “Just as the *Naturmensch* perceives his surroundings as a unity, in which he includes himself, so does the child, in his earliest phases, live in a naïve relationship of identity [*Ichbezug*] to the world, as a unified totality.” Free of the self-aware, instrumentalized thinking that characterized supposedly civilized folk, the child and the *Naturmensch* reacted unselfconsciously to their environments, acting simply for the sake of acting:

Just as tensions resolve themselves in the *Naturmensch* through immediate movements that have no purpose behind them—movements often connected with singing—the child reacts to stimuli through action, whose completion is all that is required to satisfy the child,<sup>14</sup>

This spontaneous naiveté found its perfect expression in music, understood to be the most natural of actions: “the life of the child, like the life of the ‘primitive’ and unencumbered man in general, is connected with, and fulfilled by, music in a wholly natural and effortless way from the very beginning.”<sup>15</sup> Rhythmic *Erziehung* as a tool of social and political renewal thus relied on the concept of a human nature whose qualities could be glimpsed in the unselfconscious behavior of children and “primitives”: a “healthy strength” for which adults longed, “especially in our present time, made tense through too much will and necessity [*Wollen und Müssen*].”<sup>16</sup> As the West German *Musikerzieher* Fritz Reusch put it, this nature was a timeless state, and should not be intruded upon by the demands of the present:

For the child, it is not the mutability of our fast, technical world that determines his experiences and educates him, even when one hears the opinion that the child, in his waking mind, demands “modern” content (cars, airplanes, or other technical accomplishments). The real home of the child’s soul—and this is true not only of

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<sup>12</sup> Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 95–96.

<sup>13</sup> Hildegard Tauscher, *Praxis der rhythmisch-musikalischen Erziehung* (Darmstadt: Merseburger, 1952), 8; Roswitha Seidl, “Kind und Kinderlied,” *Musik in der Schule* 1951/5, 197.

<sup>14</sup> Tauscher, *Praxis*, 8.

<sup>15</sup> Seidl, “Kind und Kinderlied,” 196.

<sup>16</sup> Fritz Reusch, *Grundlagen und Ziele des Orff-Schulwerks*, in *Einführung in “Musik für Kinder”*, by Wilhelm Keller (Mainz: Schott, 1954), 53.

the child's language—is, and remains, the elemental roots [*Urgründe*] (or also the base elements! [*Abgründe*]), which reside in the life of nature, of plants, of animals, of men. The truth and reality of fairy tales—sun, moon, and stars, or the security of the nighttime and the waking day, just like the victory of good over evil—are preserved within the child by nature, despite all efforts at “enlightenment.” For nature “knows” better than man that the child's soul needs this psychic feather-down of fairy tales as a protective shell. It is *precisely* in the time of technology that these elemental realms of the deeper layers of the unconscious must be nurtured and kept awake in the child, so that serious disturbances in the adult's nerves and soul do not appear. “We cannot rise above our humanity,” as Carl Orff once said so beautifully.<sup>17</sup>

The idea that society corrupts more than it elevates reaches back at least to Rousseau; the idea that man should look to nature for redemption has a similarly long pedigree. In other words, these are ideas with tremendous staying power: though it is surprising to see them taken up for a German socialist purpose even as they were simultaneously used to shore up a capitalist society, it seems that tradition outweighed political ideology. Indeed, in both German states, the theory and practice of rhythmic Erziehung weathered the post-war changes in society and politics smoothly. The instruments and techniques of Orff's Schulwerk proved especially popular in East Germany in the 1950s and early 1960s. Endorsed by the Ministry of Culture and advocated by Siegfried Bimberg—who, after catapulting himself to fame by taking up arms against Hartung, was well on his way to becoming the GDR Musikerzieher with fingers in the most pies—the Schulwerk (also referred to as the *Klingendes Schlagwerk*) seemed largely to have been embraced with enthusiasm in GDR schools.

By the mid-1960s, however, references to Orff and his methods had disappeared from East German curricula and from discussions in pedagogical journals, even as the Schulwerk remained popular in West Germany until reunification.<sup>18</sup> Bernd Fröde, in his thorough study of East German Musikerziehung policy, notes that he has found no official justification for this change of heart in the archival sources. But one could easily surmise that the decision might be connected to another, larger change in August 1961. It is clear why a method touted as “unified German” would no longer be welcome: and, indeed, most of the doubtful comments that stand out amid the largely positive reception of the Schulwerk appeared shortly after the construction of the Berlin Wall.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, however, the Wall allowed the East German government to relax slightly with regards to the West, as the physical barrier mitigated the need for constant ideological vigilance. State border policy is rarely the whole story. There are politics beyond geopolitics, and there might be more to the shift in Orff's fortunes than the tense cross-border relationship.

<sup>17</sup> Reusch, *Grundlagen und Ziele*, 50.

<sup>18</sup> Bernd Fröde, *Schulmusik in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone und in der DDR bis Anfang der 1960er Jahre: zwischen fachorientierter Tradition und ideologischer Okkupation* (Hannover: Institut für musikpädagogische Forschung, 2010), 153.

<sup>19</sup> These occasional disagreements may have also taken place earlier, of course—just because there are no records in the archives does not mean they did not take place. As it is, the sources for these debates has been cobbled together out of notes from meetings in the VDK, the Ministry of Culture, and a few published texts. Unlike the solfège debate, there was no *Methodenstreit*, no Hartung against whom a cadre of teachers could unite. The *Schulwerk* therefore did not generate polemics—most of the texts, instead, are basic methodological guides aimed at introducing the relatively new methods to novice teachers.

This chapter examines the long-standing beliefs about children and about music that informed the Schulwerk's reception. Investigating how the method was developed in pre-war times and subsequently adapted in the GDR, I show that the anxieties voiced about the method stemmed from modes of thought that far predated the politics of the German division. Teachers wondered whether the Orff system would interfere with children's taste for new music and hinder their development, thus ruining both children's bodies and the future of music in the GDR. The two aspects bled into each other, so that it seemed, for some critics, that music and children's bodies were one and the same. I will argue that this occasional unease was only partly the result of a Marxist critique of the underlying premises of the method, which focused on "renewal" and considered biological factors as exclusively important for child development—not exactly a Marxist attitude. Instead, it was the rhythms and the instruments themselves that provoked suspicion—a suspicion reminiscent of contemporaneous fears about the rhythms of jazz. Even though, for most, the "decadent" sounds of jazz and the "natural" rhythms of childhood music were worlds apart, critics believed their negative effects to be the same: both would endanger the health of the individual's body and had the potential to do violence to music itself. It was, one could speculate, partly the destabilizing effect of jazz on the concept of rhythm as a whole that made it easy for Musikerzieher to step away quietly from a technique praised only a few years earlier as the salvation of the citizenry. Even as the supposed primitiveness of children was seen in a positive light, since it allowed rhythm special access to their bodies, what was seen as musical primitiveness of a different sort was meanwhile endangering civilized and adult European society.

*From Dalcroze to Bimberg: The Journey of Rhythmic Erziehung*

What would become GDR Rhythmic Erziehung had begun in the early twentieth century. Dalcroze, a professor of solfège and harmony at the Geneva conservatory from 1892 to 1910, had noticed that many of his students lacked the ability to play rhythms exactly.<sup>20</sup> Arguing that children are typically taught to "classify and name the various divisions of time" rather than learning to feel rhythm, he developed a system that started with the body—with noting the natural and unconscious rhythms that made up actions such as breathing, eating, and walking. These he defined as "a series of connected movements forming a whole and capable of being repeated."<sup>21</sup> Rhythm, therefore, was bodily as much as it was musical. But even more, rhythm was the base of a set of congruences, or simultaneities, that started within the individual and worked their way up through the arts. "Rhythmic gymnastics starts from the principle that the body is the inseparable ally of the mind," Dalcroze wrote.

It affirms that body and mind should harmoniously perform their divers functions, not only separately but simultaneously. The necessity for this simultaneity seems to derive from the dual nature of so many phenomena. Music, for instance, is not only the art of sound, but also that of accentuation and development of time; rhythm is not only the outcome of some intellectual process, it is a vital instinct.

<sup>20</sup> Irwin Spector, *Rhythm and Life: The Work of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1990), 55.

<sup>21</sup> Jaques-Dalcroze, "Rhythm in Musical Education," 109; "The Nature and Value of Rhythmic Movement," 3-4, both in *Eurhythmics, Art, and Education*.



Our bodies are the vessels in which seethe our emotions, and our minds are the centers which inspire them with life. It is for the intellect to control the action of both. If we accept this analysis, we must also accept the existence, both in art and in life, of three forms of beauty which rhythm makes one: spiritual beauty, plastic beauty, and technical beauty. Combined, they appear as sensation, emotion and idea, expressed by the body, the heart and the brain.<sup>22</sup>

This “vital instinct” was the organizing force of the body and, by extension, everything else:

All the laws that govern the harmonizing of our bodily rhythms govern that of the specialized rhythms, and set up relations between the arts dealing with sight and those dealing with sound, between architecture and mechanics, between poetry and art, between art and science, between science and life, between life and society.<sup>23</sup>

To teach rhythm, Dalcroze designed a set of exercises to develop both the “spontaneous” and the “deliberate” forms of motion, often in quick alternation, in order to “permeate the subconscious forces with conscious forces, and vice versa.”<sup>24</sup> These exercises included rhythmic walking, rhythmic breathing, exercises in stopping suddenly, and actions for each part of the body: opposite motion of limbs, shifting of center of balance, and “the effects of breathing on the different parts of the organism... [and] the study also of the relations between the effect of breathing on the expansion and contraction of the limbs in the vocal emission of sound, whether spoken or sung.”<sup>25</sup> These exercises and the ideals behind them, which came to be known as “Eurythmics” or “rhythmic movement,” were equal parts movement and music, intended to improve musical and also gymnastic education, which, in Dalcroze’s view, could not be separated.<sup>26</sup> His ideas inspired, in turn, a long lineage of dance and music pedagogies.<sup>27</sup>

One of these was Orff’s Schulwerk.<sup>28</sup> Orff had developed this improvisation-based musical pedagogy at the Munich Günther-Schule, which he had co-founded in 1924 with the dancer and gymnast Dorothee Günther.<sup>29</sup> The Günther-Schule taught dance and gymnastics, with improvised music as an accompaniment: the school aimed to synthesize the three main dance schools of the time (Dalcroze, Laban, and Mensendieck), as well as unite dance with music.<sup>30</sup> In the search for an “elemental” music to integrate with this “elemental” dance, Orff turned to body percussion and instrumental percussion, using a range of instruments that included an African

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<sup>22</sup> Jaques-Dalcroze, “Rhythm in Musical Education,” in *ibid.*, 108-109.

<sup>23</sup> Jaques-Dalcroze, “Nature of Rhythmic Movement,” in *ibid.*, 11.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>25</sup> Spector, *Rhythm and Life*, 116-118; Jacques-Dalcroze, “The Technique of Moving Plastic,” in *Eurythmics, Art, and Education*, 19.

<sup>26</sup> The Greek prefix “eu” of “Eurythmics” means “good” or “well” (as in “euphony” or “euphemism”).

<sup>27</sup> See Karl Toepfer’s *Empire of Ecstasy* for a thorough study of Dalcroze’s and related ideas in Weimar Germany. Karl Eric Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

<sup>28</sup> I use the word “Schulwerk,” which can be translated as “method,” to refer to Orff’s technique as it was practiced and adapted widely, and not just the five-volume set of scores.

<sup>29</sup> Günther was a student of the dancer Mary Wigman, herself a Dalcroze student.

<sup>30</sup> Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*, 131; also Michael Kugler, *Die Methode Jaques-Dalcroze und das Orff-Schulwerk. Elementare Musikübung: bewegungsorientierte Konzeptionen der Musikpädagogik* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 2000), 179-180.

xylophone and African and Asian drums.<sup>31</sup> He had reportedly been introduced to the possibilities of non-European percussion, as well as the music of Monteverdi, through his contact with the musicologist and organologist Curt Sachs in the early 1920s.<sup>32</sup> Sachs's own commitment to "exotic" instruments seems to have been limited, however, as it was reportedly he who urged Orff to use recorders instead of xylophones for the melody instrument in his group improvisations. *Musik für Kinder*, a five-volume set of Schulwerk arrangements, was written by Orff and Gunild Keetmann (a student of the composer and of Günther) at the behest of the music publisher Schott, tested at several continuing education courses for teachers through the early 1930s, and finally published between 1950 and 1954.<sup>33</sup>

Orff's outspoken enthusiasm for the primitive and the elemental, the *Ur* of music, as well as his tendency to expound on the virtues of percussion instruments, those "primitive sound-tools from the childish rattle to the demonic gongs and bells, this primitive, demonic sound-world, which so gently and imperceptibly leads from sound to playing, from noise to music," might lead one to believe that his improvisations would resemble a less obviously Western source, especially as they were described by reviewers as "no more than an exotic curiosity."<sup>34</sup> Yet apart from the xylophones, bongos, zils, and tambourines—instruments that sounded "foreign," though they were not exactly new—and from some clapping/stamping choruses and spoken verses, most of the music in the five volumes was familiar stuff. The melodies were traditional German children's rhymes and songs, often in Bavarian dialect. Many of them featured the supposedly innate "children's melody" (a combination of the scale degrees 5-6-5-3, the next stage of development after the 5-3 "children's call"), set in simple pentatonic or diatonic arrangements. Unlike in Bimberg's Orff-inspired arrangement of "Mein Wagen," pitched percussion instruments, mostly xylophones, made up the bulk of Orff and Keetman's orchestrations. The pieces sometimes abandoned the cadences of functional harmony in favor of drones, but these accompaniments left no doubt as to the tonal center of the pieces. Orff and Keetman seemed to

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<sup>31</sup> Kugler, *Die Methode Jaques-Dalcroze*, 194, 200.

<sup>32</sup> At the time, Sachs was the head of the State Musical Instrument Collection (*Staatliche Musikinstrumentensammlung*) in Berlin, where he gave Orff a tour of the collection in 1923. It was supposedly this tour that inspired Orff to turn his ear eastward, though one has to wonder how accurate this story is. *Ibid.*, 177-178.

<sup>33</sup> Gunild Keetman's name shares the title page with Carl Orff's in these volumes. Yet it has been difficult to find exact documentation of Keetman's involvement in developing the method: indeed, she is often left out of the entire enterprise. For instance, Michael Kugler's book on the Orff Schulwerk attributes certain pieces to Keetman, but resolutely refers to the entire method as the "Orff Schulwerk." Similarly, Hans Bergese and Anneliese Schmolke's Orff-inspired *Schulwerk für Spiel, Musik, Tanz* was a collaborative effort (Schmolke prepared the dances, while Bergese composed the music), yet is referred to in the GDR literature exclusively as the "Bergese" text. I have retained the designation "Orff Schulwerk" when talking about the method, as I can only be sure that Keetman helped write the scores. Yet I am troubled by this default privileging of Orff over his female collaborator, especially given that Orff was working in a creative environment that had been built by women: all of Günther's students were women, something that Kugler points out only to note that it must have been "uncomfortable" for the men to be outnumbered. Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*, 131; Kugler, *Die Methode Jaques-Dalcroze*, 220. True to its Weimar dance roots, GDR Rhythmic Erziehung in general continued to be an area dominated by women, as Walter Dieckermann remarked, somewhat patronizingly: "it is mostly female instructors who make such attempts." Walter Dieckermann, *Rhythmische Erziehung* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1949), 3. Although men authored the best-known GDR books on rhythmic Erziehung—a fact reflected in the men's speech quoted in this chapter—the vast majority of the practitioners were women: women's names crop up frequently in the records of meetings, conferences, and seminars, and Erzieher Irmgard Wolff used the exclusively female-gendered noun, "Rhythmiklehrerinnen," to refer to rhythm teachers. (The only other consistently female-gendered group of teachers in the GDR was the "Kindergärtnerinnen.") Irmgard Wolff to Müller (MfK), 21 Jan 1955, SAPMO-BArch DR 1/663.

<sup>34</sup> Kugler, *Die Methode Jaques-Dalcroze*, 221–222.

have achieved a music that took simultaneously from three backward-looking sources: “primitive” and exotic instruments, the melodies of children, and the harmonies of early music.

It was likely this “primitiveness” that afforded the Schulwerk and the Günther-Schule a mostly undisturbed existence during the Nazi years.<sup>35</sup> In cooperation with the new regime, the Günther-Schule had established a new division called “Deutsche Gymnastik,” and worked together with several Nazi youth organizations; a delegation from the school performed at the 1936 Olympic Games.<sup>36</sup> The Schulwerk itself was not officially mandated, but it was permitted and used as an educational tool throughout the Nazi period, though how widespread it was is difficult to determine.<sup>37</sup> Orff’s and Günther’s active collaboration with the regime is also a matter of debate, as might be expected. According to Michael Kater, Orff “[took] care, in conjunction with his publisher, to tailor his Schulwerk series as much as possible to the goals of the Nazis, as they then appeared, without, it may be assumed, wanting to falsify any facet of its originally conceived character.” This was certainly no difficult task, as the tonal simplicity of the music and its debt to folk songs were broadly compatible with Nazi ideals.<sup>38</sup> Others disagree, protesting that Orff’s “cooperation” was both reluctant and over-reported, and that the “primitivism” that interested Orff was fundamentally different from the “primitivism” of Nazi political songs.<sup>39</sup> But Orff’s and Günther’s actual intentions are less relevant than the fact that their educational techniques and institutions were consistent with Nazi ideas.

One might have expected Hugo Hartung, or a doppelgänger, to step in at this moment and protest this Nazi compatibility. But the Schulwerk’s spotty past did not seem problematic to GDR Musikerzieher. After all, the Schulwerk came out of an artistic tradition that valued communal ideals highly: the socialist affinity outweighed any Nazi misuse of the techniques.<sup>40</sup> In an effort spearheaded by Siegfried Bimberg, the method and its newly published scores were heralded as a way to “use music to win children over to music [without] annoying them with notation.”<sup>41</sup> The Schulwerk instruments were endorsed in the curriculum of 1953, and the Ministry for Culture apparently “strongly recommended” that music schools use the Orff techniques.<sup>42</sup> Orff’s “primitiveness” was exactly the quality that Musikerzieher sought. It was perfectly childlike: rhythm was the aspect of music that “played the most important role in the

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<sup>35</sup> The school was closed in 1944 so that the Nazis could use it as a depot. Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*, 131.

<sup>36</sup> Kugler, *Die Methode Jaques-Dalcroze*, 229–230.

<sup>37</sup> Kater notes that it did not achieve the prominence that Orff and his publishers claimed it had, but does not cite any sources. The Schulwerk was not unanimously praised during the Nazi period. Michael Kugler uses the presence of a “quasi-official” negative report to assert that the Nazis were deeply suspicious of the instruments. Kater has dismissed the negative reports as “Nazi infighting.” Michael H. Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era: Eight Portraits* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 121–122; Kugler, *Die Methode Jaques-Dalcroze*, 231. It is safe to assume that the Schulwerk in Nazi Germany—just like everywhere else—prompted a variety of responses, not all of which complied with or resisted a direct order, or should be read as commentary on the political situation.

<sup>38</sup> Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era*, 120.

<sup>39</sup> Kugler, *Die Methode Jaques-Dalcroze*, 226–234.

<sup>40</sup> The Nazis, of course, were also interested in communality. However, Toepfer argues that the Nazi “culture of the body” arose as a desire to control Weimar “body culture,” not continue it: “Weimar body culture was to ‘blame’ for Nazism insofar as it ascribed to bodies so many complicated, differentiating significations that only a totalitarian state could dream of containing them.” Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*, 383–384.

<sup>41</sup> Bimberg and Bachmann, *Musizieren mit Klingendem Schlagwerk*, 7.

<sup>42</sup> Bimberg had taken the lead in developing the curriculum of 1953. The date of the Ministry’s recommendation is unclear, but it must have been before 1962. “Konferenz Ministerium für Kultur und Verband Deutscher Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler,” 4 July 1962, SA-AdK VDK 1453.

child's musical life," and children's games were characterized by movement and imagination.<sup>43</sup> Children seemed naturally drawn to the Orff instruments, which they could "play independently immediately," experiencing success even at their first attempt.<sup>44</sup> They progressed quickly, playing the "most difficult rhythms" with joy,<sup>45</sup> "ease and security."<sup>46</sup> The instruments themselves were also child-appropriate, as so-called primitive cultures had, it was claimed, relied heavily on percussion instruments as well.<sup>47</sup> The Schulwerk fulfilled two further conditions. Some Musikerzieher believed that children were naturally drawn to tonal music: "The observation of song inventing, or improvisation, among two-and-a-half and three-year-olds proves time and again that they move, in a harmonically functional sense, within the realm of the tonal."<sup>48</sup> In addition, as Seidl wrote, children prefer four-bar periods, as they have a "healthy need for roundness."<sup>49</sup> Overall, Karl Kleinig gushed, the technique could touch the soul, speaking to the real, creative child:

It signals a deep involvement of the soul, when music—even if only in the elemental form of rhythm—becomes an expression of the child's own consciousness. This is not merely a slogan. On the contrary, it has been proven that such experiments create contact with the experiencing [*erlebenden*] child. The finished product is not the goal, but rather the effort to express something using musical rhythm. He for whom the instrument has become a crayon [...] will be able to draw with it. We let our children draw—let us have them make music as well, and indeed, in the same inventive way!<sup>50</sup>

In keeping with its Weimar origins, GDR Rhythmic Erziehung was the province not just of musicians, but also dancers. Many of the participants in the working groups and seminars on rhythmic Erziehung were former dancers, as well as sport and gymnastic teachers; some of them had done their training with Mary Wigman.<sup>51</sup> The design of the new courses in rhythmic Erziehung at conservatories such as the University of Theater in Leipzig and the Franz Liszt University of Music in Weimar showed, as well, that rhythmic Erziehung came from dance. These courses did not emphasize music theory—even though adults, unlike children, would presumably be open to "being annoyed with notation"—but focused instead on the way that rhythm related to the body. A learning objective for the first semester prioritized the ability to move appropriately to duple and triple meters, as opposed to the ability to hear, notate, understand, or explain them verbally: "Walking in straight lines and in curves as a preparation for duple and triple meters. Portraying meters and note values using the body and the space of

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<sup>43</sup> Seidl, "Kind und Kinderlied," 197; Schubert-Jahnke, "Die Bedeutung der rhythmisch-musikalischen Erziehung," 152.

<sup>44</sup> Rölf Geisenhainer, "Bericht," *Musik in der Schule* 1959/3, 144.

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<sup>46</sup> "Jenaer Schulmusiktag," *Musik in der Schule*, 1957/4, 229; Erika Penner, "Die Löbauer beweisen ihr Können," *Musik in der Schule* 1957/4, 228.

<sup>47</sup> Erdmann Bogisch, "Die Bedeutung der Schlaginstrumente für die Schule," *Musik in der Schule* 1957/3, 97.

<sup>48</sup> Heinrich Werlé, *Musik im Leben des Kindes* (Dresden: Verlag L. Ehlermann, 1949), 29.

<sup>49</sup> Seidl, "Kind und Kinderlied," 197.

<sup>50</sup> Kleinig, "Arbeit mit Rhythmusinstrumente," 109.

<sup>51</sup> Bänsch and Hempel to MfK (Künstlerische Lehranstalten), 8 June 1956; Director of the Robert Schumann Conservatory to MfK (Künstlerische Lehranstalten), 11 June 1956; SAPMO-BArch DR 1/663.

the room.”<sup>52</sup> Nearly every musical phenomenon was to be learned with a corresponding spatial depiction, also using balls and “devices for the hand.” The curriculum included common dances and folk dances from other socialist countries, and practice in inventing movements to portray fairy tales and other narratives.<sup>53</sup> Even though these pupils had outgrown the age where movement was “self-evident,” and had long been inhabitants of the age where most were already “miseducated [*verbildet*],” learning to move naturally with music was still the essence of rhythmic education.<sup>54</sup>

In taking on a Dalcrozean sensibility, East and West German Musikerzieher did the mustachioed Swiss one better. Dalcroze had proposed that the motions of the body should become both more instinctive and more controlled: his method relied on the interplay of consciousness and instinct. The exercises were

to keep body and mind “under pressure” [...] to combine and interchange spontaneous, *i.e.* involuntary, and reason-controlled rhythms; to influence the mind by the irresistible might of instinctive rhythmic movements and the body through the centers of volition.<sup>55</sup>

Disciplined intellectual activity was key—an equal partner in the endeavor. Many GDR teachers, in contrast, dispensed with Dalcroze’s injunction to train the mind as well as the body, preferring instead an approach to education that did not “intellectualize” music.<sup>56</sup> A few, to be sure, emphasized that the education of the body involved learning control. Fritz Reuter argued that

schooling in taste and behavior [entails] the volitional mastery of the body, whose task it is to take up, imitate, and recognize these rhythms. This mastery over the body is not only an aesthetic matter, but also a practically applicable, very advantageous ability that is beneficial in life.<sup>57</sup>

Richard Wicke, Hugo Hartung’s onetime collaborator, agreed, maintaining that childish motion needed discipline:

How clumsy children and grown-ups reveal themselves to be with the first steps in realizing rhythms, and at the first use of percussion instruments. It is a long journey to clear, will-driven representations of rhythmic figures and the secure performance of rhythmic scores.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Wolff, “Lehrplan für die Fachausbildung in Rhythmischer Erziehung. Hauptfach Rhythmische Erziehung,” 25 April 1955, SAPMO-BArch DR 1/663.

<sup>53</sup> Wolff, “Lehrplan für das Pflichtfach Rhythmische Erziehung (Entwurf),” no date [1955-1957], SAPMO-BArch DR 1/663.

<sup>54</sup> Helmut Böhmer and Ingeburg Böhmer, “Die Rhythmische Erziehung im Dienste der Musikerziehung,” *Musik in der Schule* 1955/4, 159.

<sup>55</sup> Dalcroze, “The Nature and Value of Rhythmic Movement,” 6-7.

<sup>56</sup> Böhmer and Böhmer, “Rhythmische Erziehung,” 158.

<sup>57</sup> Fritz Reuter, “Geschmacksbildung der Jugend durch Musik,” *Musik in der Schule* 1956/6: 265-66. Reuter continues, “In general, this means: He who has learned to master his body through rhythmic exercises feels freer, and adopts elegant ways of acting [*Umgangsformen*]. He has been trained to have the good taste of moving himself well.”

<sup>58</sup> Richard Wicke, “Wie kann die Schulmusik zur ästhetischen Erziehung beitragen?” *Musik in der Schule* 1957/1, 3.

However, most East and West German Erzieher either ignored the role of intellectual discipline in rhythmic Erziehung, or explicitly refuted it. Helmut and Ingeburg Böhmer described the aim of the exercises as “releasing the child’s entire body from the inhibitions and cramps which are often psychically determined, or vice versa, which can have psychic effects.”<sup>59</sup> The body should cure the mind’s disturbances, but the mind was not granted an equal but opposite task. Rhythmic Erziehung would “lead the child to insights and skills through the holistic sound-body experience of the music, without intellectualizing the music in the process.”<sup>60</sup> West German Elfriede Feudel echoed Dalcroze’s own words, stating that the method was

a path of intellectual and artistic [*geistig-künstlerisch*] development, in which no single sense, no single ability of any one limb, no partial region of human skill is activated and developed, but in which the whole body with all of its organs, with its senses and nerves, is called to act as a channel of the mind [*des Geistigen*] and the mirror of the soul.<sup>61</sup>

But unlike Dalcroze’s generally balanced evaluations of the dualities of *Geist* and *Seele*, Feudel feared that the soul—the province of the body—was much more vulnerable than the over-developed mind:

A healthy development of mental capabilities is therefore not at all thinkable without a simultaneous strengthening of the opposite power, that which relates to the soul. For the soul, too, is fragile and constantly in danger of losing its wonderful receptiveness to all the stimuli of the animate world. It becomes matte and dull when its inborn sense for the rhythmic order of things is never confirmed, when it has to live in such artificial conditions, that the stimuli of life rarely reach it and its instrument, the body, is neglected through misuse of its senses and nerves.<sup>62</sup>

Rhythm, as the tool of the fragile body and, by extension, the vulnerable soul, needed to be encouraged, not tamed.

Part of the reason for this seeming allergy to “intellectualism” in the GDR texts doubtless had to do with the early 1950s campaign against elitist formalism in art, in which everything that did not fit a narrow yet vague conception of populism was suspect. It was perhaps this campaign that led to the eradication of words that smacked of intellectualism from educational documents: the 1953 curriculum published in *Musik in der Schule* proclaimed that rhythmic Erziehung contributed to “living taking-up [*lebendigen Erfassen*] of the melody.”<sup>63</sup> An earlier version of the

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<sup>59</sup> Böhmer and Böhmer, “Rhythmische Erziehung,” 158.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Elfriede Feudel, *Durchbruch zum Rhythmischen in der Erziehung* (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1949), 5.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>63</sup> “Der neue Lehrplan ist da!” *Musik in der Schule* 1953/1, 9-10. Hanns Eisler, for one, in calling for a new *Volkstümlichkeit* in music, would never have maintained that this was also anti-intellectual; it was merely meant to be anti-elitist. But the subtleties of an accessible yet not anti-intellectual culture were lost on many. Eisler, “Brief nach Westdeutschland” in *Neue Musik im geteilten Deutschland*, vol. 1, 117-120.

document, however, had promised “Erziehung to the understanding of the melody.”<sup>64</sup> Siegfried Bimberg himself had been chastised for the use of the word “consciousness” in his concept of “melodic consciousness,” a charge against which he defended himself with reverse accusations of mindless Romanticism:

If the teacher has instilled this ability for recognition [the melodic consciousness] in his pupils, then they are capable of consciously deducing and classifying the principles from musical material. This has nothing to do with intellectualism. It is an exaggeratedly Romantic idea that one should let only the emotional preside in music. [...] Because we are people, we cannot turn off the intellect. To have a feeling does not mean shutting off consciousness. Seeing emotion and thought as separate indicates an elementary and mechanical basic approach to the laws of psychology.<sup>65</sup>

Though Bimberg, at least, refused to let go of a concept of “consciousness,” the anti-intellectual current of the time was perceptible in most of the rhythmic Erziehung texts, whether due to cautious self-censoring, strongly held Weimarian convictions, or both. The result was a version of rhythmic Erziehung which, as Hugo Hartung had pointed out time and again with regards to solfège, more closely resembled an irrational Romantic conception of music (and children) than it did any sort of socialist science. Here, the GDR’s anti-formalist mandate not to alienate the “simple” folk directly countered another aspect of socialist culture: one could only be sufficiently populist by actively thwarting the mind.<sup>66</sup>

### *In Practice*

The description of rhythmic Erziehung in the 1953 music curriculum presented rhythm in terms of motions for the body, rather than in musical terms.

The topics of rhythmic Erziehung are divided into:

1. Full-body representation (movement from a place).
2. Partial-body representation (movement while stationary): clapping, tapping, finger movements, foot movements, keeping time [*Taktieren*], arm movements.
3. Representation through speech: the use of particular words for particular note values.

Rhythmic Erziehung is the natural union of music and bodily movement. Movement in a room is a symbol for melodic movement. The bodily representation of rhythmic, melodic, metric, dynamic, and agogic occurrences visually shows what is to be learned, and at the same time serves as an exercise.

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<sup>64</sup> “Lehrplan für Musikerziehung,” 1953, DIPF/BBF/Archiv: DPZI 433/2; also “Lehrplan 1953”, pp. 171-172 SAPMO-BArch DR 2/3902.

<sup>65</sup> Siegfried Bimberg, “Kann man Melodie- und Rhythmusbewußtsein trennen?” *Musik in der Schule* 1956/3, 123.

<sup>66</sup> A problem that looks awfully familiar from the vantage point of 2015.

Rhythmic and melodic improvisation, under consideration of speech rhythm, contributes to the development of musical shaping and invention. The ultimate goal of rhythmic Erziehung is the spatial representation of the musical expression in the melodic process. The characteristic features of the melodic expression are represented in space through corresponding forms, for instance: swaying [*schwingende*] melodies in circles, curves, wave-lines. Firm and emphatic melodies in straight and angular forms. Thus, rhythmic Erziehung serves Erziehung to the living taking-up of the melody. Materials: simple percussion instruments (i.e. tambourine, triangle, rhythm sticks, cymbals) and the xylophone.<sup>67</sup>

The Orff techniques that Bimberg was promoting so energetically were folded into the plan without special mention: they appeared as the “materials” with which to realize the larger goal of “taking in the melody.” This elision of movement-based techniques with percussion and melodic improvisation signaled the overlap between movement and improvisation, bodily rhythm and musical rhythm. For GDR Erzieher, the relationship between Eurythmics and the Schulwerk was one of continuity and interpenetration: Dalcroze had brought music and motion into contact, and Orff had made this combination useful for the specific goals of Musikerziehung.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, the productive similarity extended to the use of improvisation:

A inner and fruitful correspondence can be established between rhythmic Erziehung and *improvisation*. The possibilities for the whole of Musikerziehung are just inexhaustible... The Orff Schulwerk gives worthwhile inspiration for this sort of work.<sup>69</sup>

Rhythmic Erziehung for the youngest, however, started not with the Orff instruments but with the basics: the motions of the body. A beginner class might walk to a simple melody, or even just to a beat, a motion that would be automatic for children over the age of 6: “The teacher taps quarter notes on the tambourine, asking the children to listen very carefully. ‘Whoever can clap with me exactly can do so.’ This won’t present any difficulties.”<sup>70</sup> Walking was key: “the full-body representation of music (movement from a place) is very important, because it awakens the creative powers.”<sup>71</sup> The next step was speech. The teacher would assign a word to the quarter-note beat, perhaps “Schritt” (step), which the children would say while walking. Eighth notes would be associated with the two-syllable word “laufen” (running); dotted eighths would be “hüpfen” (hopping), half-notes might be “schleich” (creep), dotted quarters “zögern” (delay), rests “ruhen” (rest).<sup>72</sup> These words would stand in for the fractional designations, so that a teacher might ask the class to tap four step notes and eight running notes. The speaking portion might then be rounded off by asking the children to think up a sentence to match the rhythm, such as “Vorwärts, vorwärts, immer weiter” (forwards, forwards, always further) for a sequence

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<sup>67</sup> “Der neue Lehrplan ist da!” 9-10.

<sup>68</sup> Bogisch, “Die Bedeutung der Schlaginstrumente,” 97.

<sup>69</sup> Böhmer and Böhmer, “Rhythmische Erziehung,” 167 (emphasis original).

<sup>70</sup> Siegfried Bimberg, “Beiträge zur Methodik des Musikunterrichts in der Unterstufe,” *Musik in der Schule* 1953/5, 223-24; Schubert-Jahnke, “Die Bedeutung der rhythmisch-musikalischen Erziehung,” 153.

<sup>71</sup> Bimberg, “Beiträge zur Methodik,” 223-24.

<sup>72</sup> Schubert-Jahnke, “Die Bedeutung der rhythmisch-musikalischen Erziehung”: 154.



of eight quarter notes.<sup>73</sup> The process, Schubert-Jahnke summarized, was this: “Acoustic perception—bodily reaction, four beats on the tambourine correspond to four steps in the room, speech-motoric complement through the invention of little verses.”<sup>74</sup> One would combine bodily motions to differentiate between rhythm and meter, tapping the feet to the meter while clapping the rhythm.<sup>75</sup> Speech could be also useful in helping children to recognize metric stress: either a teacher could invent sentences to accompany rhythms, or she could use a rhythmic solmization system that Richard Münnich had developed as part of *Jale*, in which down- and up-beats were signaled by the syllables “kai” and “teu.”<sup>76</sup>

Other lessons would be playful variations of the preceding templates. Teachers might ask children to reproduce the music they heard through speaking, stamping, tapping, walking in circles, walking twice as fast or as slow as the rhythm of the song, changing volume and having the children change the quality of their steps, and dividing the class into groups that would do different tasks.<sup>77</sup> “The first task is simply to foster the direct relationship between the sound and the bodily representation.”<sup>78</sup> In tandem with the countless combinations of speech, singing, motion, and instruments, Musikerzieher were to focus children’s attention on timbre, thereby training careful listening. To this end, Bimberg identified three different kinds of clapping (both palms striking, one palm sliding, fingertips tapping on palm), asking teachers to point children’s attention to the differences in sound.<sup>79</sup> These descriptions emphasized that children themselves should invent ways to recreate musical sounds in their bodies: an exploratory method of pedagogy that was guided without being prescriptive. This was all to take place without “annoy[ing] children with notation” and arithmetic, though some teachers used a simplified script to help children remember a sequence of motions.<sup>80</sup>

After the children had learned these basics, they could be introduced to the joys of the instruments: rattles, headless tambourines, rhythm sticks, cymbals (crash and suspended), triangles, castanets, wood blocks, frame drums (with and without zils), cylindrical drums, two-sided drums (with or without snare), conventional timpani and “Orff timpani” (with a wooden cylinder instead of a kettle), xylophones, metallophones, soprano, alto, and bass glockenspiels, glass harmonicas, and recorders.<sup>81</sup> The instruments were to function as a “partial-body representation of rhythm,” as extensions of the “most natural” instruments, the hands and feet.<sup>82</sup> Yet the instruments carried an added benefit above hands and feet, as Bimberg, Bachmann, and Lange argued:

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Böhmer and Böhmer, “Rhythmische Erziehung,” 162-163.

<sup>76</sup> Bimberg, *Wie studiere ich ein Lied ein?*, 108–111; Bimberg and Bachmann, *Musizieren mit Klingendem Schlagwerk*, 21–25.

<sup>77</sup> Böhmer and Böhmer, “Rhythmische Erziehung,” 161; Bimberg, “Beiträge zur Methodik,” 227.

<sup>78</sup> Bimberg, “Beiträge zur Methodik,” 229.

<sup>79</sup> Bimberg and Bachmann, *Musizieren mit Klingendem Schlagwerk*, 25. Bimberg’s authority Keller had offered the following detailed instructions about stamping: “The stamping can be carried out while sitting or while standing. For stamping while standing, the foot is best raised by swinging the lower leg backwards, striking the floor while swinging back, which can happen with more or less force. After striking, the foot must stay *on the ground* (at the beginning, the children tend to raise the foot after stamping, standing in a helpless position). Alongside this full stamping, tapping of the toes with the heel planted, and reverse (tapping the heels with the toes planted) can be practiced.” Wilhelm Keller, *Einführung in “Musik für Kinder”* (Mainz: Schott, 1954), 9.

<sup>80</sup> Bimberg and Bachmann, *Musizieren mit Klingendem Schlagwerk*, 7.

<sup>81</sup> Keller, *Einführung in “Musik für Kinder,”* 7.

<sup>82</sup> Böhmer and Böhmer, “Rhythmische Erziehung,” 62.

From the psychological standpoint, one should also mention that the use of instruments strengthens the development of a melodic consciousness. With regards to the developmental psychology of the toddler, we speak about the beginning of “thinking with tools”: the use of child-appropriate tools. We can draw a comparison to the schoolchild using a musical instrument. As the instrument offers an experience of immediate music-making, the child can soon “play along” even without sophisticated abilities, and will start making music soon thereafter [...] Though it is a principle of music psychology and music pedagogy that it is primarily singing that leads to melodic consciousness, we have found that the instrumental play of the *Klingendes Schlagwerk* is a component of the intensive stabilization of a melodic consciousness..<sup>83</sup>

Teachers could tell children what to play. But even better, they could use the instruments to encourage structured polyphonic improvisation—not disorganized chaos—using a song or a rhythmicized text. This sort of improvisation represented “a higher quality of conscious listening and music-making. It requires a child to be able to analyze and synthesize practically what he hears.”<sup>84</sup>

Unlike walking to a beat, improvisation had to be carefully trained. Most children, when asked to improvise an accompaniment, would simply reproduce the rhythm of the song.<sup>85</sup> The teacher was to guide them to a setting in which each instrument played a different role, starting by singling out the largest tambourine to keep the beat. Other instruments were added from the bass up: larger instruments were to play bass voices, perhaps on every strong beat, and smaller instruments played faster rhythms (triangle and cymbals were to be used only sparingly). The different parts could show stress, keep the beat, play the song’s rhythm, or offer a counterrhythm.<sup>86</sup> After some experimentation, each part should arrive at a simple ostinato that repeated every two bars.<sup>87</sup> Using pitched percussion instruments, pupils could improvise simple harmony and fauxbourdon parts.<sup>88</sup> Children should also switch roles, so that each voice of the song was played by all pupils. Further challenges might involve varying the text, rhythms, and phrase lengths of the original melodies.<sup>89</sup> For example, the first half of the German folk song “Auf, du junger Wandersmann,” in six bars, could be cut and modified so that the text was sung over four bars.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Siegfried Bimberg, Fritz Bachmann, and Christian Lange, *Singen und Musizieren mit Klingendem Schlagwerk im Zusammenspiel. Beiheft zum Lehrerbildungsfilm*, Musikerziehung in der Unterstufe, VI, 1958, 33–34.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>85</sup> Bimberg and Bachmann, *Musizieren mit Klingendem Schlagwerk*, 8.

<sup>86</sup> Anni Fischer, “Arbeit mit dem Klingenden Schlagwerk zur metrisch-rhythmischen Erziehung der Kinder im Vorschulalter,” n.d., 29.

<sup>87</sup> Bimberg and Bachmann, *Musizieren mit Klingendem Schlagwerk*, 8.

<sup>88</sup> Bimberg, Bachmann, and Lange, *Singen und Musizieren*, 34.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>90</sup> Bimberg and Bachmann, *Musizieren mit Klingendem Schlagwerk*, 8. “Auf, du junger Wandersmann” has a curious structure to begin with: the strophe is divided into two sections, one of six bars and one of eight.

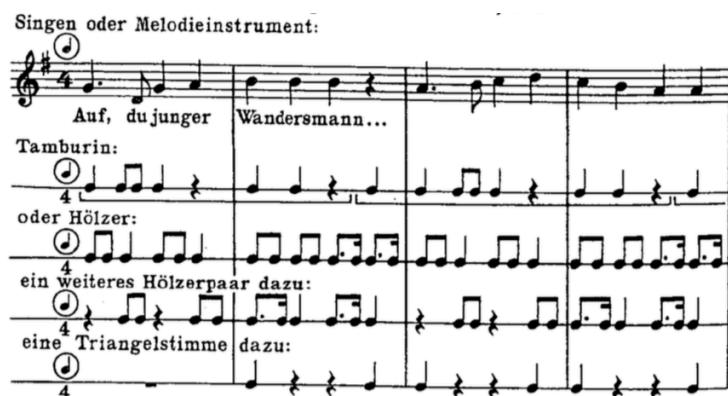


Figure 7: Original with suggestions for instrumental improvisation

Tamb. 1 *c. f.*

Auf, du jun - ger Wan - ders - mann, jet - zo

Tamb. 2

Triangel

Becken

Hölzer 1

Hölzer 2

Tamb. 3 (groß)

Tamb. 1

kommt die Zeit her - an, sie gibt uns Freud.

Tamb. 2

Triangel

Becken

Hölzer 1

Hölzer 2

Tamb. 3 (groß)

The score is in 4/4 time. It features two systems of staves. The first system has seven staves: Tamb. 1 (marked *c. f.*), Tamb. 2, Triangel, Becken, Hölzer 1, Hölzer 2, and Tamb. 3 (groß). The lyrics are 'Auf, du jun - ger Wan - ders - mann, jet - zo'. The second system has the same seven staves, with lyrics 'kommt die Zeit her - an, sie gibt uns Freud.'. Each percussion staff has a circled '4' at the beginning. The notation includes various rhythmic values and rests, with some measures containing multiple notes to suggest improvisation.

Figure 8: Suggestion for modified text

Musikerzieher were careful to stress that percussion improvisation existed only to serve the melody and the development of a melodic consciousness. Singing and the melody were to remain the primary focus—though, given the joyful thickness of some of the scores, one might wonder whether this was possible.<sup>91</sup>

This improvisatory, body-focused pedagogy, which will probably be familiar to any contemporary reader who has worked with young children, might seem not at all exceptional. Yet the thorough detail in which it is described would seem to indicate that, in the GDR, it was not self-evident. In addition, judging from the tone of some of the articles, GDR rhythm teachers seemed to have felt the need to justify their methods repeatedly, indicating that Dalcroze-inspired pedagogy was not yet mainstream. As Irene Schubert-Jahnke complained,

<sup>91</sup> Bimberg, Bachmann, and Lange, *Singen und Musizieren*, 34.

If we ask Musikerzieher about the deeper significance of rhythmic-musical Erziehung—this, until now, truly neglected area of school music—we often wring a pitying smile from them, and have to hear: “This ‘gymnastics’ and ‘hopping around’ [*Gehopse*] may have some relationship or other to music, but all and all it is really not that important, and can’t get past general ridicule. Rhythmic Erziehung isn’t necessary: I, for one, have had great success without it.”<sup>92</sup>

The inventive and encouraging model of these lessons is indeed far removed from the prescriptive, theoretical teaching that Hugo Hartung had advocated. The lessons in rhythmic Erziehung seemed less to instruct, to fill a vessel, than to enable the unfolding of what was already latent.

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<sup>92</sup> Schubert-Jahnke, “Die Bedeutung der rhythmisch-musikalischen Erziehung,” 150.

### *Contra Orff?*

All this sounds potentially sweet and hopeful, and the idea of a class of children piping up eagerly to participate in collaborative group improvisation, along with the cherubic images that accompany the Orff guides, tugs at the heartstrings.



**“Musikalische Früherziehung mit Schlaginstrumenten im Kindergarten in der Dregerhoffstraße in Berlin-Köpenick”<sup>93</sup>**

Anyone who has had experience with actual children, however, will know to mistrust these idealistic fantasies. 1930s commentators had observed that even the adult test subjects for Orff’s method had not been able to resist the urge to thump their drums as loudly as possible.<sup>94</sup> One

<sup>93</sup> Objektdatenbank des Deutschen Historischen Museum,  
[http://dhm.de/datenbank/dhm.php?seite=5&fld\\_0=BA404081](http://dhm.de/datenbank/dhm.php?seite=5&fld_0=BA404081) .

<sup>94</sup> Kugler, *Die Methode Jaques-Dalcroze*, 220.

need scarcely point out that children armed with percussion instruments are even harder to curb. Though Orff-inspired manuals described, in warm detail, how teachers were to guide their charges to soft, attentive focus—playing and listening sensitively to the various timbres of the instruments—a different outcome was probably more common, as one reviewer remarked:

For it is surely no accident if so many percussion orchestras, which supposedly play in the spirit of the Orff Schulwerk, sound more like that mechanized mandolin orchestra, whose dry and hectic chirping fills every real musician with sorrow.<sup>95</sup>

In addition, many songs suffered when exposed to what the musicologist Erich Dolfein had disparagingly termed “percussion dilettantism”: the addition of rhythm sticks and triangle to the peaceful “Der Mond ist aufgegangen” “bypassed the task of sensible music-making.”<sup>96</sup>

The din was the most obvious quibble one could have with the Schulwerk. But Orff detractors had other bones to pick as well. At a conference that brought together the Ministry for Culture and the VDK on 4 July 1962, the composer Kurt Schwaen, who was perhaps the GDR’s best-loved composer of children’s works, contradicted the claims that the Schulwerk offered easy beginnings, quick and painless musical (and personal) progress, and a natural starting point for further musical experiences.<sup>97</sup>

Colleague Schwaen gave a very thorough evaluation of the Orff Schulwerk. He proved that the whole system is based on an old song repertoire whose content is never socially critical, and is sometimes questionable, even harmful (examples include “Legende vom St. Nikolaus”). Even considering all the advantages of the method, especially with the Erziehung of preschool children—both pedagogically and with regards to their musicianship—its main deficit lies in its over-emphasis on the rhythmic and its neglect of the melodic and the harmonic. After working through the five-volume work, the children gain access neither to classical music nor to the music of the present. In conclusion. Colleague Schwaen remarked that it would be good to create a Schulwerk that contains our ideas, and develops the positive sides of the Orff Schulwerk, not only rhythmically but in connection with melody and harmony.

Significantly, no one disagreed with Schwaen, even though the meeting was hosted by the Ministry for Culture—the very institution that had recommended the Orff system. It seemed that few people knew how to employ the technique:

From the discussion

Assessments contrary to Colleague Schwaen’s were not offered, despite requests for such. Some of the colleagues reported on their experiences using the Orff Schulwerk. A few years ago, at a conference in Dresden,

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<sup>95</sup> Bogisch, “Die Bedeutung der Schlaginstrumente,” 98.

<sup>96</sup> Kugler, *Die Methode Jaques-Dalcroze*, 215; Kurt Kühne, “Wege zur Verbesserung des Musikunterrichts in der Unterstufe,” *Musik in der Schule* 1959/8, 338.

<sup>97</sup> For more about Schwaen, see Chapter 4.

the Ministry recommended that the music schools take up the Schulwerk as soon as possible. The books and the instruments were acquired at some schools, a teacher was hired, a third lesson per week was set up. Soon the senselessness of the enterprise was recognized. Scarcely a school has progressed beyond the first volume. The instrumentarium and the books are employed in very different ways. For instance: in rhythmic Erziehung, combined with other instruments to create different timbres in the orchestra, occasionally also with our songs. Colleague Schwaen asked whether the Ministry's recommendation from the above-mentioned conference had been revoked. No one knew. [...] *Singen, spielen, lernen* [Bimberg and Lange's Orff textbook] was rejected by several colleagues as "too primitive."<sup>98</sup>

Schwaen had an ideological complaint: the Schulwerk's ideas were outdated, and not "critical." But though this was certainly true, and solidly Marxist to boot, the idea that reappeared consistently in Schulwerk criticism was that it was "too primitive": the music was too easy, it was too childish, it was too rhythmic, it was "backward." This was an odd charge to level at a technique intended, explicitly, to be primitive, which aimed towards "the re-acquisition of our originalness [*Ursprünglichkeit*] in music... a sinking into the not-yet-gone-wrong [*unverbildet*] beginnings of the musical."<sup>99</sup> What could be wrong with the primitive, if it was so perfectly suited to children's nature?

To a twenty-first-century ear, the music is indeed "primitive," childish—it sounds less like a catalog of Western art music fundamentals than it does a saccharine representation of imaginary childhood innocence. Whether or not GDR Musikerzieher heard this music the way I do, many had misgivings: this "primitive" music offered no clear path to the present. Schulwerk champion Siegfried Bimberg had maintained that Orff's backward-looking primitiveness was simultaneously a way forward. Early-music techniques such as ostinato and fauxbourdon helped children "transcend the common cadence-oriented mode of listening," and the harmony, which consisted of "combinations of tone-color complexes," prefigured the orchestration and the craft of "many modern artworks."<sup>100</sup> But Bimberg was alone in arguing that Orff's music was stylistically forward-looking. Others seemed to agree with Schwaen that the music pointed neither to the music of the past nor to the music of the present. In fact, it was not just too rudimentary, but also too individualistic. In his *Grundlagen der Musikerziehung*, Fritz Reuter pointed out that, although the Schulwerk's simple rhythms and melodies were indeed the building blocks of composition, indulging overmuch would eventually result in pieces like Orff's opera *Antigone*—not exactly a promising direction for new music.<sup>101</sup> Others maintained that "the

<sup>98</sup> "Konferenz Ministerium für Kultur und Verband Deutscher Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler," 4 July 1962, SA-AdK VDK 1453.

<sup>99</sup> Erich Doflein, "Orffs Freiburger Improvisationskurs," *Melos* 11 (1932): 28; as quoted in Kugler, *Die Methode Jaques-Dalcroze*, 215.

<sup>100</sup> Bimberg, Bachmann, and Lange, *Singen und Musizieren*, 34.

<sup>101</sup> Fritz Reuter, *Grundlagen der Musikerziehung* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1962), 156. *Antigone* had had a complicated reception in the GDR. Following an enthusiastically received premiere in Dresden in 1950, the opera was condemned—perhaps at the personal behest of Walter Ulbricht himself—for "formalism" and for embracing the "cultural barbarism of US imperialism." That Orff could be lumped in with such "formalists" as Schoenberg says less about the music than it does about the binary nature of GDR official critique, where all terms that meant "bad"

Schulwerk is primarily a guide to Orff's own music, and does not sufficiently take into account the traditions of German music."<sup>102</sup> Orff was simply too Orffy.

Schwaen's other complaint had to do with rhythm itself: the Schulwerk "over-emphasized" rhythm while "neglecting" melody and harmony. Rhythm occupied a bizarre and slippery place in criticisms of the Schulwerk. After all, the point of the system was to train a sense for rhythm, which, the Schulwerk's advocates claimed, was an important auxiliary to developing a sense for melody. Yet to others, rhythm was dangerous. Even though it was a necessary part of music and children's development, it posed a threat to music and children, in ways that seemed intertwined. The "primitiveness" of rhythm was the main source of the Schulwerk's eerie suitability for children's natures. And this, it seemed, was the problem: there was no guarantee that children, indulged, would then grow out of childhood. Fritz Reusch had maintained that rhythm alone would do the trick: "In the rhythm of his first steps and kicks, man seizes his existence [*Dasein*]; in the rhythmic games of childhood, he dares the passage from a natural being to an intellectual being [*Geistwesen*]."<sup>103</sup> But as the East German Musikerzieher and music psychologist Paul Michel explained, Reusch and his West German compatriots were beholden to a false application of the biogenetic law to music education. According to this principle, children went through phases of musical development that mirrored the historical development of music. Between the ages of 1 and 9, which corresponded to "primitive man," children were primarily drawn to rhythm. After that, there followed a phase of "melodic talent and intellectual talent"—Michel, as well, linked intellect and melody—and then another rhythmic phase, before children finally matured to intellect. But biogeneticists ignored the fact that children's environment was an essential factor in their development—thus dooming children, who were exposed only to the music believed to match their ages, to a "turning backwards, or a stabilization of that which was already learned, and no forward motion."<sup>104</sup> In other words, as Schwaen put it, "primitive" music such as the Orff Schulwerk "inhibit[ed] the child's development."<sup>105</sup> Orff, it seemed, could as easily provoke degeneration as progress, something that earlier commenters had also observed. In 1932, a Berlin reviewer wrote, in a Schillerian vein, that the Orff method meant a "regression into the state of culture of archaic times [...] it is impossible to turn back centuries of development and lose oneself in a mendacious primitiveness that is inimical to men, to the nature of our being [*Wesen*], to our time."<sup>106</sup> It was unclear whether the reviewer was writing about a decline in art or a decline in people—or both—but this slippage between music and citizens, also visible in Schwaen's and Michel's words, was exactly what made this method and its dangers seem so potent. To Michel and Schwaen, though rhythm was undeniably the root of children's musical nature, children must be pushed to leave this nature behind.

Schwaen was not against rhythm per se. Elsewhere, he had campaigned vigorously against passive listening and uncritical "Kunstgenuss," the blame for which he laid at over-familiar, stultifying rhythmic patterns such as four-bar periods and the "Plappermelodie" of most

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were used almost interchangeably. Petra Stuber, *Spielräume und Grenzen: Studien zum DDR-Theater* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1998), 115–121.

<sup>102</sup> Bogisch, "Die Bedeutung der Schlaginstrumente": 98.

<sup>103</sup> Reusch, "Grundlagen und Ziele des Orff-Schulwerks," 53.

<sup>104</sup> "Parteiaktiv und Zentralvorstand vom 28.9. bi 30.9.62 in Weimar," SA-AdK VKM 105.

<sup>105</sup> "Sitzung des Zentralvorstandes 24. Mai 1959." SA-AdK VKM 92.

<sup>106</sup> Kugler, *Die Methode Jaques-Dalcroze*, 222.



children's songs (♩♩♩, ♩♩♩, ♩♩♩♩♩♩♩).<sup>107</sup> In addition, he had his own background in expressive dance, having played piano for Mary Wigman's studio for several years during the Nazi period. His quibble with Orff was not over the presence of a rhythmic element, but rather its strength. The rhythm overwhelmed the melody—it was an aggressor, rather than the savior of the fragile body and soul (as Feudel would have it). In this view, rhythm and melody did not work in beautiful concert, but in competition. Fritz Reuter went so far as to accuse the Schulwerk's rhythms of violence against melody, arguing that “with many percussion scores, one gets the impression that the melody of the song—sung or played—is violated [*vergewaltigt*] by the noisy backdrop of the clattering rhythms and the ostinato figures of the rhythm sticks.”<sup>108</sup> The Musikererzieher and music psychologist Paul Michel voiced a nearly identical complaint, that the Schulwerk was “a violation of the melody—if one can even hear it in the face of 26 individual parts, ostinati, etc.”<sup>109</sup>

### *Rhythm, Jazz, and the Anxiety of Grown-ups*

The thought that rhythm could “violate” melody is a striking one, and even more so when one thinks of the various other meanings of “*vergewaltigen*,” which include “attack” and even “rape.” This may seem disproportionate, considering the banality of the music. However, one can find other, earlier instances of rhythm as metaphorical “attacker,” such as Erich Major's assertion that rhythm, which reveals the “primitive will to eternalize itself,” is “the highest violation of the sense of time [*höchste Vergewaltigung der Zeitempfindung*].”<sup>110</sup> Such assertions suggest that this trope is hardly unique to Orff. Indeed, rhythm appeared similarly dangerous in another contemporary musical practice: jazz.

Georg Knepler, a leading East German musicologist and a pioneer in the new field of Marxist musicology, was—like so many of his compatriots—wary of jazz:

Knepler: ...the young people who are interested in jazz are, for the most part, lost to everything else. Not only to music, but also to all other interests—also to...

Interjection: Proof!

Knepler: Well, come on, you know it yourself.<sup>111</sup>

Popular music was indeed supplanting “classical” music in East Germans' preferences. A FDJ survey of 16-year-olds from the early 60s showed that only 17.6% were especially interested in “symphonic music,” “chamber music,” and “opera”—music that could safely be considered

<sup>107</sup> Kurt Schwaen, *Kindermusiktheater in der Schule: Erfahrungen und Anregungen* (Leipzig: Zentralhaus für Kulturarbeit der DDR, 1979), 35; also Kurt Schwaen, “Was Sie von der Schulmusik erwarten,” *Musik in der Schule* 1956/6, 259.

<sup>108</sup> Reuter, *Grundlagen der Musikerziehung*, 157.

<sup>109</sup> “Parteiaktiv und Zentralvorstand vom 28.9. bis 30.9.62 in Weimar,” SA-AdK VKM 105.

<sup>110</sup> Erich Major, *Die Quellen des künstlerischen Schaffens. Versuch einer neuen Ästhetik*. (Leipzig: Klinckschardt & Biermann, 1913), 84.

<sup>111</sup> “Diskussion über Jazz mit Prof. Hanns Eisler in der deutschen Akademie der Künste,” 15 May 1956, p. 28, SA-AdK Hanns-Eisler-Archiv 2854.

classical. The rest dedicated themselves to the “light” genres of “operetta,” “dance music,” and “entertainment music,” all of which had gained in popularity after the war:

Symphonic music	6.0%
Chamber music	0.5%
Opera	11.1%
Operetta	9.4%
Dance music	56.0%
“Unterhaltungsmusik”	17.0% <sup>112</sup>

This survey—one of many that displayed similar results—is useful not only for its numbers, but also for its design: the genre designations are organized according to what the adults in question understood as “real” music, and they are paradigmatic in their vagueness with regards to popular genres. For music commentators, popular genres were a source of complete confusion. East German musicologists typically distinguished between “ernste Musik” (“serious music”; by which classical music was meant) and “Unterhaltungsmusik” (“entertainment music”; everything else).<sup>113</sup> Within “U-Musik,” the terms “jazz,” “Schlager,” “Unterhaltungsmusik,” “leichte Musik/leichte Muse” and “Tanzmusik” were often used imprecisely and with a great deal of overlap. Nevertheless, it may be useful to make some basic distinctions among the genres. “Tanzmusik” was used for contemporary dances. “Schlager” was (and is) a genre of German hit songs, characterized—in East German terms, at least—by its sentimentality. “Leichte Musik” could also encompass excerpts from operetta. Over the first post-war decade, the term “jazz” was used to mean a number of things: the music played on the American Forces Network stations, music made by black Americans, and sometimes even all popular music.<sup>114</sup> As Horst Lange explains, “a dire terminological confusion arose in Germany with regards to jazz. Only the experts knew what real jazz was.”<sup>115</sup> Lange’s claim is likely exaggerated, as by the mid-1950s many Germans had heard enough jazz to differentiate it from “lighter popular hits.”<sup>116</sup> But the term “jazz” continued to be widely applied, even to styles that were very clearly German in origin such as Schlager: the pejorative designation “jazz,” from a certain quarter, indicated a kind of kitsch for which the Americans were to blame.

The pull of these popular genres, researchers determined, lay in their “hot” rhythms: “What is appealing about jazz? The syncopations, the rhythms, the drum solo, the sense of the body getting carried away by motoric sound.”<sup>117</sup> Jazz, in other words, was compelling because it literally compelled the bodies of its listeners. Unlike the (mostly) positively received rhythmic

<sup>112</sup> “Ergänzungen zur Einschätzung des Einflusses des Verbandes auf das kulturelle und sportliche Leben der Jugend,” SAPMO-BArch DY 24/3893, Band 1: 1960-1961.

<sup>113</sup> See, for instance, Hanns Eisler, “Manifest” for the Second International Conference of Composers and Music Critics in Prague, May 1948. In Ulrich Dibelius et al., *Neue Musik im geteilten Deutschland*, vol 1 (Berlin:, Henschel Verlag, 1993), 68–70.

<sup>114</sup> The musicologist Nathan Notowicz had advocated “that very many forms of music made by the Negroes should be treated as a whole.” “Diskussion über Jazz,” p. 3, SA-AdK Hanns-Eisler-Archiv 2854. Also Horst H. Lange, *Jazz in Deutschland: Die Deutsche Jazz-Chronik bis 1960* (Hildesheim: Olms Presse, 1996), 145.

<sup>115</sup> Lange, *Jazz in Deutschland*, 145.

<sup>116</sup> Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 138.

<sup>117</sup> Willi Maertens, “Über das Verhältnis Jugendlicher der Reifezeit zur Musik: Ein Beitrag zum Problem der musikalischen Rezeption,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* X, no. 1 (1961): 105.

pull of the Orff Schulwerk, however, these enticing rhythms were a double-edged sword. For some, rhythmically exciting music fulfilled the needs of the working class, as the musicologist Ernst Hermann Meyer acknowledged:

It would be wrong to misjudge the rhythmic vitality, the instrumental color, the element of improvisation and the humor and wit of the original jazz, as these fulfill real needs of the workers; incidentally, these are qualities that could by all means be useful in the creation of a new, contemporary music for dancing and entertainment.<sup>118</sup>

Indeed, Reginald Rudolf, a political scientist and journalist who was poised to become the GDR's leading jazz advocate, wrote that this American "folk music" could prove an inspiration: a marriage of "melodies from the treasures of our folk dance music and the new, beautiful dance forms of today" could revitalize German popular dance music.<sup>119</sup> Hoping to achieve this goal—and, surely, in an attempt at damage control on popular music—the VDK ran competitions, some with cash prizes, to write Schlager of better quality.<sup>120</sup> Others saw in the modern preference for jazz, Schlager, and dance music an opportunity to win listeners over, slowly, to "serious" music. Some composers thus included elements of jazz and blues in their music. Yet for all that, many seemed to consider this effort a dead end, as good taste could apparently be nurtured only on a strict diet of good music. The notorious crank Meyer, for one, felt that one could not make a silk purse from a sow's ear: "One cannot lead from light entertainment music, or from primitive musical content, to the experience of the great works."<sup>121</sup> Fascinating rhythm, as Hanns Eisler argued, could corrupt the listener's ear: "those who take the empty *Motorik* from jazz, and then find the same thing in Bach, will become lousy Bach listeners."<sup>122</sup> Even tempered by a classical setting, jazz rhythms posed a danger to Germans' behavior, as the composer Dieter Nowka fretted:

Then another question, which I'd like to touch on very briefly. That is the question of the use of influences from jazz and dance music in symphonic music. I don't know—I believe that there's some danger there. Because if we were to perform Liebermann's Concerto for Jazz Band and Orchestra for a larger group of unspoiled, fresh young people, then they would

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<sup>118</sup> Ernst Hermann Meyer, *Musik im Zeitgeschehen* (Berlin: Henschel, 1952), 162.

<sup>119</sup> Reginald Rudolf, "Für eine frohe, ausdrucksvolle Tanzmusik," *Musik und Gesellschaft* 1952/8, 251. Through the timely publication of several widely read articles, Rudolf had established himself as the GDR's own jazz expert. Together with his friend Heinz Lukasz, he ran a jazz radio show ("Vom Lebenslauf einer Musik") from September 1954 to March 1955. In addition, he started a jazz club in 1955 at the Leipzig FDJ—one of many such clubs in East Germany—and gave frequent guest lectures about jazz in numerous venues. Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 154. For a chronology of jazz events in the GDR, see Rainer Bratfisch, *Freie Töne: die Jazzszene in der DDR* (Berlin: Links, 2005); Uta G. Poiger, "Amerikanischer Jazz und (ost)deutsche Respektabilität," in *Akten, Eingaben, Schaufenster: die DDR und ihre Texte. Erkundungen zu Herrschaft und Alltag*, ed. Alf Lütke and Peter Becker (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), 119–36.

<sup>120</sup> "Wettbewerb Tanzmusik" in "Protokoll über die Sitzung des Sekretariats am 6.3.59," SA-AdK VKM 623; "Protokoll der Bürositzung vom 16.7.59," SA-AdK VKM 624.

<sup>121</sup> Walther Siegmund-Schultze, "Schlußwort," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* XI, no. 1 (1962): 72.

<sup>122</sup> "Diskussion über Jazz," p. 36, SA-AdK Hanns-Eisler-Archiv 2854

probably climb onto their chairs at the final mambo. And I don't know if that serves our purposes.<sup>123</sup>

Beyond questions of “serious” music, there was a more fundamental problem in the relationship between jazz and GDR Marxist art theory. On the other hand, the doctrine of socialist realism mandated a music that was, in Meyer's words, “truly and deeply folk-like [*volkstümlich*], without being primitive, and which has the closest connection to national folk music.”<sup>124</sup> Jazz, though not a German folk music, still might deserve the respect accorded to the folk traditions of other socialist nations. Rudolf exploited this mandate in his defense of jazz, maintaining that jazz was, in effect, an “urban folk music” born of spirituals and the blues. The last two styles were celebrated as an expression of real suffering, a progressive music that depicted the social conditions of the time under which it was produced: “a sad, but never powerless expression of the Negro's real musical sensations [*Empfinden*]; [these styles] are based on complaints about the inhuman conditions of the life of the working Negro.” By the same token, jazz was a way for black Americans to voice their oppression, “giving a new, spontaneous musical expression to their feelings, their pitiful lives, their hatred, but also their hopes for a new social order.”<sup>125</sup>

Yet much of the jazz that reached German ears, skeptics argued, had nothing in common with these noble beginnings. They drew a distinction between “authentic” jazz—politically viable, as it was understood to be a “folk” music—and “corrupted” jazz, which had been taken over by the “profit hyenas” of Tin Pan Alley. Thus, to critique jazz was to critique American capitalist-imperialist commodification, as in Meyer's paradigmatic assessment of jazz in his 1952 text *Musik im Zeitgeschehen*:

Jazz was once the expression of the lively, metropolitan-folksy life of Negroes and whites in the American South, created after the First World War as a contemporary art expression. [...] But from a early stage of its development onwards, jazz was seized upon by American industry exclusively for the purposes of profit, and distributed on a huge scale. The “boogie-woogie” of today is a channel through which the barbarizing poison of Americanism penetrates, threatening to anesthetize the brains of the workers. This threat is exactly as dangerous as a military attack with poisonous gas [...] Here, the American amusement industry kills several birds with one stone: it conquers the musical markets of other countries and helps to undermine their cultural independence through boogie-woogie-cosmopolitanism; it propagates the degenerate ideology of American monopoly capitalism with its lack of culture, its criminal and psychopathic films, its empty sensationalism and, above all, its warmongering and destructive wrath. The “boogie-woogie” of today is the

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<sup>123</sup> “Parteiaktiv und Zentralvorstand vom 28.9. bis 30.9.62 in Weimar,” SA-AdK VKM 105.

<sup>124</sup> Ernst Hermann Meyer, “Über sozialistischen Realismus,” in *Neue Musik im geteilten Deutschland*, ed. Ulrich Dibelius and Frank Schneider, vol. 1, *Dokumente aus den fünfziger Jahren* (Berlin: Henschel, 1993), 132-133. For a thorough consideration of socialist realism as a Zhdanovian doctrine and how it was interpreted in the GDR, see Laura Silverberg, “The East German Sonderweg to Modern Music, 1956-1971” (University of Pennsylvania, 2007) and “Between Dissonance and Dissidence: Socialist Modernism in the German Democratic Republic,” *The Journal of Musicology* 26, no. 1 (2009): 44–84.

<sup>125</sup> Rudolf, “Für eine frohe, ausdrucksvolle Tanzmusik,” 248.

weakest imitation of a formerly lively jazz—it is sultry and sentimental, dishonest and, in an artistic sense, worse than worthless.<sup>126</sup>

Meyer's grudging and brief acknowledgement of the "Ur-Jazz" quickly gave way to a lengthy account of all the ways in which jazz has been corrupted. Here, "original" jazz was described in adjectives more evaluative than analytical: rhythmic vitality, colorful instrumentation, improvisation, humor. In contrast, Meyer's description of bad music was more specific, even if terminologically inexact. "The newest turn in the American Schlager business" consisted of the "complete abandonment of the melody. In its place is either a mechanical repetition of trivial tiny phrases or, even more, the sharp, irritating 'Effect'—rhythm, harmony, and instrumentation in equal measure." His description of the "Song" (presumably a Tin Pan Alley-style standard, though Kurt Weill's "Songs" also fit the bill) was even more concrete, leaving the "authentic" jazz, in contrast, even farther behind:

The modern "song" corrupts, vulgarizes, and narrows the artistic taste of the masses. It is musically strictly limited: metrically, due to its unvarying eight-bar periods; harmonically, due to its unvarying cadential formulae, pushed together to occupy a tiny space, as well as to the cookie-cutter, common chord progressions with their cloudy harmonies; melodically, due to the predetermined harmonic structure as well as the clichéd intervals, repeated countless times; and in terms of performance, due to the sentimentality, the simulated (yet mass-produced) "feeling" in tone and in expression.<sup>127</sup>

It is immediately apparent, of course, that Meyer's critique, in its emphasis on emptiness and sentimentality in service of an "American amusement industry," borrowed from Theodor W. Adorno's jazz critique of 1936.<sup>128</sup> Meyer would not have acknowledged Adornian influence openly: he saw himself as criticizing the problems of a capitalist modernity from the perspective of the right side of history, a luxury which, he was aware, the West German Adorno could not claim for himself. Yet the similarities were obvious. Adorno had argued that jazz, which posed as progressive music, was in fact unoriginal and formulaic: its progressive façade merely served to solidify further the status quo. What is more, it was exactly those musical elements of jazz that made it seem so "elemental"—"the fixed, almost timeless stasis within movement; the mask-like stereotypology; the combination of wild agitation as the illusion of a dynamic and the inexorability of the authority which dominates such agitation"—that made it a "commodity."<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Meyer, *Musik im Zeitgeschehen*, 162.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, "On Jazz," in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard D. Leppert, trans. Susan H. Gillespie (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002). It is worth noting that numerous GDR critiques of jazz borrow from Adorno: Eisler's assertions that jazz was, "according to its nature," the music most easily corrupted by the market, and that the rhythmic contrast in jazz is achieved through "cheating," are also Adornian ideas. Adorno, "On Jazz," 470-471"; "Hanns Eisler über den Jazz," *Berliner Zeitung*, 4 April 1956. Of Louis Armstrong, Eisler was to say: "A real—also a rhythmic—regression, because the antagonism (the contradiction) between the base rhythm and the concert rhythm is a so-called mechanical contradiction, which always returns faithfully to the strong beat and embraces it tenderly." "Diskussion über Jazz," p. 28, SA-AdK Hanns-Eisler-Archiv 2854. Even the idea that jazz cannot participate in dialectical sublation (and therefore progress) was expressed—if not first—then famously by Adorno.

<sup>129</sup> Adorno, "On Jazz," 478.

This critique of jazz proved powerful, and Rudolf himself adopted Meyer's strategy of differentiating between authentic jazz and corrupt jazz, even directly quoting Meyer's own statements about swing and bebop. In fact, both arguments—for "authentic" jazz as a lost art, and for "authentic" jazz as a music which, as a kind of "folk" music, could be used to inspire new German dance music—had a passable claim to socialist ideology. According to Poiger, this was part of the confusion in the official position on jazz, which flip-flopped several times in the course of the 1950s.<sup>130</sup> The rest was due to the difficulty, for Party members and cultural commentators, of balancing the ideological and political need for solidarity and the runaway popularity of jazz with their own deeply held suspicions about this music. (The state could hardly afford to alienate its young people; in Hanns Eisler's rueful words, "after all, we can't dictate [what they listen to]").<sup>131</sup>

Issues of taste and anti-capitalism were only the beginning of the complex reception of jazz in East Germany. For, as Poiger argues, "East and West German debates about jazz were also always debates about African Americans, their culture, and their history."<sup>132</sup> Race was a complex and unresolved issue in East Germany. Marxist doctrine mandated solidarity with oppressed proletarians the world over. This included African Americans, understood to be the victims of the world's most oppressive imperialist and capitalist nation. At the urging of the government, GDR public opinion demonstrated warm support of black Americans, especially those censured and persecuted for their political beliefs, such as Paul Robeson. Like the Soviet Union, the GDR cited American civil right abuses in claiming political and ethical superiority over the USA, a country that legally discriminated against its own citizens based on the color of their skin.<sup>133</sup> In contrast—also to West Germany—the GDR saw itself as an anti-racist, anti-colonialist, and anti-fascist state.<sup>134</sup> Nonetheless, political solidarity is not the same thing as a critical assessment of race as a concept, as Sabine Boeck has pointed out with regards to post-war West Germany. Despite their anti-segregationist convictions, "[West] German progressives did not devise a critical epistemology which could have taken German antiblack racism, Germany's role in the history of the slave trade and colonialism, actual German implications in an international black diaspora, and a self-critical reading of the white hegemony into account."<sup>135</sup> Similarly, Poiger argues, the issue of racism and anti-racism with regards to the GDR's reception of jazz was a complicated matter. "It would seem that the racialism and racism

<sup>130</sup> Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, 159.

<sup>131</sup> "Diskussion über Jazz," p. 36, SA-AdK Hanns-Eisler-Archiv 2854.

<sup>132</sup> Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, 138.

<sup>133</sup> A great deal of scholarship has addressed the contradictions and hypocrisy of American domestic policy during the Cold War, as well how international pressure helped change discriminatory American legislation. Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Timothy L. Schroer, *Recasting Race after World War II: Germans and African Americans in American-Occupied Germany* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2007). For information on the promise that Soviet countries offered black Americans, see Joy Gleason Carew, *Blacks, Reds, and Russians: Sojourners in Search of the Soviet Promise* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008).

<sup>134</sup> See Alfred Babing, *Gegen Rassismus, Apartheid und Kolonialismus: Dokumente der DDR 1949-1977* (Berlin: Staatsverlag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1978).

<sup>135</sup> Sabine Boeck, "The Erotics of African American Endurance, Or: On the Right Side of History? White (West)-German Public Sentiment between Pornotroping and Civil Rights Solidarity," in *Germans and African Americans: Two Centuries of Exchange*, ed. Larry A. Greene and Anke Ortlepp (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2011), 128.

apparent in East German charges of ‘decadence,’ ‘degeneracy,’ and ‘primitivism’ against American popular culture were clearly at odds with East Germany’s public stance against racism in the United States,” she points out.<sup>136</sup> And of course, even those assessments of African American culture that purported to be “positive” still relied on essentializing ideas of racial difference. Ernst Bartsch’s influential book *Neger, Jazz, und tiefer Süden* presented African Americans using the best-worn clichés: as a physical people for whom “rhythm is everything.”<sup>137</sup> “Which of us did not read *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in his youth? Who has heard of black jazz trumpeters, singers, and athletes? And yet we know so little about the Negroes of America,” began Bartsch’s story, written “without academic ballast, and with realistic clarity” to appeal to the lay reader.<sup>138</sup> His account of African-American culture touched on only athletics and music: African Americans had an “enthusiastic love, one could even say a fanaticism for music” that was matched by “a fine musical sensibility, an instinctive sense for rhythm, strong feelings and expression, and a pronounced talent for imitation.”<sup>139</sup> Their talents were nature-given and unconscious—“[they] of course had no idea about written music”—and were limited to the realms of the intuitive and the physical rather than the intellectual.<sup>140</sup> In addition, as Manfred Frisch wrote, jazz improvisation was part of “a wholly original musical tradition [*ursprüngliches Musikantentum*], which we must appreciate especially because it is hardly the realm of us Europeans any longer,” but which African Americans still possessed.<sup>141</sup> The supposed “nature” of African Americans was thus presented as coterminous with the qualities thought inherent in jazz music: both were thought “more *ursprünglich* and more original” than white Europeans and their music-making.<sup>142</sup>

These racialized jazz critiques co-existed uncomfortably with the Marxist discourse of social and musical progress, the proponents of which would have understood themselves to be vigilant anti-racists. Thus Jamie Owen Daniel, in writing about Adorno’s “On Jazz,” seeks to rehabilitate Adorno’s argument, commonly condemned for its racist language, by arguing that Adorno was writing not about “real” jazz, but rather about the function that commercialized jazz played in Europe.<sup>143</sup> The two critical lineages, however, are not so easily disentangled. Both warn about a “regression” of European culture—and, crucially, both identify rhythm as the culprit. Nowhere was this more clearly demonstrated than in a lengthy meeting held at the Akademie der Künste on 14 May 1956.<sup>144</sup> The meeting had been convened by the Minister for

<sup>136</sup> Uta G. Poiger, “American Music, Cold War Liberalism, and German Identities,” in *Transactions, Transgressions, Transformations: American Culture in Western Europe and Japan*, ed. Heide Fehrenbach and Uta G. Poiger (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 130.

<sup>137</sup> Ernst Bartsch, *Neger, Jazz und tiefer Süden* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1956), 239.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

<sup>141</sup> Manfred Frisch, “Was ist Jazz? Eine Einführung,” *Musik in der Schule* 1957/1, 29.

<sup>142</sup> As Kira Thurman has demonstrated, this racialized view of African Americans also constrained the reception of classically-trained black singers in both East and West Germany. Kira Thurman, “Black Venus, White Bayreuth: Race, Sexuality, and the Depoliticization of Wagner in Postwar West Germany,” *German Studies Review* 35, no. 3 (2012): 607–26; Kira Thurman, “The German Lied and the Songs of Black Volk,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 67, no. 2 (2014): 565–69.

<sup>143</sup> Jamie Owen Daniel, “Introduction to Adorno’s ‘On Jazz,’” *Discourse* 12, no. 1 (October 1, 1989): 39–44.

<sup>144</sup> “Diskussion über Jazz,” p. 36, SA-AdK Hanns-Eisler-Archiv 2854. The record of this meeting, which was transcribed from tape, is a truly amazing document that reveals Eisler’s deeply modernist assumptions about what makes good music and the angst of a generational divide, among other things. My thanks to Michael Schmidt for leading me to this source.

Culture, who had asked Rudorf and a number of musicologists and composers—presumed jazz *Kenner* Hanns Eisler received star billing—to develop a statement on jazz, “a few maxims or thoughts so that the Ministry can know what jazz is” (as Eisler put it).<sup>145</sup> This expert opinion would then, presumably, inform an official position. (One can assume that the Ministry bureaucrats were even more perplexed by jazz’s appeal than the composers.)

On the one hand, Eisler remarked, the jazz records that Rudorf was playing for him represented, by and large, “primitive and bad” music:

...completely undemanding music (you can drink coffee, shave, eat lunch—you can bathe, you can even go for a walk, if you have one of those little portable apparatuses)—it doesn’t ask anything of people: nothing! The fact that it brings a certain motoric-rhythmic satisfaction.... you could just as well get a little drum and bang on it with a clever [*schick*] rhythm, until you get drunk off of it! You could do that too, isn’t that right?<sup>146</sup>

Here, it was the rhythm, which demanded nothing of the listener, that characterized jazz’s easy-listening and intoxicating qualities. But rhythm, to Eisler, led to more than stultification—it was also dehumanizing.

Rudorf: I have been watching how some of you react. For instance, it is curious how you reacted, Herr Professor. From the standpoint of a jazz fan, you did the rhythm entirely incorrectly.

Eisler: I didn’t do any rhythm at all! [...]

Rudorf: I have often observed that those who have no sense for the rhythmic conflicts in jazz, or in the emancipated bar music that we have just heard... that they, if they don’t have a feeling for it, just don’t grasp this rhythmic element.

(Eisler tells Rudorf that he doesn’t need to fidget in order to understand music, and Rudorf replies that all folk music is tapped along to [*mitmarkiert*].)<sup>147</sup>

Eisler: My dear sir, I am from Leipzig—I am not from South Africa. I don’t let myself get carried away.

Rudorf: Yes, but please excuse me: there are hundreds of jazz fans in Leipzig who let themselves get carried away! (In response to some interjections): Yes, please! Indeed, indeed! I want to make myself understood in the interest of these young people? Why shouldn’t they do that? Isn’t that a vital experience of the music?

Goldschmidt: A question: is every animality a sign of vitality for you?

Rudorf: No, of course not!

Goldschmidt: There are very different forms of vitality...

Rudorf: Yes, and I am of the opinion that exactly this vitality...

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 1. The attendees included Georg Knepler, Hans-Georg Uszkoreit, Nathan Notowicz, Max Butting, Harry Goldschmidt, and Ludwig-Richard Müller.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 23, 38.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 63-66.



Goldschmidt: Professor Eisler is very vital—especially today in the discussion. But I have not noticed anything animalistic about him, in the remarks that he made, and I also haven't made myself into a attorney of animality...

Rudorf: Are you saying that you noticed something animalistic about us, when we...

Eisler: Mr. Rudorf, we don't want to upset you!

Rudorf: When I say that I tap my foot along with the rhythm and you say that belongs in the realm of the animalistic—yes, great, then the conversation is over.

Rhythm snuck into the susceptible body, causing the fictional South African and the real Leipzig teenagers to be “carried away,” a sort of experience that, to Goldschmidt, was the same as “animality,” which, presumably, a “civilized” listener would not experience. In these accounts, rhythm was the agent of musical, social, and racial degeneration.

### *The Idea of the “Primitive”*

This rhythmic seduction to a racialized animality would seem the exact opposite of the rhythms offered to children to reverse the corruption of the modern world. But though one threatened destruction while the other promised renewal, if not exactly progress, these contrasting takes on rhythm were two sides of the same coin: perhaps evidenced by the fact that jazz was sometimes also read as regenerative and Orff regressive. Indeed, these fears and hopes about rhythm and the way it shaped bodies grew out of the same set of ideas. Black Americans were believed to have the same relationship to jazz as children did to the *Schulwerk*, and for the same reasons: because their selves inhered in the corporeal rather than the intellectual, both groups were thought to have an instinctive and pre-rational tie to the rhythms of music, already a more “original” [*ursprünglich*] aspect of music than melody. Both, then, occupied an uncultivated realm separate from grown-up Europeans, who created music not as an unconscious expression of their nature but as an act of will.

The idea that black Americans (and their music) were “natural” traded on a much older tradition of European thought that had divided the world into *Naturvölker* and *Kulturvölker*: those who existed in an unchanging state of nature, outside of time, and those with history and culture. The *Naturmensch*, as he had not entered into progress, provided a glimpse into human nature, nature “unobscured by the masks of culture,” while also representing the forebears of the *Kulturvolk*. Thus, the *Naturmensch* revealed man's natural self, as well as the origins of civilization: to study the *Naturmensch* was to study simultaneously human nature and one's own past.<sup>148</sup> More to the point, the related ideas of the natural and the cultural were part of a civilizing discourse: one that pitted the idea of a timeless “nature” against the idea of a historical “culture,” and charted the journey from one to the other within the body and lifespan of the individual, an idea foundational to both Rousseau's *Émile* and Schiller's *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*. As such, these ideas recapitulated the motion of leaving childhood for adulthood, of maturing from a

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<sup>148</sup> Andrew Zimmermann, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 4. This is a view also often held about children.

natural beginning to a cultural adulthood in society—a connection made explicit by frequent descriptions of “primitives” as childlike.<sup>149</sup>

Described in this way—and familiar from a number of classic texts, such as *Robinson Crusoe*—the *Naturmensch* may seem a convenient and abstract fabrication. He appears as a mirror for the European, not a human in his own right, and Schiller’s casual lumping-together of children, “country folk,” and “the primitive world” as that to which we “dedicate a kind of love and tender respect [...] simply *because it is nature*” would seem to tell us more about the sentimental “us” than about the naïve objects of our affection.<sup>150</sup> Certainly a strain of popular knowledge holds (erroneously) that the “noble savage,” the *Naturmensch*’s close cousin, was invented by Rousseau out of whole cloth, in order to critique European society more effectively.<sup>151</sup> But many scholars have pointed out that European images and concepts of “primitives,” whether noble, natural, or childish, arose out of real and, in some cases, long-lasting engagements—colonial, imperial, anthropological—with Africans, Native Americans, and Asians, both abroad and on the European continent.<sup>152</sup> As Susanne Zantop argues, although Germany acquired its own colonies only late in the nineteenth century, German “fantasies” of colonial encounters from the late eighteenth century onward both naturalized the idea of colonialism, “creat[ing] a colonialist imagination and mentality that beg[ged] to translate thought into action,” and also proved a way for Germany to create an “imagined community,” differentiating itself from other European nations through the superiority of its would-be colonial rule.<sup>153</sup> Thus the well-worn image of the “primitive” was built on a relationship of conquest, either real or desired, with a racialized Other: it was both produced by and produced colonial encounters. As Andrew Zimmerman puts it, the “very notion of a European self was worked out in the colonies so that the ‘self’ of humanism and the ‘other’ of imperialism were twin births.”<sup>154</sup>

The identification of “primitive” people with children—in Hegel’s words, “eine Kindernation”—did more than prepare for and justify colonial rule: at the same time, it produced

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<sup>149</sup> For an overview of primary texts in which the (Black) “primitive” is figured as childlike, see Sander L. Gilman, *On Blackness without Blacks: Essays on the Image of the Black in Germany* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1982), and Dienne Hondius, *Blackness in Western Europe: Racial Patterns of Paternalism and Exclusion* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2014).

<sup>150</sup> Friedrich Schiller, *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry and On the Sublime: Two Essays* (New York: Ungar, 1966), 83. (emphasis original).

<sup>151</sup> Ter Ellingson points out that it was the French lawyer and ethnographer Marc Lescarbot who coined the term “noble savage” in 1609. Ellingson’s book is a thorough consideration of the origins and subsequent mythologizing (and critiques) of this discursive trope. Ter Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), chapter 2.

<sup>152</sup> Lescarbot invented the “noble savage” upon his return from the New World, but as a comparative legal concept, rather “an idealized equation of morality with nature.” Ibid., 32. See also ibid., chapters 11–13; Gilman, *On Blackness without Blacks*; Hondius, *Blackness in Western Europe*; Zimmermann, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*.

<sup>153</sup> Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770–1870*, Post-Contemporary Interventions (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 3–7. In addition to familial relationships, several scholars have discussed ways in which racialized colonial discourse also constructed European notions of gender and sex (which, of course, are inextricable from family structures). See Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Richard C. Trexler, *Sex and Conquest: Gendered Violence, Political Order, and the European Conquest of the Americas* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995). For more information on how colonial narratives produced German identities, see Jeff Bowersox, *Raising Germans in the Age of Empire: Youth and Colonial Culture, 1871–1914*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>154</sup> Zimmermann, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*, 3.

power relationships between European subjects at home. Zantop suggests that the colonial discourse that figured colonized subjects as “children” cut both ways, as the paternal attitude towards the colonized resulted in a “racialized” view of women and children, the domestic subjects of paternal power.<sup>155</sup> At the same time, German accounts of colonial encounters were often pedagogical in nature, and on two accounts. They often depicted the European educating the “primitive” to “civilized” behaviors—which, though noble, was an effort; in addition, in teaching children about the European domination of the natural world and its “natural” people, older people were preparing young German subjects to be future colonialists—a move that resembled nothing more than a “colonialization.”<sup>156</sup> A “civilizing” pedagogy that aimed for the triumph of culture over nature, Zantop implies, was thus always also a discourse of subjugation—whether applied to foreign “primitives” or one’s own children.

In the GDR, of course, the racialized division of the world into colonizers and colonized were believed long abandoned: such people had no place in a modern socialist and anti-racist society. But just as colonial “fantasies” were not solely the product of political action, but also produced it, their complete erasure could not transpire—or, at the very least, not immediately—as a result of state policy only. Bartsch’s well-reviewed book, at the very least, should hint at the fact that ideas of black people as intuitive and “natural,” rather than intellectual and “cultured”—ideas forged at the beginnings of European colonialism—had never really disappeared.<sup>157</sup> Traces of a civilizing mentality resurfaced in the *Akademie* discussion, in which music became a metonym for the societies who made it: the ways in which Eisler responded to the music rehearsed all the most tired clichés. In response to Rudolf’s claims that jazz was an art form equal to German art, Eisler huffed,

Don’t forget that we greybeards, as well, have since our youth been accustomed to listening to and knowing exactly the most extremely complicated and advanced music. In contrast, jazz, even your jazz, is.... childish. Wait a moment! I am only saying: we are accustomed to hearing and understanding sounds, compared to which even your most artful jazz is a children’s game, milk soup, a lamb in the woods.<sup>158</sup>

Eisler judged music according to modernist notions of value, privileging innovation and complexity; it is therefore no surprise that jazz fell short. At the same time, it is hard to ignore the racialized element to describing a music previously understood as “animalistic” to be “childish” as well. Eisler was, however, careful to note that he was not opposed to all music made by African Americans, even if it was not the equal of the music he preferred. Of a recording of the Spirit of Memphis Quartet singing spirituals, he exclaimed,

I also think that the way of singing is wonderful. It has nothing at all to do with polyphony. It’s pure singing club [*Gesangsverein*], my dear sirs! Just like in

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<sup>155</sup> Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 5–6.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 105–106.

<sup>157</sup> Bartsch saw himself—if not explicitly politically progressive—as certainly well-meaning. The same was true of many of the educational materials developed to teach children about racism, which decry the racist and classist inequality of American society while depicting situations in which whites save blacks from mistreatment. See, for instance, E. Jablonski and F. Menzendorff, “Schwarz-Weiß: Ein Tanzspiel für Kinder von mindestens 12 Jahren,” *Musik in der Schule* 1959/10.

<sup>158</sup> “Diskussion über Jazz,” p. 46, SA-AdK Hanns-Eisler-Archiv 2854.

Thuringia—though our people are not quite as miserable (not even a hundred years ago) as these.... If this is jazz, I'm for it.<sup>159</sup>

However, this “cold, exquisite” sort of singing had Anglo-Saxon roots, not African.<sup>160</sup> Rudorf, for his part, had also traced “Negro Songs” to the places

where, after slavery had ended, the exploitation was the most shameless [...] there the secular songs of the Negroes arose, mostly under the immediate influence of the folklore of the European emigrants, especially the Germans.<sup>161</sup>

In order for this music to become acceptable, its origins had to be proven—colonized, even—as safely European.

I am comparing these discussions of Orff and of jazz not to claim that one somehow caused the other, but rather to show that both are grounded, ultimately, in the same discourse about modern European origins, which located the beginnings of civilization and the beginnings of modern adulthood in the same undifferentiated morass: the natural and rhythmic state. That the *Naturmensch* is childlike had been a truism of European thought for generations. That the equation was reversible—if so-called primitives are childlike, then children are also primitive—had also never been denied. Seidl's matter-of-fact equivalence of the child and the primitive demonstrated that this commonality had hitherto been accepted, even welcomed. Music was believed to be the natural habitat of children as it was of primitives, and for the music educator, that fact was foundational. Yet the advent of jazz, a form of music that would seem to perform, in Reusch's words, the “base elements” of the primitive, cast a different light on the issue. Rhythm, which would seem to enable children to realize their nature fully, also offered no way out of this timeless and natural state: a state represented, in terrifying musical and bodily reality, by jazz music and its performers. Significantly, it was *Orff's* music that was subsequently thought suspect, not the Dalcrozean movements that were grounded in the same concept of the primitive. Dalcroze, after all, had identified the rhythmic and racial danger, and countered it with an injunction to tame the percussive in favor of the melody, in effect describing a Schillerian trajectory from “primitiveness” to “civilization.”

If we would restore to the body all the rhythms it has gradually forgotten, we must not only offer it as models the jolting, rioting rhythms of savage music, but also gradually initiate it into the successive transformations which time has given to these elementary rhythms. Thus, during his lessons, the master of rhythmic movement must do more than use percussion instruments, like those of Negroes or Indians. He will also have to become thoroughly acquainted with the elements of melody and harmony; he must be a musician in the fullest sense of the word.<sup>162</sup>

Orff's method would seem to aim for the opposite, with its gleeful excess of percussion—including instruments, such as xylophones, that were commonly associated with “exotic”

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>161</sup> Rudorf, “Für eine frohe, ausdrucksvolle Tanzmusik,” 247.

<sup>162</sup> Dalcroze, “The Nature and Value of Rhythmic Movement,” 7-8.

cultures. Dalcroze's cultivated gestures, in contrast, must have seemed the height of civility. Yet the actual rhythms suggested by the Schulwerk were entirely, stereotypically Western—four-bar phrases, emphasis on the first and third beats, easily divisible with no polyrhythms, and with little syncopation. In other words, rhythm's threat to children predated the sounds of jazz: it had been there all along. The category of the "rhythmic" had become a racial category as well, and percussive sounds had become an developmental threat—the threat of racial degeneration, of children learning, through musical activities, to stay primitive rather than grow into citizens. German music education had always been racialized: that is to say, its understanding of children as primitives had relied, necessarily, on a concept of primitives in the first place, a concept that was possible only through colonial contact. The racial fears that came out through jazz only served to underscore the fact that Musikerziehung was a whitening project.

Music's elemental danger is one of the threads that run through this dissertation: its ability to encourage fascism, to subvert critical thought, to instigate an anti-collective individualism. These anxieties about rhythm marring citizens' bodies were inseparable from anxieties about rhythm "violating" music itself. But, of course, it was exactly this capacity that also made music useful as education. This Janus-faced and dualistic view of music, of its primal as well as its primitive nature, shows the power that Musikerzieher believed, and feared, music to possess. Children were certainly corruptible, and the close and nervous attention paid to all aspects of children's culture—literature, theater, radio, television, games, dances—demonstrated that they could encounter danger from all directions. But music, it seemed, was special. While inappropriate literature could mislead children into thinking the wrong thing, music could encourage them to develop wrongly—to *be* wrong, a flaw that, unlike incorrect ideas, could likely not be corrected. Music's strength in this regard was due to its ability to access the child's body, but even that was merely a symptom, a surface expression of the real, underlying issue: that music and children shared a special unity, which, as a part of nature, could not be denied. Despite the socialist state's great ambitions for progress over nature, music here was in no danger of being sublated. Instead, it would seem, it was a still more primal force, one that inherent far beneath transient social changes.

### Chapter 3. Listening to History: The Halle Reception Studies

Walther Siegmund-Schultze, Professor at and Director of the Institut für Musikwissenschaft at the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg, Fachrichtungsleiter für Musikwissenschaft und Musikerziehung and Dekan der Philosophischen Fakultät at the same, Wissenschaftlicher Sekretär der Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft, and Träger des Vaterländischen Verdienstorden, had a problem with jazz. The youth of the republic were rejecting the great classical music of the *Kulturerbe* and of the present day, turning instead to “purely motoric or superficial-sentimental music.”<sup>1</sup> This worried him, as it had worried Ernst Hermann Meyer, Hanns Eisler, Georg Knepler, and Harry Goldschmidt. But Siegmund-Schultze, a man with initiative to match his titles, decided to approach the matter with science. He proposed a sweeping research project at Halle: members of the Institute of Musicology and Musikerziehung, as well as area teachers, were to embark on a systematic study of the relationship between youth and music in order to arm Musikerziehung with the tools to restore worthwhile music in the tastes of the nation.<sup>2</sup> The examination would focus on five areas of youthful engagement with music: the great music of the past; the socialist realist music of the present; folk songs, workers’ songs, and mass songs; school music and *Spielmusik*; and *Unterhaltungsmusik* and *Tanzmusik*, including jazz. (“Do the youth have a sense for kitsch?” he wondered, plaintively.)<sup>3</sup> In the event, the work did not match the breadth of this research program. It focused primarily on the first and the last areas: the great music of the past (with a strong focus on instrumental music) and the regrettable music of the present, representing the former as the antidote to the corrupting influence of the latter—more potent than the ideologically approved “realistic” works of the present, or even folk songs.

Siegmund-Schultze proposed the following questions:

To what degree is musical heritage [*Erbe*], in all of its variety, current and vital to youth—which epoch and which genres are preferred? In particular, this question should be addressed with regards to the era of Bach and Handel, as well as the Classical and Romantic periods, without neglecting the relationship of youth to the most important musical representations of the late nineteenth century. The question of foundational significance is to what degree the music of the past presents real, experiential content for youth, and whether they recognize the decadent phenomena of late romantic music as such.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Walther Siegmund-Schultze, “Untersuchungen zum Problem der musikalischen Rezeption 10-18jähriger Schüler,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* X, no. 1 (1961): 81–84. This was the program for the first of three conferences held on the topic; it was the basis for the Musiktheoretischen Konferenz on 4 and 5 December 1959. “Youth” (*Jugend*) means pubescent and post-pubescent individuals, as opposed to “children” (*Kinder*), who are approx. 5-10 years of age.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

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

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

Yet more important than the question of whether youth encountered the *Kulturerbe* was how they listened, and what they learned. It was not enough for this music to act as background noise, as Siegmund-Schultze feared that the “lighter” genres did, nor was it to be “a purely emotional art, a passive influence.” For GDR youth to turn the music of the past into their “permanent possession,” they needed to “take it up actively, to judge it, to implement it as a mode of *Erziehung*; to recognize and let blossom its humanistic seed, which should be palpable in every guise.”<sup>5</sup> This “active listening” was most of all a matter of understanding the music’s “content,” the “real and objective” messages that it transmitted. For the Halle researchers, then, the problem of young people’s reception of music and the question of music’s true content needed to be investigated together. Pedagogical practice and musicological theory were to go hand in hand, as Siegfried Bimberg wrote:

Only when our investigations have helped to answer the practical question of a methodology of listening, and the theoretical, aesthetic question of the content of the work of music, can we speak of a successful investigation of this topic.<sup>6</sup>

The Halle institute organized three conferences on the topic of “Problems of Music Reception and its Development Among Pupils and Working Listeners” (*Probleme der musikalischen Rezeption und ihrer Entwicklung bei Schülern und werktätigen Hörern*), held in December 1959, February 1961, and November 1962. These conferences featured a range of contributions, from theoretical excursions on aesthetics to shorter, practical suggestions for a simplified notation for musically alphabetic teachers, authored by well-known figures such as Antonín Sychra as well as by students of the institute. In addition to articles published in the pages of the university journal, the research initiative also spurred a number of reception experiments that were conducted by university students as part of their degree work (*Staatsexamenarbeiten*). These reports were a practical testing ground for the theories of content in instrumental music that were making the rounds in university lectures. With detailed and sometimes painful humility, the students chronicled attempts (and failures) to assess and influence pupils’ listening habits. The methods were diverse and ever-changing: students took up longer-term residences in classrooms, examined the pupils in music theory and history, and inspected their classwork in other subjects; they interviewed pupils or had them fill out questionnaires; they offered introductions to the works they played or played them cold; sometimes they sent questionnaires to teachers by mail, without ever going to the schools. From the standpoint of scientific method, these projects were flawed at best: terminologies and questions were neither standardized nor clearly defined, though a number of students were given questionnaires to work with (questionnaires that they often criticized as substandard). The experiment design was equally haphazard. The surviving theses thus provide more reliable information about the experimenters than about their test subjects—but that is precisely their value to the historian. As the center of GDR reception studies, the projects tell us about how

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<sup>5</sup> Walther Siegmund-Schultze, “Musikästhetische Grundfragen der Rezeptionsforschung,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* XII, no. 7/8 (1963): 550.

<sup>6</sup> Siegfried Bimberg, “Psychologische Überlegungen zu der Methodik der musikalischen Rezeptionsuntersuchungen,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* XII, no. 7/8 (1963): 561.

music was conceived of and taught at Halle, and about the peculiarities of teaching a skill that many believed to be innate and instinctive.<sup>7</sup>

The student experiments were supervised by Halle faculty, frequently the same academics known for theoretical articles in *Musik in der Schule* and the *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität*: Walther Siegmund-Schultze, Siegfried Bimberg, Paul Michel (who, though he taught at Halle, was also the director of the Institute of Pedagogy and Methodology at the Franz Liszt University of Music of Weimar), and Willi Maertens, a lecturer for Musikerziehung and English. The unstated beliefs and assumptions of these senior scholars—hard to discern in their published articles, amid the extensive citations, sweepingly dialectical language, and self-assured, homogeneous tone—are in plain view in their students’ disorderly tales of practice: what can be learned about pupils’ musical habits, what researchers believed constituted “correct listening” and musical content, and whether such things could even be taught.<sup>8</sup> The younger authors were less confident than their advisors in presenting their findings as scientifically objective. They inserted themselves into the texts, exposing their preconceptions about children (often not much younger than themselves), music, and the interaction of the two. These documents offer a glimpse into the kind of musical thought that circulated in the halls, practice rooms, and classrooms of Halle—a bricolage of ideas that students brought to the university, learned in seminars, and took out into the schools in their careers as music teachers: ideas that were encouraged (or at least tolerated) by their professors. Some of these documents reported on particular classroom interactions, and serve as memoirs. Others were instructional guides, such as the booklets accompanying the reel-to-reel tapes distributed by the German Center for Teaching Material (DZL) from the same era (1955-1961). Designed for real teachers—those who, it was widely recognized, often hadn’t enjoyed a full training in Musikerziehung—these how-to pamphlets revealed, in plain language, what their authors thought to be the best possible ways to discuss instrumental music.

This chapter explores the Halle reception projects of the 1950s and early 1960s. I focus here on the beginnings of what would later become a vibrant area of study in the GDR and post-reunification. From 1964 through the 1990s, Siegfried Bimberg, Paul Michel, and Hella Brock, to name just the best-known authors, would all publish studies on listening to music. These later essays on listening—aesthetic, psychological, and methodological—built on the early work done at Halle, an influence that became evident almost immediately. Siegfried Bimberg’s 1964 article on listening (“Contemporary Music-Aesthetic Discussions and the Necessary Consequences for Music Listening in Schools”), published shortly after the third conference, presents an analysis of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3 for teachers that clearly borrows from the lesson plans presented at the conferences.<sup>9</sup> The early studies are important not only for their influence but also for their plurality. As listening research developed, its premises and conclusions became more rigidly codified: the student theses from later years displayed more homogeneous language. But that standardizing was visible on the level of university discourse. The daily school lessons, one

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<sup>7</sup> My most heartfelt thanks to Dr. Christine Klein at the Martin Luther University, who quite literally “broke the [duct-tape] seal of knowledge” on the cupboard holding these theses, and thereby made this chapter possible.

<sup>8</sup> Natalia Nowack has characterized Bimberg’s précis of the Hallenser research as describing how things should be, rather than how they are (*soll* vs *ist*). The older scholars’ reports on listening presented a united front: they seemed to have it all figured out. Natalia Nowack, *Grauzone einer Wissenschaft: Musiksoziologie in der DDR unter Berücksichtigung der UdSSR* (Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 2006), 215.

<sup>9</sup> Siegfried Bimberg, “Gegenwärtig musikästhetische Diskussionen und notwendige Konsequenzen für das Musikhören in der Schule,” *Musik in der Schule* 1964/9.



surmises, might still have reflected the variousness and pragmatism of the experiments that the Halle student-teachers put together at the beginning. My goal is to determine how GDR views of music and listening were shaped by teaching practice and lived experience—in ways that may be surprising to historians inclined to view GDR pedagogy as ideologically rigid.

In her book *Composing the Canon in the German Democratic Republic: Narratives of Nineteenth-Century Music*, Elaine Kelly describes how the construction of the GDR classical canon served as a form of nation-building. Canons are essentially conservative, she writes:

They privilege aesthetic criteria that are born of contemporary norms and, in doing so, perpetuate the status quo. Canons do not, however, just endorse structures of power; they also expose the tensions that underlie those structures. They emphasize the disjunctions that inevitably exist between the reality of a society and its projected self-image, and contain within their idealized forms the shadow of the undesirable other.<sup>10</sup>

Kelly's account of nineteenth-century music in the early years of the GDR shows, in part, how musicologists mapped narratives of musical progress onto narratives of social progress, creating an "uncomplicated articulation of the state's master discourse."<sup>11</sup> At the same time, she reports, records of GDR concert life show that performing institutions clung to works that were not so easily read in Marxist progressive terms. In Kelly's analysis, musical works were sometimes mobilized to bolster an ideology, and at other times to cater to audiences' long-established tastes. Both of these functions rely on an inherited value system; they tell a story of continuity more than change. Yet this is only half the story. A musical heritage, however unchanged it may seem across generations, does not spring fully formed from the head of Zeus, but requires methods of transmission. The canons of musicology and performance are the products of a process of value formation that includes, and is perpetuated by, pedagogy: the means by which listeners and performers are taught to embody and reproduce canonical values. The inert "musical canon" alluded to in musicological studies and preserved in concert programs constitutes only the most legible trace of a continuous process that relies on the quotidian labor of instruction.

My intention, then, is to trace some of the overlapping relational networks that produced GDR musical knowledge, continuously making and remaking a set of works and associated values: the musicologists who proposed grand theories of musical content that would guarantee music's progressive political meaning, but who were uninvolved in education; the professors of musicology and Musikerziehung (such as Siegmund-Schultze) who, as at least occasional teachers, were as interested in the pliable listener as the immutable work of art; and the teachers and student instructors who sought to encourage teenagers to sit still through the *Eroica*, and even to learn to love a repertoire that had shown the teachers their vocation in the first place. I address these different modes of knowledge production as a set of negotiations between pedagogues, listeners, and the qualities they assumed to be inherent in the music. Though some of the documents produced in these interactions resemble theory and others practice, there is no clear division between the two, as Musikerzieher responded to the utopian goals set by musicology and educational policy—to give all listeners ways to appreciate the music of the past—and posited alternative theories of content that informed how their pupils were asked to

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<sup>10</sup> Elaine Kelly, *Composing the Canon in the German Democratic Republic: Narratives of Nineteenth-Century Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

listen. Musikerzieher attempted to instruct pupils to attend to music's form, its thematic material, and its history, and to get them to hear (*Erkennen*) these aspects together with their supposedly unmediated aesthetic and emotional experience (*Erleben*). The study of listening was a study in both content and emotional education (*Gefühlserziehung*): after all, to bring objective content to bear on aesthetic experience was to attempt to steer the listener's emotions.

### *Theories of Musical Content*

The third Halle conference published the following description of the desired new Marxist listening:

Musical reception is to be defined as a totality of habits, knowledge, abilities, and needs in the realm of musical listening, which can be deepened through acquired skills [*Fertigkeiten*]. Musical reception is always informed by concrete historical and social relations, both material and ideological. These determine the character of people's aesthetic relationship to the music, as well as the structure of the musical experience, the specific ways and means of the intellectual-emotional acquisition [*Aneignung*] of the music and thereby of reality.

In contrast to conceptions that see in listening enjoyment of a purely passive, fleeting nature, or mere distraction, in contrast to conceptions that limit reception to a purely formal musical understanding, Marxist research places the comprehension of the objective content of the music in the central role. The necessary development of a conscious and active reception of musical-structural relationships through the listener—bearing in mind the historical conditions, the function, and the genre of the work—is never an end unto itself and is therefore only worthwhile when the musical form is experienced and recognized as meaningful form, as form of its content. [...]

Just as little should the listener, in his efforts to understand the content, stop at the comprehension of the material (for vocal and program music), or content himself with general and vague emotional descriptions. The content arises even less from the sum of statistically-collected individual judgments.<sup>12</sup>

The new “active and conscious” listening was premised on the idea that music possessed objective content derived from “concrete historical and social relations,” and that the point of listening was to engage with this content, rather than focusing solely on emotional reactions or

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<sup>12</sup> “3. Fachtagung: Probleme der musikalischen Rezeption und ihrer Entwicklung bei Schülern und werktätigen Hörern,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* XII, no. 7/8 (1963): 538. Siegmund-Schultze and his compatriots rarely mentioned Theodor W. Adorno in any connection, but the resemblance to Adorno's 1938 critique of “regressive listening” is clear. Theodor W. Adorno, “On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening,” In *Essays on Music*, ed., Richard D. Leppert, trans. Susan H. Gillespie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

on form. The desired listening relied on a set of recent theories about musical content, based largely on the literary ideas of Georg Lukács and the musical ideas of Boris Asafyev. Lukács had maintained that all great art reflected the objective social reality of the time of its creation, a fact that established continuity between the “critical realist” art of the past and the “socialist realist” art of the present.<sup>13</sup> Boris Asafyev, meanwhile, had proposed that music communicated through *intonatsiya*: reproducing and adding to a vocabulary of musical “intonations” (intervals, but also melodies and rhythms) that acquired conventional meaning over time.<sup>14</sup> In East Germany in the late 1950s, the works most frequently cited on the theory of musical content, referred to à la Lukács as “reflection theory” (*Widerspiegelungstheorie*), were Ernst Hermann Meyer’s *Musik im Zeitgeschehen* (1952) and the Polish musicologist Zofia Lissa’s *Über das Spezifische in der Musik* (German translation published 1954). Though a number of other scholars, German and Soviet, had already, or would subsequently, publish studies on this topic, Meyer’s and Lissa’s texts distill a common understanding of musical content and how it came to be.<sup>15</sup>

As Meyer explained, mankind’s thoughts and feelings were the direct result of material and social life. Art, the product of those thoughts and feelings, similarly depended on, and also reflected, the struggles of society from the time of its creation.<sup>16</sup> In other words, art had its basis in real experiences, even if those experiences were half-remembered and far away. It was a “reflection of reality”: nothing could come out that hadn’t first been put in.<sup>17</sup> This was true of all art forms, each of which reflected an aspect of reality using methods and materials unique to it. Unlike visual art, which could portray specific and individual objects, music could reflect reality only indirectly. Its directly mimetic power extended only to natural acoustic occurrences, such as birdsong: its true realm of representation was human emotion. “The feelings and thoughts contained in music are always reflections of social life: the productive activity of people, the relationships of production, the position of the individual (also of the artist) in society that results from these relationships.”<sup>18</sup> These “emotions,” more than the fleeting impulses experienced by one person, were the general reaction of the composer to reality, a reaction that was not simply “private” but “guided by great social occurrences”: “The artist’s personal experiences, which belong to his private existence only to a certain extent, are surely the impetus for the emotional life of many artworks, but in the artworks themselves, these experiences only appear as the concretizations of social problems.”<sup>19</sup>

Socially generalizable emotions were music’s subject; movement was the means by which it portrayed them. Lissa identified two ways in which music could use movement to express meaning: “first, the real sequences of motions [*Bewegungsabläufe*] that are acoustically or visually—that is, sensuously—perceptible, and second, the sequences of human feelings, which are not sensuously perceptible without mediation.”<sup>20</sup> According to Meyer, the motion of a

<sup>13</sup> George Bizsray, *Marxist Models of Literary Realism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 52–73; Georg Lukács, “Art and Objective Truth” in *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*, ed. and trans. Arthur Kahn (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1970), 25–60.

<sup>14</sup> Gordon D. McQuere, *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983).

<sup>15</sup> Meyer and Lissa were working largely towards the same goals, but they did not always agree: Meyer’s work focused more heavily on music as an expression of progressive ideas, whereas Lissa’s account concentrated primarily (though not exclusively) on the mechanisms and manners in which music can reflect reality, leaving progressive politics largely untouched.

<sup>16</sup> Ernst Hermann Meyer, *Musik im Zeitgeschehen* (Berlin: Henschel, 1952), 13–14.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 41. See also Zofia Lissa, *Über das Spezifische der Musik* (Berlin: Henschel, 1957), 53, also 89.

<sup>20</sup> Lissa, *Über das Spezifische der Musik*, 41.

musical phrase (which he referred to as its *Gestalt*) correlated with sensory impressions in other realms as well: an ascending phrase, for instance, resembled other upwards-moving things like the silhouette of a mountain range, or speech, or the “rising” feeling of increasing rage.<sup>21</sup> (In this, Meyer and Lissa differed significantly from Asafyev, who thought that music’s expressive capacity had originated in its mimicry of speech, and had been made specifically musical through convention.)<sup>22</sup> Through the imagination [*Vorstellung*], one could connect the experience of musical motion to the experience of analogous kinds of motion, and to the emotions associated with those experiences.<sup>23</sup> Using notes alone, then, one could portray rage, but not rage over a lost penny: that kind of referential precision was possible in music only through the use of text, images, or a program.<sup>24</sup> For Lissa and Meyer, “program music” was not the opposite of “absolute music,” but denoted music that focused its general expressive capacities with extra-musical signaling devices.

Content, however, was different still: the material of music (emotions and the musical ideas that represented them) organized into form. Both material and form were, on this model, products of social reality: Schubert’s melancholy, Meyer suggested, was expressive of the German-Austrian disappointment in the political retrenchment that followed the French Revolution.<sup>25</sup> The two themes of sonata form owed their existence to a new spirit of individualism, which had enabled the idea of a theme at all, and a new focus on pleasure and variety. Both were the products of changing social circumstances.<sup>26</sup> Thematic contrast and *thematische Arbeit* corresponded to the progressive struggle for a solution to social problems that characterized the sonata’s heyday (which Meyer located between 1760 and 1820.)<sup>27</sup>

Behind the emotional life of the music lies the conceptual content [*Ideengehalt*] of the work, which is artistically formed by the intellect. Thereby the artist constructs not only abstract formal schemata, [...] but he also creates his work as a social man, as an expression of his *Weltanschauung*.<sup>28</sup>

Content thus consisted of emotions put into service of “feelings and ideas in their active function as an expression of an overall world view and attitude [*weltanschaulicher Gesamthaltung*].”<sup>29</sup> This “musical concretizing of a *Weltanschauung*” was a realistic portrayal of the class relations at the time, giving the great art of the past its inevitable political thrust: the *Weltanschauung* about the present reality and the vision of a better future went hand-in-hand. For Meyer, these depictions of present and future were a deliberate act on the part of the artist. A great composer was always also a great revolutionary, who “wants to create order and harmony *consciously*, and as a social person, he creates these things militantly, over and above the existing contradictions and imperfections of the social relations that surround him; he hurries ahead of them in a bold

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<sup>21</sup> Meyer, *Musik im Zeitgeschehen*, 30.

<sup>22</sup> McQuere, *Russian Theoretical Thought*, 235–245.

<sup>23</sup> Meyer, *Musik im Zeitgeschehen*, 40.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 53; Lissa, *Über das Spezifische der Musik*, 50, 90.

<sup>25</sup> Meyer, *Musik im Zeitgeschehen*, 41.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 68–69.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 69–71.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

flight.”<sup>30</sup> Meyer thus conflated an “objective” representation of social reality in art with the artist’s personal politics. This was a crucial departure from Lukács, who, following Engels, had maintained that realism in art shone through regardless of the artist’s own convictions: perceptive artists could not help but portray social structures as they really were, meaning that history’s progressive tendency was always reflected in art.<sup>31</sup>

### *Theorizing Reception: The Emotional and the Rational*

By the time of the Halle conferences, then, a particular theory of musical content was well established in the GDR. But a theory that posits immanent content is a thinly veiled poetics, and despite Meyer’s assertions that musical life relied on a trinity of equally valuable participants—composer, interpreter, and listener—there was little attention paid to the listener within reflection theory. Meyer’s brief descriptions of the act of listening focused on how it reproduced the act of composing:

After all, the *listener* also recapitulates, in essence, the creative activity of the composer: through the active process of listening and understanding, he brings the world of sensations, affects, and thoughts presented by the artwork to bear on his own; he too “identifies” his own inner life with that of the artist; he hears (in the ideal case) “creatively” and “composes” the work anew as he listens to it; and he experiences alongside and with this process of “recomposing” [*Nachkomponieren*] an enrichment in his soul similar to what the composer experienced with the initial act of composing. As the work unfolds itself to the listener, he makes it into his own gripping experience [*Erlebniserfahrung*].<sup>32</sup>

Meyer had identified three kinds of experience in music—sensuous, emotional, and intellectual.<sup>33</sup> Here, he presented the intellectual (“composing,” which he had insisted was hard intellectual labor rather than divine inspiration) and the emotional (“his own gripping experience of experience”) as intertwined and inseparable, or perhaps sublated.<sup>34</sup> This was certainly in the spirit of the desired “intellectual-emotional acquisition of the music.” But Meyer proved hasty—or maybe just hopeful—in unifying the emotional and the rational: the mid-1950s were dominated by popular music, which was believed to speak to the emotional and bypass the rational altogether. According to the listening surveys sponsored by the Halle conferences, audiences favored this music exactly because it did not require intellectual engagement. The *Musikerzieher* Rudolf Lüdeke noticed that young people preferred “light” music that they could listen to anywhere, and Halle student Gisela Andreas found that school pupils enjoyed Schlager

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>31</sup> George Bizstzay, *Marxist Models of Literary Realism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 88–101; Friedrich Engels, “Letter to Margaret Harkness,” 1888, in *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels on Literature and Art: A Selection of Writings*, ed. Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski (New York: International General, 1974), 115–117.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 79 (emphasis original).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 45.

precisely because “one doesn’t need to think when listening to Schlager; it isn’t strenuous.”<sup>35</sup> Compared to the emotional *Rausch* that youth were supposedly finding in jazz, “recomposing” was bloodless stuff—an unlikely habit for mid-1950s audiences to indulge in.

Musikerzieher held that the emotional and rational faculties were discrete. They believed that the emotional experience (*Erleben*) of music came prior to intellectual understanding (*Erkennen*). For this idea they found inspiration in Lissa’s assertion that in music, “the emotional element prevails over the logical. Music appeals primarily to the emotions.”<sup>36</sup> Halle student Sigurd Klaua, in his study of children’s reception of character pieces (discussed in more detail below), noted that the children’s reactions to the music allowed him “to recognize whether the children approach the issue emotionally or intellectually”: he clearly thought these approaches to be different, even opposed. Siegfried Bimberg suggested that an inclination towards “emotional” or “intellectual” listening was predetermined:

The displacement of the emphasis of the work of *Erziehung* and *Bildung* from artistically-focused [*musisch*] to intellectually focused activity has effects on the development as a whole. The child is led increasingly into the mode of intellectually determined learning. This has differing effects: some of the pupils lose their lightheartedness and originality [*Ursprünglichkeit*] in expression and in the artistic activities of the class collective, and other pupils display an increasing need for artistic activity.<sup>37</sup>

Musikerzieher saw their task as dialectically uniting “logical thinking” and “musical feeling,” thereby progressing past the “dualistic emotional aesthetics [*Gefühlsästhetik*] of the nineteenth century.”<sup>38</sup> This aesthetic had theorized two separate sorts of listening, each undesirable in its own way: a formal and analytical type *à la* Hanslick, and a purely emotional sort *à la* Kretschmar or Schering.<sup>39</sup> The former, though necessary, was “boring” for education if studied alone.<sup>40</sup> The latter, “Romantic” sort of listening, Michel claimed, was “passive.”

Music became an “expression of personal existence.” It was to express feelings that the listener would experience in an unmediated fashion. This, in other words, is a mystical sinking-in, an identification with the content of the work, a “spiritual slurping of the notes.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Rudolf Lüdeke, “Die Entwicklung des musikalischen Hörens,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* XI, no. 1 (1962): 18. Lüdeke had pedagogical training, but worked as an Oberassistent and a Lehrbeauftragte at Halle, not as teacher in a school. See also Gisela Andreas, “Hörfähigkeit und intellektuelle Bildung bei Schülern der 12. Klassen, dargestellt an der Aug. Herm. Francke Oberschule zu Halle/Saale, vom Abiturjahrgang 1958/59” (Staatsexamenarbeit, Martin-Luther-Universität, 1958), 36.

<sup>36</sup> Lissa, as quoted in Paul Michel, “Das musikalische Erleben Jugendlicher in der Reifezeit,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* X, no. 1 (1961): 88.

<sup>37</sup> Siegfried Bimberg, “Untersuchungen über das tonale Hören als eine Grundlage der Rezeption musikalischer Kunstwerke,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* Sonderband: Traditionen und Aufgaben der hallischen Musikwissenschaft (1963): 137.

<sup>38</sup> “Die Spezifik der Musik,” *Musik und Gesellschaft* 1958/2, 35. Also Lissa, *Über das Spezifische der Musik*, 45.

<sup>39</sup> Hans Stange and Kathrina Kucera, *Beiträge zur Methodik des Musikunterrichts in den Klassen 5 bis 8* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1961), 27.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Paul Michel, *Musik und Hörer in unserer Zeit* (Berlin: Deutscher Kulturbund: 1967), 45-46.

In addition, such a “subjective” emotional experience led to an understanding of music that was no more than “hermeneutic analyses,” in which, Bimberg argued, “the content is first ‘created’ in the listener, on a subjective basis, in other words, the content appears first within the subject, and is ‘lent’ to the work afterwards.”<sup>42</sup> The listener was not apprehending the objective content, but experiencing fantasies that “easily unfolded into an individual life, awaken others, transform, and the music becomes background noise.”<sup>43</sup>

GDR musicologists were professionally wary of unmediated emotional musical experience. Part of the reason was control: listening that bypassed content in order to achieve an “individual life [*Eigenleben*]” could not be officially mandated. As Herbert Marcuse argued in his critique of reflection theory, the point of insisting that art that be objective and realistic is to dampen art’s otherwise subversive potential to show mankind its unfulfilled (subjective) desires: it is an act of suppression.<sup>44</sup> Thus Siegmund-Schultze, emphasizing his commitment to the “concrete relationships between music and life,” sought to distance himself from Hermann Hesse’s reverent mode of listening: “Musik des Weltalls und Musik der Meister / Sind wir bereit im Ehrfurcht anzuhören (Music of the cosmos and music of the masters / we are prepared to listen to in reverence).”<sup>45</sup> This subjective side of music, which teachers thought to exist *a priori*, must be refined and deepened through knowledge, as Siegmund-Schultze argued:

The “unmediated” experience usually communicates the correct impression, but it can also be less than profound and misunderstand the actual intent [of the work]; a deeper understanding of music, such as a musical analysis, may initially endanger the pure enjoyment of music, but with effort and with a work of sufficient value, will lead again to an unmediated and then enriched experience.<sup>46</sup>

Part of the problem for *Erziehung* was that the supposed objective content, though it was (in Meyer’s assertion, and with his original emphasis) “*wholly unambiguous* in its intellectual-psychic character [*Beschaffenheit*] and its effect [*Wirkungsrichtung*],” could not be explained in words.<sup>47</sup> Meyer himself had acknowledged the incommensurability of words and music—a well-known and long-standing trope, and for him, a given. As long as content could be theorized as graspable through a synthesis of acquired knowledge and immediate experience, there was no issue. However, as soon as musicologists and *Erzieher* were forced to consider how one could teach people to perform this sublation within their own heads, the field exploded with caveats. One had to explain to growing listeners what it meant to “understand” music, while also making clear to them that understanding couldn’t be explained: “It has to be made clear to the recipient what ‘understandability’ means in the realm of music. In particular, one shouldn’t try to ‘explain’ a musical work of art to the last detail with words,”<sup>48</sup> Siegmund-Schultze wrote. Though Karl Kleinig admitted that “the explanatory word encourages the apprehension of the sounding work,”

<sup>42</sup> Bimberg, “Musikhören,” 360.

<sup>43</sup> Stange and Kucera, *Beiträge zur Methodik des Musikunterrichts*, 28.

<sup>44</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism: A Critical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 127–132.

<sup>45</sup> Hermann Hesse, “Das Glasperlenspiel,” as quoted in Siegmund-Schultze, “Musikästhetische Grundfragen,” 544.

<sup>46</sup> Walther Siegmund-Schultze, “Zu einigen Grundfragen der Musikästhetik,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* XI, no. 2 (1962): 152.

<sup>47</sup> Meyer, *Musik im Zeitgeschehen*, 60.

<sup>48</sup> Walther Siegmund-Schultze, “Schlußwort,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* XI, no. 1 (1962): 72.

Siegmund-Schultze warned against an excess of verbiage, fearing that listening could slide off the rails into the “subjective” and the “hermeneutic”:

The difficulty of music lies in the fact that a definition in words always either slides into abstractions that contradict the living soundings [*Klanglichkeit*] of the music, or into dull, graphic formulations that may satisfy for some program-related music (but only apparently!), but do not do justice to the polyvalent concreteness of the music.

Each attempt to facilitate reception must be welcomed, but hermeneutic “summaries” are less fruitful than a short, suggestive elucidation of the basic idea, which expresses itself in melodic forms and in technical idiosyncrasies.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, Siegmund-Schultze’s fear of what he considered the typical “Romantic” way of listening was bound up with a fear of listeners’ missing the point. Yet he hedged, in the next breath allowing room for an experience protected from the incursions of intellect: “I am, however, not of the opinion that we shouldn’t know anything at all about [Hesse’s] attitude towards music; the reverent beholding and adoration of the work of art is near to our hearts, and analytical reason often does not have the ability to penetrate deeper.”<sup>50</sup> Perhaps Harry Goldschmidt was referring to this ultimate failure of reason when he wrote that there is a dimension of music that is ahistorical and escapes the circumstances of its time: “great art has a viability that is not class-related.”<sup>51</sup> In any case, both Siegmund-Schultze and Kleinig, even as they acknowledged the objective historicity of musical content, left room for a kind of content not identical to any historical *Weltanschauung*, and a mode of apprehending it that was non-rational: perhaps a way to allow the “pure enjoyment of listening” to slip in through the cracks.<sup>52</sup>

Musikerzieher believed that emotions were also of special importance for teenagers, for biological reasons. Adolescents were primed for an emotional listening experience, as Paul Michel argued: “Youths in puberty—the phase of psychological development between 12 and 18 years of age—are especially open to music.”<sup>53</sup> They were increasingly interested in “psychic

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<sup>49</sup> Karl Kleinig, “Rezeptionserfahrungen aus Musikvorträgen bei Arbeitern,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* XI, no. 1 (1962): 48; Siegmund-Schultze, “Musikästhetische Grundfragen,” 549.

<sup>50</sup> Siegmund-Schultze, “Musikästhetische Grundfragen,” 544.

<sup>51</sup> Harry Goldschmidt, “Verantwortung und Perspektive,” *Musik und Gesellschaft* 1962/1, 43. Goldschmidt sold this statement as an interpretation of Marx, for which Siegmund-Schultze chastised him in a letter: “Of course I am familiar with that wonderful Marx sentence to which you allude. But in this connection, he does not draw the same conclusions that you do [...] Just previously to that, Karl Marx was speaking of the unique “appeal” of art from long-past epochs: this is connected with the time of its production. I would never argue with the fact that there are unmediated emotional connections, humanistic traditions, etc., but we’re talking about deepening the listening experience! What else is the point of all of our academic work on behalf of the people [*Populärwissenschaft*]?” Siegmund-Schultze to Goldschmidt, 8 February 1962, SA-AdK VKM 408. Goldschmidt was also later accused by Bimberg of being a modern representative of hermeneutics, in the model of Kretschmar and Schering. Siegfried Bimberg, “Entwurf einer Rezeptionslehre der Musik,” *Hallesche Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft* 1968/8, 155-222, 162.

<sup>52</sup> Walther Siegmund-Schultze, “Die Erziehung zum aktiven Hören: Gedanken zur Hauptaufgabe des neuen Musikerziehers,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* IX, no. 4 (1960): 474.

<sup>53</sup> Michel, “Das musikalische Erleben Jugendlicher in der Reifezeit,” 86.



processes,” were beginning to consider their own inner emotional lives and those of others, and to understand actions as motivated by psychological concerns:

With the beginning of puberty, the young person acquires the ability to understand the outer deeds and behavior of other people through consideration of their emotional background (determined by reality), their current motives, and their stable character traits. Increasingly, he judges other people according to his individual psychic peculiarity.<sup>54</sup>

Whereas previously a child would hear “a graphic and concrete experience,” an “outer” occurrence—instrumentation, speed, volume, or a general emotional impression such as “sad” or “happy”—a teenager would hear the “emotional elements of the music, and [would] be grabbed by the moods.”<sup>55</sup> Adolescents were able to learn, retain, and apply knowledge of history, as was demonstrated by their increasing capability for abstract thought. In addition, starting around the ninth grade, they could successfully recognize and compare stylistic features of eras of music history, and starting in the tenth grade, could identify the personal style of individual composers.<sup>56</sup>

Adolescents’ psychological proclivities thus explained their ability to understand and enjoy classical music, as well as their attraction to jazz. It was here that Musikerzieher developed a psychologically-inspired theory of listening that strove to take the listener’s real abilities into account. The last chapter discussed how children were thought to be especially drawn to rhythm; the same was believed to be true of adolescents, who were said to find great satisfaction in jazz, as well as in the “rhythmic-motoric music of the present.”<sup>57</sup> Young people’s tastes were thus a combination of their natural inclinations and the availability of certain kinds of music. Many noted that adolescents showed a special connection to character music of the nineteenth century, which was as emotionally turbulent, yet simple and unambiguous, as they were:

The young person’s predisposition towards fantasies and character pieces from Schubert to Brahms, but also those of similar, later masters, results not only from the preference for those works in public concert life, but also from the natural need for programmatic unambiguity when listening to instrumental music. In addition, the timbres, the veiled rhythmic accents, and the large dynamic contrasts correspond very well to his state of mind.<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, young people were inclined to hear Bach’s music as “strictly mathematical,” “calming,” and “thought-provoking.” According to Willi Maertens, ninth and tenth graders preferred Beethoven, a preference that persisted into the older classes. Pupils took longer to appreciate Haydn and Mozart, and even then the potential for mishearing was great:

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 88–90.

<sup>56</sup> Willi Maertens, “Über das Verhältnis Jugendlicher der Reifezeit zur Musik: Ein Beitrag zum Problem der musikalischen Rezeption,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* X, no. 1 (1961): 109.

<sup>57</sup> Paul Michel, *Musik und Hörer in unserer Zeit: psychologische und pädagogisch-methodische Grundfragen der Musikverbreitung im Deutschen Kulturbund*. (Berlin: Deutscher Kulturbund, 1967), 46.

<sup>58</sup> Maertens, “Über das Verhältnis...,” 109.

I have typically only been able to observe an inner relationship to the music of Mozart and Haydn starting from the eleventh or twelfth grade onwards. But even here, characterizations such as “light and playful,” “for entertainment,” “without inner seriousness” are given, which clearly show which qualities the youth at the age of puberty look for in music, and cannot yet find here.<sup>59</sup>

Maertens’s convoluted prose deserves some explanation. What he meant, I believe, is that adolescents hear this music as silly and playful because they desire seriousness, a quality that this music possesses but that they cannot yet hear in it. (These are people, he contended elsewhere, who take themselves seriously.) Mozart’s and Haydn’s music was deceptive: it sounded simple to the young, but offered much more to the discerning.

These psychological realities placed two responsibilities on *Musikerziehung*. The first was protection. Teenagers’ increased emotional sensitivity made them vulnerable to bad influences, especially musical ones:

Of all the ages, puberty—a period when the young person comes into contact with music especially easily through his environment, when he absorbs bad music in large quantities, and when the defensive forces of morality and taste are not yet sufficiently developed—requires custodial care of a particular sort. Of all the ages, it is puberty, when the growing person begins to feel like an adult, that is of decisive importance for determining what relationship to music he will achieve in later life.<sup>60</sup>

The second had to do with timing. Regrettably, Michel admitted, if one followed the psychological realities of adolescence—only introducing works of music at the moment when the young listeners were mature enough to fully apprehend their content—then “many excellent works must be excluded entirely from school instruction,” including, presumably, Mozart and Haydn.<sup>61</sup> This biologically determined fact complicated the workings of a new socialist music education, which aimed to find ways to turn the “best musical heritage into the permanent possession of the youth.”<sup>62</sup> However, Michel maintained, all was not lost: one should instead lay the foundations, presenting the pupils with an understanding of music that they would (presumably) grow into. Walther Siegmund-Schultze agreed, reassuring his readership that “it is not bad if not all the values of the work in question are appreciated by all students, if some are only adumbrated—nevertheless, it can still be an unforgettable experience, which will ripen fully in later years.”<sup>63</sup> The (future) readiness was all, Michel asserted, glossing over the contradiction inherent in the sudden introduction of overly advanced music into a system that had elsewhere doggedly insisted that repertoire be matched to developmental age. The trick was not to employ “unscientific attempts at explanation, especially those that obstruct the understanding of the scientific explanation that will come later.”<sup>64</sup> Michel and Siegmund-Schultze thus admitted that for adolescents, musical reality and listener reality were incommensurable. School reception

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Michel, “Das musikalische Erleben Jugendlicher in der Reifezeit,” 92–93.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 92. Nowack discusses this problem as well. See Nowack, *Grauzone einer Wissenschaft*, 238.

<sup>62</sup> Siegmund-Schultze, “Untersuchungen zum Problem der musikalischen Rezeption,” 1.

<sup>63</sup> Siegmund-Schultze, “Die Erziehung zum aktiven Hören: Gedanken zur Hauptaufgabe des neuen Musikerziehers,” 473.

<sup>64</sup> Michel, “Das musikalische Erleben Jugendlicher in der Reifezeit,” 92.

lessons involved a double leap of faith. There was no way to confirm that pupils (or, indeed, anyone) who had been provided with the requisite formal and historical knowledge would understand music's objective content, and not go veering off into undirected subjectivity.

Adolescent listening lessons were an especially high-stakes enterprise for *Musikerziehung*, owing to the untimely collision of biology and the institution of school. Teenagers had to learn to appreciate good music, recognize and reject bad music, and acquire the tools to continue this education on their own. At the same time, their emotional curiosity, paired with their immature sense of reason, left them particularly vulnerable to bad music and to incorrect (i.e. "subjective and hermeneutic") understandings of good music. The utopian goal of a musical reception on the Schillerian model—whose higher purpose was to unify the sensuous and the intellectual, emotions and facts—remained; but theory offered few clues about how to reach it.

### *Listening to "Character"*

Teachers approached listening lessons by starting with short programmatic pieces before introducing larger-scale programmatic and culminating with what were held to be "absolute" instrumental works. The youngest pupils were typically offered nineteenth-century character pieces, as was already the custom in the GDR: as Eva Rieger has pointed out, GDR *Musikerziehung* adhered to the long-standing tradition of pairing small children with "small and straightforward" pieces.<sup>65</sup> By 1962, the Halle planning committee had settled on three pieces each from Schumann's *Jugendalbum*, Bartók's *10 leichte Kinderstücke*, and Prokofiev's *12 Kinderstücke* as the most suitable pieces for investigating children's reception.<sup>66</sup> Such character pieces were "simple" and "child-appropriate"; instead of following a detailed program, they expressed "a general attitude" through the music's motion.<sup>67</sup> Young children found certain motions particularly easy to identify, such as marching, dancing, or anything equestrian: "Pupils in the first years of school first find access to those pieces of music that proceed from a particular characteristic of movement."<sup>68</sup> These pieces may have seemed safe sites for interpretation. Through the clarity of their titles ("Hoch zu Ross," "Soldatenmarsch," "Dudelsackmusik"), the opportunity for "subjective fantasy" would be curtailed from the outset.

In his 1957 thesis, "Examples of So-Called Piano Music for Children and Youth: An Examination," Sigurd Klaua investigated whether children were able to recognize and "experience" [*Miterleben*] "ganz bestimmte und gegenständlich bezogene Affekte" in music.<sup>69</sup> Klaua focused on pieces composed for children to perform, as these, "due to the relatively simple, easily comprehensible content, seem to be matched to the intellectual and musical stage of the children's development."<sup>70</sup> The works, chosen "according to their artistic content [and] the degree of the intensity of their expressive content, the clarity of the relationship between content

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<sup>65</sup> Eva Rieger, *Schulmusikerziehung in der DDR*, (Frankfurt am Main: Diesterweg, 1977), 18.

<sup>66</sup> Untitled document [1962], SA-AdK VKM 408.

<sup>67</sup> Sigurd Klaua, "Beispiele sogenannter 'Klaviermusik für Kinder und Jugend': Eine Untersuchung" (Staatsexamenarbeit, Martin-Luther-Universität, 1957), 34–35.

<sup>68</sup> "Berichte über die Sektionsbesprechungen," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* XII, no. 7/8 (1963): 650.

<sup>69</sup> Klaua, "Beispiele sogenannter 'Klaviermusik für Kinder und Jugend,'" i.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

and expression, and the relationship to the piece's title," included Schumann's *Album für die Jugend*, Bartok's *Mikrokosmos*, and Debussy's *Children's Corner*.<sup>71</sup> Klaua believed that these pieces' unambiguous emotional content would appeal to the pupils, as the music was as simple as they were: "The pupils of the age in question bring a better understanding to the character piece than to forms of absolute music, as at this age they prefer strong, almost isolated emotions."<sup>72</sup>

Klaua carried out the following experiment in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades of the August Hermann Francke Primary School in Halle. He announced to the class that the lesson was to introduce them to character pieces. The classroom teacher then performed the pieces live for each class, in chronological order:

Robert Schumann, "Soldatenmarsch" and "Erster Verlust"  
 Theodor Kirchner, numbers 9 and 10 from *100 kleine Studien für Klavier*  
 Chaikovsky, "Der kleine Reiter" and "Soldatenmarsch"  
 Debussy, "Golliwog's Cake Walk" from *Children's Corner*  
 Gretchaninov, "Trennungsschmerz" and "Hoch zu Ross"  
 Bartok, "Dudelsackmusik" from *Mikrokosmos V*  
 Prokofiev, "March" and "Der Abend" from *12 leichte Kinderstücke*  
 Hindemith, "March" and "Die Diebe kommen in der Nacht" (Nos. 1 and 6 from  
*Wir bauen eine Stadt*)  
 Siegfried Borris, "Blinkende Räder" and "Abendgespräch" from *Erstes  
 Klavierbuch für Karen-Isela*

Klaua then waited for the pupils to respond with unprompted comments, as "the pupils' spontaneous verbal reactions enabled [me] to draw conclusions about their musical receptiveness."<sup>73</sup> The classroom teacher was to prod them only when they obviously didn't understand, because, as Klaua noted, "it cannot be the function of the experiment to force pupils to an opinion about the work through directed conversations, or through suggestive questions from a teacher."<sup>74</sup> The conversations were recorded without the pupils' knowledge.

The pupils, however, understood that the goal of the exercise was to guess the piece's title. This was communicated in large part by the classroom teacher, who moved on to the next piece as soon as one pupil guessed "correctly"—and these correct guesses often came from the same pupil, a pianist. When others protested that they couldn't participate as they were not pianists, the teacher replied:

Whether or not you play the piano is unimportant. You shouldn't comprehend the entire make-up of the melody, but merely the song as a whole. You should just describe the impression that the piece makes on you, whether it's depressing or cheering. You should think of a possible title for the piece, and nothing more.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 10.

For further pieces, the class continued to guess, with the pupils' answers becoming ever more absurd and the teacher ever more frustrated:

[to Borris' "Blinkende Räder"]

The teacher asked the pupils where the "eyewitnesses" to this music could be.

Pupil 13: Sports. Where something has happened.

The teacher did not agree with the answer.

Pupil 14: Politics.

Pupil 15: Earthquakes. Natural disasters.

Teacher: No, something very simple.

Pupil 16: When a herd of horses stampedes.

Pupil 17: From all around the world.

Teacher: From the world of...

Pupil 18: Animals.

Teacher: No, from the world of...

Pupil 19: Stars. (Laughter)

The teacher loses her patience: "From the world of labor. What can you imagine?"

Pupil 20: Maybe machines?

Teacher: Yes, machines.

The title of the piece is revealed. The pupils protest, saying, "I would never have been able to guess that."<sup>76</sup>

Several Musikerzieher had called for approaches with more analytical specificity, which would not privilege "general emotional statements from the pupils, but instead lead them to justify their answer by referencing the tonality, the shape of the melody, the meter, the tempo, or in simple observations about the structure of the piece."<sup>77</sup> In contrast, Klaua and the unnamed teacher did not ask the pupils to justify their guesses: they brought up the musical particularities (rhythm, tempo, meter) only when the pupils needed a hint. Klaua, to be sure, was not trying to instruct the pupils in how to listen "consciously," but was testing their acquired abilities. The experiment reveals that Klaua believed that the character of the piece would be identical to its title: no more, no less.<sup>78</sup> He agreed with the teacher's procedure of moving on when a pupil had correctly named the work's title, "because the character of the piece was recognized immediately by one pupil."<sup>79</sup> Klaua did not consider it important whether pupils could identify rhythms or tempi as a precursor to guessing the "character." The classroom teacher was evidently not in the habit of practicing such listening, as no pupils volunteered that kind of technical information, and

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>77</sup> Karl Büse, "Das Musikhören als ein Mittel der sozialistischen Erziehung im Unterricht der zehnklassigen allgemeinbildenden polytechnischen Oberschule," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* XI, no. 1 (1962): 66. See also Hans Pezold, "Werkbetrachtung im Musikunterricht," in *Lebensnahe Musikerziehung interessant gemacht*, ed. Manfred Frisch (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1957), 101.

<sup>78</sup> Klaua had been born in 1935, and at the time of this study was relatively young and inexperienced. But his youth was clearly not to blame for his non-doctrinaire behavior, as the unnamed teacher who helped him in his study clearly agreed (or just wanted to get the project over with), as did Maertens, who may have been his advisor.

<sup>79</sup> Klaua, "Beispiele sogenannter 'Klaviermusik für Kinder und Jugend,'" 8.

only those pupils who already had musical training seemed to be participating. Perhaps one of the reasons why the little character pieces were thought so easy for children was that their supposed straightforwardness offered a shortcut for teachers.

Klauba had chosen the works for their clarity of expression as he saw it. He thus seemed slightly put out when it emerged that the pupils didn't seem to agree, noting that "hermeneutic-poetic descriptions dominate in all of the classes," and concluding, contrary to his initial belief, that such character pieces

lure one into letting one's imagination run free. Only a few talented pianists and choir members knew to forge ahead to the crux of the matter and explain the music with reference to its specific materials—*musica musica*. The large majority of the answers were more or less florid fantasies that bypassed the actual events entirely, and disregarded the essence. (To Borris's "Blinkende Räder": the howls of Indians, storms, accidents, a very large fire, revolt, earthquake, natural disasters.)<sup>80</sup>

Yet for all his certainty that the content of the piece was expressed by its title, Klauba did not always think it important that pupils rein in their flowering fancies. One pupil in particular seemed to have caught his eye, a young man who described Hindemith's "Die Diebe in der Nacht" as "a jaguar, which runs back and forth inside his cage, and considers how he got to be there."<sup>81</sup> This, to Klauba, was "shining proof [of the pupil's] strong imagination."<sup>82</sup> Klauba was not alone in finding this pupil exceptional. In a report on Halle students' work, Musikerzieher and faculty member Willi Maertens deplored the "subjective-fantastic interpretations" to which Klauba's subjects were drawn, but commended that same pupil for delivering the "only fitting characterization" for "Golliwog's Cake Walk": "I thought this was so Latin, one could imagine a dancer in a nightclub (laughter). It could also be a Negro song, for when the Negroes dance around their fire."<sup>83</sup> The evocative descriptions of dancers in nightclubs and bonfires seemed, even to the experienced Maertens, the most musically convincing, much better some of the alternatives: "an acrobats' march full of dissonances" or "castanets."<sup>84</sup>

Even as Klauba seemed certain that such pieces had unambiguous content, he was both disinclined to see whether pupils could articulate the relationship between the title and the musical particulars, and happy to embrace a sort of listening that provided an elaborate surplus to these titles alone, encompassing exotic dancers, jaguars, and thieves. Far from Klauba's stated disavowal of hermeneutics, this eager imaginativeness revealed what may have been a personal preference for that kind of listening – or, at the very least, a vision of pedagogy that was not only interested in offering pupils the tools to listen in a different way.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>83</sup> Maertens, "Über das Verhältnis...", 101.

<sup>84</sup> Klauba, "Beispiele sogenannter 'Klaviermusik für Kinder und Jugend,'" 11.

Though character pieces were thought suitable for younger children, with their underdeveloped capacity for abstract thought, such works did not offer older children the kind of dialectical listening practice that they would need in order to become “active” listeners. The Halle planning committee thus proposed that researchers focus their efforts on three symphonies for the ninth grade and up: Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3, Brahms’s Symphony No. 3, and Prokofiev’s Symphony No. 5.<sup>85</sup> The point of teaching those three pieces was to get pupils to think about more “abstract” and larger-scale works. Yet of these three works, it was Beethoven that received the most attention in the classroom (it seems that Brahms was jettisoned entirely). On the one hand, Beethoven’s symphony was, politically, an ideal work. According to GDR music historiography, it was the “classical realist” symphony par excellence, depicting—as socialist realist works were also to do—a (more or less) unnamed and therefore “everyman” hero, his tribulations, his death in the second movement, and a triumphant conclusion that could easily be read as a collective jubilee, a signal that “life goes on” to a better future thanks to the sacrifices of a few individuals.<sup>86</sup> On the other hand, the *Eroica* united the clarity of character pieces (useful for younger children) with the abstraction of other symphonies (suitable for older listeners). Nicholas Mathew has pointed out that the erasure of the symphony’s first title—and the subsequent mythologizing of that act—has done a particular kind of work for the *Eroica*, allowing it both to be specific in its reference and notionally to “resist its historical context.”<sup>87</sup> In GDR Musikerziehung, this doubleness made the *Eroica* the consummate work of educational music, as it gave pupils the opportunity to practice hearing content in a piece that offered little incentive for hermeneutic sideshows.

The three teachers I will focus on here attempted different ways of navigating between the two poles of suspect bourgeois aesthetics—the explanation of music through “extra-musical content” (hermeneutics) or by “deducing the content from the intrinsic laws [*Eigengesetzlichkeit*] of the music.”<sup>88</sup> Mobilizing historical details, references to other works of music, the analysis of musical character, and formal analysis, they sought to convey to the pupils exactly what it was about the *Eroica* that was heroic. They spent nearly equal time on each movement. In contrast, as Scott Burnham has pointed out, historically the majority of *Eroica* interpretations have focused almost exclusively on the first movement; the hero’s death tended to be an obstacle when formulating a four-movement program.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, the GDR lessons presented a version of the *Eroica* that contained “fighting” and “struggle,” but was free of the internal contradiction or self-doubt that has generally characterized other poetic readings. As Burnham shows, the aggregated master narrative of the *Eroica* portrays a hero who undergoes a “crisis of consciousness” and returns triumphant.<sup>90</sup> This story, which rests on a “programmatic equation of theme and dramatic protagonist,” understands the first movement’s narrative and formal trajectory as an attempt to overcome the C-sharp that catches the theme wrong-footed in its fifth measure. The pitch is most

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<sup>85</sup> Untitled document [1962], SA-AdK VKM 408.

<sup>86</sup> Anita Kober, “Musikpädagogische Untersuchungen über die Rezeption sinfonischer Werke im Musikunterricht im Zusammenhang mit dem Gedankengut der Französischen Revolution” (Staatsexamenarbeit, Martin-Luther-Universität, 1963), 31.

<sup>87</sup> Nicholas Mathew, *Political Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 19.

<sup>88</sup> Bimberg, “Musikhören,” 357.

<sup>89</sup> Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 2–3.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

famously read as a problem internal to the hero—unpredictability, hesitation—although A.B. Marx, at least, read it as an external intervention.<sup>91</sup> But only one GDR teacher mentioned the C-sharp at all, noting that “[the theme] is not yet completed. Diverts/slips to C-sharp.”<sup>92</sup> This fact—and its “resolution” in the recapitulation and coda—received no interpretive response. Like Klaua’s assumption that the character of the piece and its title would be identical, these lessons took literally the “heroic” in the *Eroica*, showing the aesthetic subject—so frequently assumed to be a stand-in for the biographical subject—to be unified, fighting external demons rather than the internal flaw of the C-sharp.

The Halle pedagogical analyses applied the principles of reflection theory to the *Eroica* so well that one might be tempted to believe that the theory itself was constructed with this work in mind—and indeed, Meyer’s examples were almost all works by Beethoven. In these classrooms, the *Eroica* was presented as the story of an individual elevated to an archetype by the erasure of the first dedication, mirroring in its specificity-yet-generality the way that content was supposed to operate: “*wholly unambiguous*,” yet not able to be expressed in words. Music was to signify through both “form” and “material.” The symphony used a number of available musical forms to portray sorrow and celebration (via established musical characters), as well as a progressive narrative of struggle and progress in the dialectical contrast of sonata form—an analysis that surely leaned in part on A.B. Marx’s understanding of sonata form as synonymous with the works and personal achievement of Beethoven. The piece’s progressive politics, already supposedly built into the music and confirmed by the title, were further corroborated by the composer’s biography and the political leanings easily inferred from some of his works in other genres.

For his eleventh and twelfth grades at a secondary school in Thum (Saxony), the teacher Johannes Fritzsche planned nine lessons on the piece. The first two examined Beethoven’s own political beliefs and highlights of politically progressive music, from the GDR national anthem and the Thälmann Song to Beethoven’s Ninth. Lesson three was a review of the musical forms the class had learned to date; lessons four and five were largely a formal analysis of the symphony’s movements. Alongside the formal analysis, Fritzsche offered some nuggets of poetic interpretation. The first movement portrayed “a heroic struggle under conflicting/contradictory conditions, which demands a monstrous application of strength and concentration;” the exposition was “repeated, to impress the themes upon the listener in a more lasting way, and to show the difficulty of the struggle.” The second was the “greatness of a generalized funeral,” “portraying the suffering, the pain, the sadness, and the victims whose lives the fight for freedom had cost in a staggering manner.” The trio of that movement, *à la* Schindler, was “(the illumination of a star of hope) / rising, sudden expiration / it was only a dream.”<sup>93</sup> The third “told of real life, in which the enduring factor resides in the rhythm of becoming and decaying, battle and death.” From the placement of these statements in alternation with chronological notes about instrumentation, keys, and themes, one suspects that Fritzsche linked these interpretive gestures with specific moments in the symphony, maybe even with individual themes. Presumably he played the piano, because he planned to listen to the full symphony on tape only in the sixth and seventh lessons.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 5–7.

<sup>92</sup> Johannes Fritzsche, “Behandlung der 3. Sinfonie von Beethoven in 11. und 12. Klassen als Grundlage für eine gute Rezeption,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* XII, no. 7/8 (1963): 606.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 607.



Fritzsche started with politics and history, moving to the specifics of Beethoven's music only later; Klaus Rössler opened with the symphony. In the first lesson

the exposition of the movement sounded, without introduction. Then the question was asked whether this music—as the subtitle of the symphony promised—had epic and heroic characteristics. The answer was unambiguous: ...the music was very exciting...a decisive character...the strong high points could be heard clearly...loud, forceful...oscillating between two basic statements...

In short, after the initial impressions, all of the pupils had similar judgments. A more exact rationale was not yet possible.<sup>94</sup>

Rössler tried to get pupils to connect emotive content to musical choices by prompting them, asking questions such as “with what musical means does Beethoven achieve an increased force of expression in the development, which corresponds to the hero's need to preserve himself? Which function could the melodically soft and conciliatory music have after the torturous expression of the dissonances at the climax?”<sup>95</sup> He was not interested in having the pupils identify the form themselves: instead, he pointed out the themes of the sonata form and the character of the march, asking the pupils to consider Beethoven's attitude towards the topic at hand. Though some of the pupils brought up the composer's biography, the lessons focused much less on the particular history of the work than heroism as a general trope.

Anita Kober's thesis, “Music-Pedagogical Examinations of the Reception of Symphonic Works in Music Lessons, in Connection with the Ideas of the French Revolution,” offered the most in-depth chronicle of Beethoven pedagogy.<sup>96</sup> Kober's ten-lesson unit started with *Fidelio* and *Prometheus* as external musical references to situate the heroism of the *Eroica* with other, more explicitly narrative works. When it came to the symphony itself, she presented the movements out of order, starting with those that she considered the most referential and thus easiest to grasp, and moving to the most “abstract.” The first was the Scherzo, which was dance-like (i.e. bodily) and festive, with a character that was easy for pupils to recognize. The funeral march was the Scherzo's dialectical antithesis, and pupils were already familiar with marches. (When asked which should come first in the piece, Scherzo or march, one pupil replied, “The march, because at funerals, first they cry and then they drink.”<sup>97</sup>) “The contradanse fourth movement proved a fitting end to the heroic narrative, with its use of the *Prometheus* theme that, in this scheme, represented “freedom”—after all, the best way to honor a hero was to move forward in his spirit. Its modified variation form was not difficult for youngsters to understand.”<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Klaus Rössler, “Erfahrungsbericht über die Behandlung der 3. Sinfonie von Ludwig van Beethoven in den Abiturklassen einer erweiterten Oberschule,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* XII, no. 7/8 (1963): 599.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 600.

<sup>96</sup> “Musikpädagogische Untersuchungen über die Rezeption sinfonischer Werke im Musikunterricht im Zusammenhang mit dem Gedankengut der Französischen Revolution.” Kober published a short précis of her experiment in the *WZdLMU* as well. See Anita Kober, “Rezeptionsuntersuchungen in 9. und 10. Klassen,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* XII, no. 7/8 (1963): 597–98.

<sup>97</sup> Kober, “Untersuchungen über die Rezeption sinfonischer Werke,” 31.

<sup>98</sup> That the sacrifice of one leads to the emancipation of many is also a socialist realist trope. Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

She introduced the first movement, finally, by comparing the two themes of the exposition to those of the fourth movement. Both featured a (dialectical) juxtaposition: heroic and lyric in the last movement, “gathering strength” and “releasing strength” in the first.<sup>99</sup> The last lesson on the symphony focused entirely on form:

8th lesson: First Movement/Sonata Form

The pupils attempt to recognize independently the first and second themes. Review of the material from the last lesson. We want to use another example of music from the classical period to show that an underlying principle to [this] musical form lies in the juxtaposition of two themes.

Example: Haydn, Piano Sonata in E-flat major or Mozart, *Sonata facile* KV 545 in C major

Goal: The pupils should find the rule behind the relationship [*die Regel des Zusammenhangs*]

Review: Sonata form

We listen to the first movement of the “Eroica” (the exposition without repeat; parts of the development and the recapitulation).<sup>100</sup>

Whereas the introductory lessons in the unit had focused on historical context and near-referential musical character, the culminating lessons were about sonata form. Kober conceptualized sonata form in terms of the juxtaposition of two themes only, without considering key area. This model may have come from Meyer, whose lengthy description of a sonata form in *Musik im Zeitgeschehen* celebrated at length the teleological energy arising from two themes with contrasting character, but mentioned only in passing that they are introduced in contrasting keys.<sup>101</sup> Thus Kober focused almost exclusively on the exposition. The point was not *thematische Arbeit*, or a return to a home key, or the unfolding of large-scale contrast, or any of the number of features that theorists had assigned to sonata form, but rather the presence of two themes.

For a long tradition of music theory, Beethoven’s canonical odd-numbered symphonic first movements were both interchangeable with the heroic style and with sonata form, so that to discuss the dialectic of its themes would be to discuss the form’s heroic dynamism: the first movement of the *Eroica* in particular became paradigmatic for its form and its poetic content. Kober’s presentation of the last three movements thus approached the question of content differently from her class on the first. Together, with reference to the title of the symphony, the March, Scherzo, and Finale added up to a story about heroism: a funeral march for a dead hero (not just any march); a joyous celebration of his life (not just any dance); a collective resolution to strive for the freedom for which he had fought (not just any *Volksfest*). The discussion of the first movement, however, reverted to generic and formal terms, assessing the piece according to its conformity to models by Haydn and Mozart.<sup>102</sup> Sonata form was thus capable of conveying

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<sup>99</sup> Kober, “Rezeptionsuntersuchungen,” 598.

<sup>100</sup> Kober, “Untersuchungen über die Rezeption sinfonischer Werke,” 26.

<sup>101</sup> Alternatively, it may have been a reinterpretation of A.B. Marx’s *Satz*, reduced to the melodic dimension to make it easier for pupils to hear.

<sup>102</sup> While Kober and Fritzsche both used a first-theme/second-theme model of sonata form, citing the the wind interchanges in measure 45 as the second theme, Fritzsche designated the homophonic melody in measure 83 as a “new second theme.” Fritzsche, “Behandlung der 3. Sinfonie von Beethoven in 11. und 12. Klassen als Grundlage für eine gute Rezeption,” 606.

content in a different way from the other forms. And Kober accordingly presented a progression from dance to sonata, from bodily motion and poetic association to narrative-formal content. This progression mirrored the priority of forms in foundational nineteenth-century pedagogical texts on musical form, such as A.B. Marx's *Kompositionslehre*.<sup>103</sup> Indeed, GDR Musikerzieher reproduced in their lesson plans the value-laden transition from childhood concreteness to the abstractions of adult thought – the civilizing journey of Enlightenment itself.

Although she had a clear sense of the piece's narrative and the meaning of its forms, Kober expressed misgivings about using words to describe the music. Even the word "Scherzo," she thought, was too revealing: "Unfortunately, I had already written the term "Scherzo" on the board. That had too much influence on the pupils. It can therefore only be counted as a half success that the pupils described the character of the movement very clearly, and with suitable words."<sup>104</sup> Kober believed that the pupils could work out the content with minimal guidance from the instructor—and in their maturity, perhaps, would not need these training wheels at all. Thus, it was essential that the teacher choose her words carefully so as not to influence and, crucially, limit the minds of her pupils:

What should the teacher tell the pupils about the individual movements? This question shouldn't be brushed aside. A purely factual [*sachlich*] formal analysis is not at all useful to the pupils. In general, their musical understanding is not yet developed enough that they can connect and "understand" the idea and its musical presentation independently. If the teacher simply wishes to influence or direct the thoughts of his pupils, he will make the pupils dependent on his own way of looking at the piece. It is always difficult to express musical content in words, and it can lead to subjective opinions that are harmful to an objective consideration. This contains a great danger: the pupils cling to an image, attempt to project a program onto the music, as we encounter with Liszt, for instance (*Les Préludes* or *Faust Symphony*). I noticed that time and again during the lessons, and it was difficult to dissuade the pupils from this approach. I tried to keep my remarks about the individual movements brief, and made a point of guiding the pupils' attention to the form and themes of the movements, and the way the themes were developed. At the end a brief summary should be given of that which absolutely has to be said about the movements.<sup>105</sup>

Too many interpretive words would mislead pupils into subjective opinions; not enough would be "of no use." Here, again, was that same pesky problem of how to teach objectively, but without using words: how to mobilize the musically specific without stumbling into the linguistically overprescriptive. Kober's solution was to focus on the musical construction of the movements (form, themes, motivic development) while presenting associated historical information as context with very few explicit musical connections. She hoped that the pupils

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<sup>103</sup> This progression differs from Asafyev's analysis in *Form as Musical Process*. Asafyev sees rondo/variations as forms based on identity, and sonata as a form based on contrast, but does not argue that the first gives rise to the second: rather, they continue to develop side by side. McQuere, *Russian Theoretical Thought*, 232–233.

<sup>104</sup> Kober, "Untersuchungen über die Rezeption sinfonischer Werke," 31.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

would synthesize the history and the music themselves. It seemed that Fritzsche and Rössler had hoped the same things, though one led with history and the other with music.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about this approach to the *Eroica* is its familiarity: it is the very reading that Burnham describes and, ultimately, advocates in *Beethoven Hero*. The East German way of teaching Beethoven was almost wholly conventional, for all that it claimed to emerge from a new and progressive aesthetics: it relied on a traditional repertoire of images about the heroic Beethoven and an accompanying set of music-theoretical devices. Reflection theory, here revealed through listening lessons with only a nominal degree of uncertainty or doubt, was, though progressively Marxist in name, conservative in its methods. One might expect a new theory of musical meaning to reconsider its mediating analytical tools. That the two-theme conception of sonata form was repurposed so easily might lead one to question how new the conclusions of GDR Marxist aesthetics could ever be.

### *Music and Emotional Experience*

The difficulty of understanding music without helpful titles was indicated clearly by the following passage from a draft of a guiding document for Musikerziehung:

As a result of the specificity of the artistic material, it is a peculiarity of the musical work of art that its content and its idea are not directly visible in each case. This becomes especially clear with the pieces whose content is not expressed or suggested through a programmatic title or an accompanying text—in other words, with extra-musical materials. Often, it is only possible to draw conclusions about the content of the work from the expressive character of the sound [*Klanggeschehen*], and from knowledge about the composer, the historical situation of the work's genesis, and the musical materials common to certain eras.<sup>106</sup>

This little paragraph seemed to have aroused some concern—one draft of the document in the VDK archive has the last sentence underlined in red, marked with the word “Caution!”<sup>107</sup> Indeed, such unease around the possibility of deriving musical meaning from the composer's life and historical environment characterized the lessons on untitled pieces more generally. The university students did not attempt lessons on such works, preferring instead to stick to pieces where the content or character was indicated by a title. Tips on presenting these less overtly referential pieces can be found, instead, in the booklets accompanying the tapes distributed by the DZL in the late 1950s. The texts in these booklets—meant to guide teachers with perhaps little musical experience—provided biographical information about the composers, formal analyses of the pieces, and occasional hints about how to structure lessons.

The biographies were tailored to emphasize political progressiveness, which, for composers who had never before been seen as political revolutionaries, led to some surprising

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<sup>106</sup> “Konzeption für den Musikunterricht in der zehnklassigen allgemeinbildenden polytechnischen Oberschule,” 15 December 1963, SA-ADK VKM 876. The passage was underlined in purple pencil.

<sup>107</sup> In this version, the second sentence is marked with a “Ja!” “Konzeption für den Musikunterricht in der zehnklassigen allgemeinbildenden polytechnischen Oberschule,” 15 December 1963, VKM 3099.

results. Chaikovsky's makeover, inspired by Soviet musicology, was a departure from earlier German studies, which had the composer as a frivolous imitator of European styles:<sup>108</sup>

Chaikovsky, who was thoroughly possessed of a democratic spirit—though he was inhibited by the allegiance to his class from drawing political conclusions from his affection for the people and the Volkslied, an affection that was instinctive—“experienced for that reason, perhaps, especially strongly the economic and social crisis of czarist Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century.” As a result, his grappling with the dark powers in his life is also understandable, in a broader sense, as the people's grappling with the dark forces of brutal despotism in Russia, which must finally end with the victory of the revolutionary *Volk*.<sup>109</sup>

According to Hans Pezold, author of a booklet on Bach's instrumental music, Bach's oeuvre expressed the rise of the merchant class as much as it did an ostensibly religious message:

As a bourgeois man [*Bürger*], when he composed sacred music, Bach expressed the feelings of the bourgeoisie of his time, just as in his secular works. Essentially, Bach did not recognize a strict differentiation between sacred and secular in his musical creations.<sup>110</sup>

Perhaps to entrench this lesson (or to disprove the apparently common idea that Bach's music was “too difficult to understand”), teachers were encouraged to introduce Bach not through the instrumental works on the tape at hand, but through the “Bauernkantate” (BWV 212), one of Bach's few secular cantatas, for which pupils themselves could sing parts of the piece.<sup>111</sup>

Many of the authors contented themselves with providing analyses of the taped works, pointing out the number of themes and making vague pronouncements about the character of the work (Mozart's Symphony K 543/iii is described as “a work full of joy in existence and life affirmation”).<sup>112</sup> Some of the booklets offered step-by-step instructions for lessons on the pieces. Unlike the lesson plans for the *Eroica*, these instructions offered no hints on how the teacher was to connect Bach's world-view with the works on the tape: in some cases, it seemed, such information was thought to hinder the pupils' reception of the music. For the two-part inventions, Pezold suggested that the pupils (from the eighth to tenth grade) start with No. 8 in F major, singing the motive and the countermotive through several times in order to memorize them, and continue this way throughout the piece, pointing out the invertible counterpoint.<sup>113</sup> For the second movement of the Concerto for 2 Violins (BWV 1043), “a noble, peaceful song” with

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<sup>108</sup> See, for instance, Adolf Weissmann, *Die Musik in der Weltkrise* (Stuttgart, Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1922), 100; Rudolf Malsch, *Geschichte der deutschen Musik, ihre Formen, ihr Stil und ihre Stellung im deutschen Geistes- und Kulturleben*, 3. Aufl. (Berlin [West]: W. de Gruyter, 1949), 339.

<sup>109</sup> *Tschaikowski: IV. Sinfonie, 4. Satz.*, Beiheft zum Magnettonband MB-A 188 (Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Lehrmittel, 1960), 14.

<sup>110</sup> Hans Pezold, *Johann Sebastian Bach: Instrumentalmusik*, Beiheft zum Magnettonband MB-A 60 (Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Lehrmittel, 1956), 5.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>112</sup> *W.A. Mozart: Sinfonie Es-Dur, KV 543, Menuett, 3. Satz*, Beiheft zum Magnettonband MB-A 191 (Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Lehrmittel, 1960), 11. “Life affirmation,” of course, is a socialist realist cliché.

<sup>113</sup> Pezold, *Johann Sebastian Bach: Instrumentalmusik*, 10.

“deep emotional content [*Gefühlsgehalt*],” even this level of analysis would be too much.<sup>114</sup> Introducing this piece to pupils in the eighth grade was to be a purely emotional matter. The teacher was encouraged not to burden the pupils with any extraneous information, as “in the eighth grade, it can only be a matter of a purely emotional absorption of the music by the pupils. Detailed historical or analytical observations would be out of place.”<sup>115</sup> The emotional *Erlebnis* trumped the intellectual *Erkennen* for this piece: the younger pupils, in this guide, were not exhorted to find an objective “character” or even point out themes, but were shielded from such considerations. For Hans Pezold, historical and analytical facts threatened the emotional experience—though, elsewhere, he had advocated for exactly the opposite, proclaiming

We can only bring the pupils to active listening if we urge them to give a full account of what they have heard, and if we help them to penetrate into the intentions of the composer and into the means through which they were realized. We have to analyze the work with the pupils.<sup>116</sup>

Pezold recommended a similarly emotional procedure even for pupils in the eleventh grade, who were to listen to the last movement of the Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 (BWV 1049). “The movement [...] should initially be allowed to act upon the pupils in a purely emotional fashion,” he wrote.

In the subsequent discussion, the question of content should be addressed first. The pupils should say what sort of musical details they noticed (polyphonic construction, one theme returns again and again, the instrumentation, etc). The goal is that the pupils realize the following: in this movement, fugal sections alternate with free episodes; a significant element is the soloistic exchange [*Konzertieren*] between the solo violin and the flute on hand, and the orchestra (*tutti*) on the other, as the Brandenburg Concertos belong to the genre of *concerto grosso*. It is left to the teacher to decide how much should be said about the structure of the movement. However, it is important that the theme be written on the board (dictation!) After the discussion, the movement must be played through again.<sup>117</sup>

Pezold’s suggestions implied that an emotional experience of the piece would be harmed by prior engagement with its formal aspects: (non-intellectual) experience had to precede (intellectual) recognition.

These methods contrast markedly to the ways of listening that teachers promoted for pieces with titles. Pezold noted that the Bach violin concerto had “deep emotional content,” but declined to explain it, whereas treatments of the *Eroica* and the character pieces had adapted the opposite tactic. Bach’s concerto, it seemed, was one of those pieces for which “the idea and the content [*Ideengehalt*] are not immediately apparent”; to insist on making such meaning explicit would be counter to the nature of the music. “Absolute” music and “program” music—a

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 21, 23.

<sup>115</sup> Pezold, *Johann Sebastian Bach: Instrumentalmusik*, 32.

<sup>116</sup> Pezold, “Werkbetrachtung im Musikunterricht,” 100.

<sup>117</sup> Pezold, *Johann Sebastian Bach: Instrumentalmusik*, 34.

conceptual division that plainly structured the thought of GDR Musikerzieher—seemed to warrant different modes of engagement.<sup>118</sup> Whereas pupils were encouraged to draw connections between music and title for program music (Rössler’s lesson plan is the clearest example), pupils here were shielded from considering extra-musical content in connection with untitled music. That this mode of listening resembled the “Romantic” listening it was meant to supplant was not lost on commentators, though it took some time for critiques to appear. Ten years after Pezold’s Bach booklet was published, Halle student Hans Nolte wrote a thesis evaluating the treatment of instrumental concertos in the DZL Beihefte. Of Pezold’s contention that “historical or analytical considerations would be out of place,” Nolte wrote that “this sort of listening will not lead to any overwhelming success. [...] One can read that ‘to begin with, the pupils should give themselves over to their impressions of the movement wholly unselfconsciously [*unbefangen*], and discuss it afterwards.’ Such views and methods of looking at a work, which still stand with both legs on hermeneutic grounds, have nothing in common with progressive methods of lesson planning.”<sup>119</sup> For Nolte, Pezold’s call to yield to emotions—even though those emotions were never characterized or articulated—was already too hermeneutically risky to pass muster. For all that, Nolte’s own (brief) suggestions about how to improve the lessons differed from Pezold’s only in that Nolte suggested that the pupils sing the themes on *Jale* syllables.<sup>120</sup>

However, most of the works recommended in the curriculum contained at least some programmatic reference, so teachers would rarely need to resort to a sort of listening that kept “historical or analytical observations” at arm’s length. It is therefore surprising to encounter just this tendency with respect to Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, which, in the GDR, was usually mobilized to celebrate the triumph of socialism, under which all men could truly become brothers. Like the *Eroica*, the Ninth was an emblematic political work of music, able to convey ideals (applicable to any society that professes to aspire to “brotherhood”) while still maintaining the deniability of timelessness.<sup>121</sup> The DZL booklet contained a lengthy history and analysis of the symphony, detailing its misuse by the Nazis and its proud reverberations throughout the socialist lands, using quotations from Beethoven’s sketches to reveal his humanistic intentions, and explaining just how perfectly Beethoven had realized these intentions in his choice of music and text. Teachers were encouraged to discuss Beethoven’s political convictions and their relationship to his time:

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<sup>118</sup> Teachers often argued that children had an easier time approach “program music” than “absolute music.” See, for example, Günter Fleischhauer, “Probleme der musikalischen Rezeption und ihrer Entwicklung bei Schülern und werktätigen Hörern,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* XI, no. 1 (1962): 4; Hans-Joachim Köhler, “Die Klavierimprovisation des Lehrers als Mittel zur Erziehung der Schüler zu aktiven Hörern,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* XI, no. 1 (1962): 22.

<sup>119</sup> Hans Nolte, “Kritische Auswertung der Unterrichtstonbänder des Deutschen Zentralinstitutes für Lehrmittel unter dem Gesichtspunkt musikwissenschaftlicher Rezeptionsuntersuchungen: Das Instrumentalkonzert” (Staatsexamenarbeit, Martin-Luther-Universität, 1966), 23.

<sup>120</sup> The same is true of Siegfried Bimberg’s 1964 critique of lesson plans on the *Eroica*: though it used a number of new theoretical terms to describe the ways in which active listening could fail to take place, the only way in which it differed from the work he was critiquing was its use of *Jale* syllables. Nolte may well have been a student of Bimberg’s. Bimberg, “Musikhören,” 361–362.

<sup>121</sup> As Mathew argues about Beethoven’s Congress of Vienna works, the monumentality of many of Beethoven’s conclusions is what invites appropriation, “as if their emphasis on the musical present can only be interpreted according to the historical present.” And yet, he cautions, readings that focus solely on self-contained form (as so many do) obscure the fact that this music might demand an extra-musical interpretation. Mathew, *Political Beethoven*, 99–101.

The introduction [*Einstimmung*] can be based roughly on the following thoughts: Beethoven had been enthusiastic about Schiller's poem since his time in Bonn: his ideal was also "in Frieden und Freude" (in peace and joy). He remained true to this idea. The use of this poem in his Ninth Symphony—and by extension, the whole work—is a protest against the ruling reactionary [ideas] of the time (draw a connection to the lessons learned in History!) and simultaneously a challenge to the future. The bold content corresponds to the bold form: the use of soloists and choir in the instrumental genre of the symphony.<sup>122</sup>

But aside from this general introduction to the last few years of Beethoven's life, the booklet discouraged teachers from furnishing musical moments with explicit messages, as some had done for the *Eroica*. Although the text identified the Turkish march and other moments of interest, the teacher was not to isolate those parts to discuss in class:

In consideration of the fundamental effect of the movement, dissection is irrelevant. The movement should be allowed to radiate its own power to the pupils. The teacher therefore has the sole task of preparing the pupils for the experience through a kind of introduction, and through necessary advice. A good start to the lesson might be the repetition of the Ode to Joy, as it is the main theme of the movement. When the pupils have mastered the melody, then they will recognize its variations during their subsequent listening as well.<sup>123</sup>

The "fundamental effect" had to be carefully managed to achieve its full potential.

The lesson demands very exact timing. The presentation from tape must be started at the precise minute so that it concludes exactly with the end of the lesson. It must be absolutely avoided that the final bell disturbs the last bars. On the other hand, no time can remain at the end of the piece: the experience cannot be talked to bits [*zerredet*].<sup>124</sup>

The painstaking detail of this lesson plan—more precisely laid out than any other in the DZL booklets—bore no small resemblance to a religious ritual. There were to be no disturbances from outside; there was also to be no conversation, no analysis, to dispel the magic.

It was possible that this tremendously famous movement needed no further introduction than a review of Beethoven's biography. Or perhaps the poem said it all: in an educational climate that favored affirmative (not internally contradictory) readings, the Finale would have been understood to reproduce perfectly, and in a specifically musical fashion, the messages of

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<sup>122</sup> Ludwig van Beethoven: IX. Sinfonie d-moll Op 125, *Schlusssatz*, Beiheft zum Magnettonband MB-A 181 (Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Lehrmittel, 1959), 27.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 28.



Schiller's text.<sup>125</sup> The reverential treatment of the piece might arguably serve to imprint the content emotionally. Nonetheless, this lesson bypassed some obvious opportunities to exercise the application of reflection theory, as teachers had done for the *Eroica*, or, in Pezold's words, "penetrate into the composer's intentions and the means by which they are realized."<sup>126</sup> It is worth noting that some methodological texts had discouraged exactly the sort of in-class presentations of music that resembled miniature concerts, advocating the use of introductory and closing discussions to educate "active" listeners.<sup>127</sup> This undisturbed listening resembled Heine's despised "Ehrfurcht" much more closely than it did any of the moves to teach "active listening."

### *The Politics of Listening*

Listening education in the early 1960s thus consisted of a heterogeneous set of practices, each calibrated to what were believed to be the inherent qualities of the pieces under examination and the emotional capacities of each age group. That these practices diverged from reflection theory in their conception of musical content—which, after all, applied best to the music of Beethoven, and in which the listener was largely absent—is unsurprising, as is the fact that many teachers and authors of methodological guides repurposed older methods for new aims. As in the solfège debate of 1952, inherited pedagogies sat uncomfortably with the demands that musicology and official policy would place on listening. It is unremarkable that teaching methods still, in some cases, resembled the Romantic *Gefühlsästhetik* that they were meant to leave behind; such ideas could not be immediately overhauled by fiat.

Believing that music's true content could not be articulated in words, Musikerzieher were limited in their ability to evaluate the success of their own methods—to recognize whether the desired dialectical listening was taking place. This unsolved problem of listening pedagogy remained in plain sight, even though it was rarely addressed directly. Many methodological critiques gestured to it, though: Siegfried Bimberg's 1963 evaluation of the available methods of studying reception concluded that each one was flawed.<sup>128</sup> Any theory of pedagogy that seeks to regulate meaning by positing a right and a wrong way to hear music, and yet openly recognizes the limits of this regulatory regime, would not seem well suited to a political order that seeks total control. That this aspect of music education acknowledged its limits is not merely further proof of a dictatorship's crumbling edges or the inherent resistance of the quotidian to state power. To be sure, for most teachers, the political *Weltanschauung* that Ernst Hermann Meyer claimed immanent in music seemed to have been a bridge too far. Even those lessons that featured patently counterfactual biographies (Chaikovsky, "filled with a democratic spirit," composing a symphony that would conclude with the "victory of the revolutionary *Volk*") did not seek to tie the composer's supposed beliefs to sounds: the last movement of Chaikovsky's Fourth Symphony was presented to teachers in terms of the number and placement of its themes, with

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<sup>125</sup> The descriptions of Beethoven's thought process in this booklet assign to him the leading role: though Schiller had written his poem first, it was Beethoven's genius that allowed him to select a poem that fit his idea so well. Ibid., 17, 23.

<sup>126</sup> Pezold, "Werkbetrachtung im Musikunterricht," 100.

<sup>127</sup> See Pezold, "Werkbetrachtung im Musikunterricht"; *Joseph Haydn (Auswahl)*, Beiheft zum Magnettonband MB-A 47 (Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Lehrmittel, 1955).

<sup>128</sup> Bimberg, "Psychologische Überlegungen."

the presence of a folk song noted just once.<sup>129</sup> Yet I would read this tendency to avoid the teaching of political readings that would marry progressivism with compositional choices, *à la* Meyer's reading of sonata form, as motivated less by "resistance"—or even by ideological and pedagogical inertia—than, perhaps, by a sense of responsibility: to what, at bottom, Musikerzieher believed music's essence to be, and to the limits of their pupils' credulity.<sup>130</sup> It would have been easy to parrot the musicological party line in a classroom—such information was readily available—but Musikerzieher seemed to have believed that Meyer's vision of composerly *Weltanschauung* in every musical work was implausible. Their unwillingness to assign what seemed to them untenable meanings to music demonstrates not only pedagogical pragmatism but also a commitment to the broadly anti-elitist project of giving pupils multiple ways to access music: historical, formal, and emotional. One might read this multi-pronged listening as a kind of utopian pluralism. The goal of teaching history, musical character, form, style, and emotional immediacy would ideally be to coordinate them, but, failing that, any combination of these elements could help to introduce children to German classical music. Party-line conformity took a back seat to the perceived needs of the pupil. Yet this is not the end of the story: politics need not inhere solely in an allegiance to Meyerian "progressivism," or even its feared opposite, "Romanticism." Rather, these lessons implied a mode of politics beyond progressive history, in the way that they conceived of listeners to begin with.

Part of the point of folding emotional experience into a theory of objective content was to determine emotional experience, to prescribe what listeners should feel. Indeed, *Gefühlserziehung* was a central goal of arts education, though it was most often connected to singing. As Juliane Brauer has documented, the collective singing of traditional and new children's songs was meant to provide children and youth with a positive "alternative" to the despair and deprivation that had characterized the years of war and rebuilding—an offering that, judging by the reception of new songs in FDJ gatherings, was taken up eagerly. According to Brauer, both the design of the songs and the act of singing itself were thought to be effective in instilling a sense of collectivity as well as the desired positive emotions.<sup>131</sup> The goals of this education were clear: "the forming of emotions that conformed to socialism, such as joy and cheerfulness, but also love for the homeland [*Heimatliebe*], patriotism, solidarity, or communal strength."<sup>132</sup>

Meanwhile, the emotional experiences aroused by listening to instrumental music were intentionally left vague. Meyer, of course, had proposed that the emotional content immanent in the music should also be awakened in the listener, creating symmetry between composer and receiver—a task that was easy enough when the composer's ideas seem clear. But for some works, such as Bach's Inventions, Erzieher avoided speculating about Bach's *Weltanschauung* and the feelings already "in" the work. Indeed, they were discouraged from using words to make

<sup>129</sup> *Tschaikowski: IV. Sinfonie, 4. Satz.*, 14.

<sup>130</sup> For examples of an entirely party-politics reading of music, one might see the Bach essays in *Musik und Gesellschaft* 1950 or the Beethoven conferences of 1952 and 1970, some essays from which are reproduced in Heinz Alfred Brockhaus and Konrad Niemann, eds., *Bericht über den Internationalen Beethoven-Kongress: 10.-12. Dezember 1970 in Berlin* (Berlin: Verlag Neue Musik, 1971).

<sup>131</sup> For example, Brauer writes, the popular "Blaue Fahnen nach Berlin," (a line of which reads "Wir sind Deutschlands neues Leben / Und der Friede mit uns zieht" [we are Germany's new life / and peace carries us with it]) expressed its upbeat message through its text and music (marching tempo, dotted rhythms, melodies without rests). Juliane Brauer, "'...das Lied zum Ausdruck der Empfindungen werden kann': Singen und Gefühlserziehung in der frühen DDR," *Jahrbuch für historische Bildungsforschung* 18 (2012): 13–140.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

the emotional “messages” of instrumental music too explicit. The practice of asking pupils for their impressions was suspect, as Siegmund-Schultze explained: “[it is questionable] whether, and to what extent, one can even express musical impressions in words at all, or whether one should demand, from less trained listeners, that they express their impressions in words, as is still so often done.”<sup>133</sup> Some believed that any words would harm the experience. The pupil’s own emotions were to be encouraged, even celebrated, while attempts to refine or clarify them or hem them in through prescription were carefully curtailed. Indeed, when it came to instrumental music, listening appeared as a private emotional activity, a counterweight to the prescriptive collectivity of singing.

Musikerzieher also adapted unusually to the individual listener in their long-term lesson planning. For one, music was matched to developmental stages: young children were exposed to character pieces, and near-adults to sonata forms. The process of maturation was thus conceived as biologically mandated, beginning with simple, “exterior processes” and culminating in complex, abstract thought. In so doing, Musikerziehung perpetuated a valuation of works based on their form. The result was a canon largely indistinguishable from earlier incarnations, one that valorized Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven above all others, and with them the concept of sonata form. The “science” of listening was tailored to existing musical taste, of course, and it was frequently unclear whether the Halle experiments were testing children’s natural abilities or their level of musical education. But however questionable the experiments may have been, they addressed real, not imaginary, people: real students and teachers who went to schools to play music for real children. Those unpredictable interactions were as foundational to the theory of listening, and thus to the practice of Musikerziehung, as musicological diktat. In other words, this was a way of conceiving of music that ceded some measure of control to the listener, however small. It also naturalized the privileged position of certain older repertoires, leaving little room for the music of the present—a fact that continued to be reflected in school curricula despite composers’ and musicologists’ calls for change.

For all that, the lesson plans themselves—minus the claims of Chaikovsky’s democratic leanings, perhaps—reflect assumptions strikingly similar to those in present-day Anglo-American musicology. The classroom vernacular of music historical pedagogy takes musical meaning to be a shifting combination of technical and broader socio-historical factors; it routinely encourages parallels between musical and bodily motion; and, supposedly freed from older formalist orthodoxies, teachers are rarely squeamish about exploring how programmatic titles might shape our understanding of the sounds we hear. Pedagogy today might be less pious about the composer’s intentions and political affiliations; otherwise, the GDR listening lessons are unremarkable. And this is precisely the point: the apparent familiarity of GDR music pedagogy may have less to do with tradition—after all, a force stronger than the political demands of the state—than with the later use of similar practices in Western Europe and North America. Kelly has recently traced the now-familiar aesthetics of *Regieoper* to the staging practices of Kupfer, Felsenstein, and Brecht in East Berlin, innovations adopted by West Germans after the turmoil of 1968 “as a means of liberating the art form from its elitist bourgeois conventions.”<sup>134</sup> James Hepokoski made a similar argument about Carl Dahlhaus’s take on the aesthetic of musical autonomy, showing that the West Berliner was motivated in part by the desire to seek an alternative to the Marxist sociology of the East.<sup>135</sup> To point out these

<sup>133</sup> Siegmund-Schultze, “Musikästhetische Grundfragen,” 549.

<sup>134</sup> Elaine Kelly, “Art as Utopia: Parsifal and the East German Left,” *The Opera Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (2014): 255..

<sup>135</sup> James Hepokoski, “The Dahlhaus Project and Its Extra-Musicological Sources,” *19th-Century Music* 14, no. 3

relationships is not to assert intellectual primacy or ruminate on the anxiety of influence, but rather to note a broad common cause, a shared desire to ground art music of the past in social reality. East German pedagogies of listening emerged from the very concerns that shaped the Anglo-American “New Musicology” and its aftershocks—though, at first blush, the extremity of East German politics may mask these similarities. East German lessons in music history and listening were a high-stakes enterprise, and it was this sense of importance that prompted Musikerzieher to navigate the tensions and rifts between politics and music, content and reception, work and listener that would, in a later and more leisurely fashion, come to inhabit the American classroom.

#### Chapter 4. “The Evil Fairy Must Remain an Evil Fairy”: Children’s Opera and the Reinvented Lehrstück

In the spring of 1969, pupils from the fifth through seventh grades at the Käthe Kollwitz Secondary School of Greifswald took the stage to perform the new children’s opera *Die Nachtigall* (*The Nightingale*; music: Burkhard Meier; libretto: Hella Brock), an adaptation of the fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen. The performance was received positively: the reviewer Gudrun Hillemann praised the music’s “simple melodic and memorable rhythmic *Gestalt*,” and concluded that, overall, “theatrical performance with music is excellently suited for aesthetic Erziehung and for supporting the artistic [*musisch*] climate at a school.”<sup>1</sup>

University students had given the opera its premiere shortly beforehand, in February 1969, at a pedagogical conference held at the Institute of Musikerziehung of the Ernst Moritz Arndt University Greifswald, where Hella Brock was a professor. The piece, therefore, was not new to Greifswald music circles. Yet a few days after the secondary-school premiere, Manfred Vetter, also a musicologist at the Institute, raised a stink. How was it possible for Hella Brock, otherwise such a progressive Socialist and a Party member, to choose a fairy tale in which an emperor, the head of feudal society, was moved—and redeemed—by music? This portrayed the emperor in much too sympathetic a light and conveyed the wrong idea about history. Other members of the Institute agreed with Vetter’s opinion, or at least did not contest it. Further performances of the opera were canceled. Several months later, after the summer vacation, the secretary of the local Party organization announced that the decision had been revoked, and the opera could be performed again. But it was too late: the children were half a year older, their voices had begun to change, and they had already put the disappointment of the canceled performance behind them. Hella Brock suffered a nervous breakdown as a result of the incident, and in 1972 left Greifswald to become a professor at the Institute for Musicology at the Karl Marx University Leipzig.<sup>2</sup>

#### *“The Evil Fairy Must Remain an Evil Fairy”*

Vetter was not alone in demanding that the text of a children’s opera adhere to a Marxist understanding of historical progress. In 1948, the GDR had adopted the political-aesthetic doctrine of socialist realism.<sup>3</sup> Under this doctrine, librettists and composers were encouraged to

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<sup>1</sup> Gudrun Hillemann, “Wer kennt der Nachtigall Gesang?” *Musik in der Schule* 1969/3, 129.

<sup>2</sup> This story is recounted in Bernd Fröde, *Gleiches Bestreben in getrennten Ländern: Musikpädagogik in den beiden deutschen Staaten nach 1945. Zeitzeugen berichten* (Hanover: Institut für musikpädagogische Forschung, 2007), 165-169.

<sup>3</sup> Andrey Zhdanov had originally coined the term “socialist realism” in 1932. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union re-invoked the idea in the Resolution on Music of the Central Committee 10 February 1948; following this, the Second International Congress, at which Hanns Eisler represented Austria, wrote a manifesto about the need for new music that served people’s changing interests. This was subsequently adopted as cultural policy in the GDR. See Eisler, “Manifest,” in *Neue Musik im geteilten Deutschland*, ed. Ulrich Dibelius and Frank Schneider, vol. 1 (Berlin: Henschel, 1993), 68. See also “Kommentare,” *ibid.*, 77.

produce work that was “close to the folk” [*volksnah*], and that embodied socialist topics and themes. Stories set in previous eras had to reflect Marxist principles: the understanding of history as a series of class struggles, the end goal of which was that the proletariat, the progressive force, will take up its role as the historical protagonist. These ideological requirements were most easily met through the creation of new texts—and, indeed, *Musik in der Schule* often published pleas for children’s operas with new, “realistic” librettos.<sup>4</sup> Musikerzieher, however, could not and did not wish to ignore the long-standing tradition of Grimms’ and Andersen’s fairy tales with which generations of German children had been raised. Calling on the theories of Georg Lukács, bureaucrats, musicologists, and literary theorists in the first decade of the GDR’s existence emphasized the usefulness of maintaining continuity between the “progressive” elements of bourgeois culture and the new socialist state.<sup>5</sup>

However, locating “progressivism” in bourgeois culture could be a tricky enterprise. To be on the safe side, a number of composers retooled fairy tales to make them conform to a more Marxist sensibility, emphasizing class struggle, solidarity, and the inevitability of the victory of the proletariat. Some tales required very little adjusting: Hans-Werner Liebscher adapted *Des Kaisers neue Kleider* (*The Emperor’s New Clothes*) in such a way that the two tailors who fool the Emperor “represent the natural, honest folk.” After fleecing the Emperor, they return the money (to which, after all, the Emperor had little right) to the community.<sup>6</sup> The story’s central issue remains the evils of vanity and the tendency of power to influence truth, but the Emperor’s unmasking now teaches a lesson about the fair distribution of wealth.<sup>7</sup> Other adaptations stretched the material a little farther. One of the earliest GDR children’s operas, *Die Geschichte vom gestohlenen Mond* (*The Story of the Stolen Moon*), updated a little-known Grimm tale to preach collective ownership.<sup>8</sup> In the original story, four boys steal the moon from a mayor who has been demanding payment for keeping the moon lit, after which they themselves carry on this extortionate practice. After their deaths, they each take a quarter of the moon down to their graves, where it lights up the underworld and wakes the dead. Annoyed by the dead’s carousing, and fearing a revolt, St. Peter takes the moon to heaven, where it can provide light for everyone. In the GDR version, the boys manage to steal the moon from where it hangs on the branch of a tree. They use the moon to exert influence over the other children: naturally, everyone then fights to acquire the moon for himself. But reason eventually prevails, as “a majority comes to the realization that property in one person’s hands leads to oppression and the deprivation of rights [*Entrechtung*], and only *common* property can bring prosperity and peace to mankind.”<sup>9</sup> The teacher Fritz Westien’s frequently staged children’s opera *Sleeping Beauty* (*Dornröschen*)

<sup>4</sup> See Karl Laux, “Zum Thema Schulooper,” *Musik und Gesellschaft* 1951/6, 182; Eva Bormann and Fritz Westien, “Zum Problem Schulooper,” *Musik in der Schule* 1952/5-6, 225; Marianne Graefe, “Zu Textfragen der Schulooper,” *Musik in der Schule* 1958/1, 32-36.

<sup>5</sup> Elaine Kelly, *Composing the Canon in the German Democratic Republic: Narratives of Nineteenth-Century Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Richard Petzoldt, “Versuch einer neuen Schulooper,” *Musik in der Schule* 1956/4, 189.

<sup>7</sup> This was one of the fairy tales most often set to music in the GDR. In addition to Liebscher’s version, *Des Kaisers neue Kleider* was also set to music by Hans Voigt (1954; reported in *Musik in der Schule* 1954/4) and Fritz Westien (1956).

<sup>8</sup> The original Grimm fairy tale was titled “Der Mond.” The opera was premiered 30 May 1953 in Chemnitz, text and music written by Walter Meusel, Eberhard Klobe, and Hans-Georg Marek, members of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für deutsche Volksmuseen und deutsche Volkskunst. Incidentally, Carl Orff had written an opera (for adult singers) on the same fairy tale in 1939.

<sup>9</sup> Hilde Wendler, “Die Geschichte vom gestohlenen Mond—eine neue Kinderoper,” *Musik in der Schule* 1953/6, 285. Italics original.

retained the best-known aspects of the fairy tale, but altered the context to reflect history's teleology. Westien set the fairy tale not "once upon a time," but at a specific moment in history, when feudal society was undergoing the transition to early capitalism. When the king and his kingdom awake, the world outside is completely different—the king, now a vestige of an outdated system, is condemned to exile (in the pantry). Meanwhile, Grimms' thirteen fairies were made into a single wise fairy, who prophesies the dissolution of the monarchy in favor of the mercantile middle class.<sup>10</sup>

Westien's updates were of a piece with other fairy tale adaptations, most of which updated the "happily ever after" to mean a shift in social structure rather than a change in the fortunes of an individual.<sup>11</sup> As such, *Dornröschen* seemed "very natural" to one reviewer, "in contrast to so many current efforts to be contemporary."<sup>12</sup> However, the composer Hans Naumilkat found the changes to be contrived:

Yes, life outside in front of the hedge of thorns went on. But that was all. It didn't develop, just as life and mankind in the German fairy tale do not develop: the good are good and will be rewarded; the bad are bad and will be punished. Time stands still or goes on, as one likes. I am of the opinion that the artist should be allowed to give the German fairy tale new features, new moments, new morals, but that such developments should not be inorganic and—as with the thirteenth fairy—the last shall be first. It [the development of the fairy tale] should continue in the direction in which it would have gone, had it not been fixed in writing. Westien ignores this, and makes the corresponding mistake in the libretto.<sup>13</sup>

Unpublished reactions were much more critical. In a meeting of the Commission for Youth and School Music of the Union of German Composers and Musicologists (VDK) in February of 1955, Hella Brock offered a direct critique of the piece's ideological message:

One can't put in Marxist thought artificially (such as the replacement of feudalism by bourgeois society). At most, such things can be taken in where the fairy tale itself offers an opportunity. The evil fairy must remain an evil fairy.<sup>14</sup>

The meeting's secretary noted that while the other teachers first disagreed "fiercely" with Brock's statement, "it was only in a conversation in a smaller group following the main discussion that it was admitted that the "progressive" moments had been incorporated in order to avoid criticism, from the local Party organization, that the piece showed an inclination towards

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<sup>10</sup> Hans Naumilkat, "Großartiger Erfolg einer neuen Schulooper," *Musik in der Schule* 1955/3, 135-136.

<sup>11</sup> Fairy-tale tweaking happened in other media as well. Anne D. Peiter has explained how a number of DEFA fairy-tale films adapt the stories in terms of class conflict. The protagonists are representatives of the hard-working lower classes; the bad characters are parasites from the middle and ruling classes. Anne D. Peiter, "'Pitschepatsche, pitschepatsch!' oder: Der 'neue Mensch' im alten Gewand. Zu DEFA-Verfilmungen grimmischer Märchen in den 1950er und 1960er Jahren," in *Der "neue Mensch": ein ideologisches Leitbild der frühen DDR-Literatur und sein Kontext*, ed. Katrin Löffler (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2013), 231-49.

<sup>12</sup> Joachim Rötger, "Schul- und Jugendoper in Städten und Dörfern," *Musik in der Schule* 1957/9, 418.

<sup>13</sup> Naumilkat, "Großartiger Erfolg," 135-136.

<sup>14</sup> "Protokoll über die Sitzung der Kommission 'Jugend- und Schulmusik' am 12.2.1955 in Leipzig." SA-AdK VKM 602.

indifference.”<sup>15</sup> One month later, in a meeting of the same commission, an unnamed discussant expressed a similar view: “One should not furnish a fairy tale with political tendencies from the outside, but should attempt to enliven the relevance to the present time already in the material.”<sup>16</sup>

These printed and oral discussions expose several of the pressures brought to bear on GDR children’s opera. First, all three critics display a strong allegiance to fairy tales’ narrative traditions. The satisfying justice of this literary form should take precedence over the demands of Marxist historiography: good is rewarded and evil is punished, “the evil fairy must remain an evil fairy.”<sup>17</sup> There were aspects of this German tradition that, for whatever reason, should not be coopted for Marxist moralizing. Second, the admission about the “progressive” moments reveals that Westien changed the narrative not because he was trying to educate children about Marxist history, but because he was trying to ensure his own political safety.<sup>18</sup> In other words, he was using the libretto of his children’s opera to send a message to adults.

Westien may, of course, have been hoping to kill two birds with one stone: to assure Party members of his political allegiances while also providing a useful lesson for children. But, unfortunately for Westien, some of his contemporaries considered such efforts to be educationally ineffective. As one reviewer wrote,

How often have we experienced children, not only in musical works but in other areas as well, singing or saying words or whole sentences that they do not understand at all. Our writers still make the mistake of presenting political arguments in a children’s song in the same form that is customary for adults.<sup>19</sup>

This opinion, which appeared in print, was a mild form of an opinion that had circulated earlier in a VDK meeting: to wit, children’s material in adult form was not only educationally ineffective, but even detrimental.<sup>20</sup> As the composer and VDK secretary Kuno Petsch had argued in a discussion about song texts,

The content of the texts has to match our general goals for Erziehung. The range of possibilities is very broad. We must be especially careful that the “raised finger” does not come into the text, because when people notice that they’re being

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<sup>15</sup> “Protokoll über die Sitzung der Kommission ‘Jugend- und Schulmusik’ am 12.2.1955 in Leipzig,” SA-AdK VKM 602.

<sup>16</sup> “Protokoll über die Sitzung der Kommission ‘Jugend- und Schulmusik’ am 19.3.1955 in Berlin,” SA-AdK VKM 602.

<sup>17</sup> Brock, it should be noted, was generally in favor of progressive opera texts. In her monograph *Musiktheater in der Schule*, she had written appreciatively of a (West German) setting of *Des Kaisers neue Kleider*, which, in her view, took aim at both the emperor’s vanity and the power relations in class society that make truthfulness impossible. Hella Brock, *Musiktheater in der Schule: Eine Dramaturgie der Schulooper* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1960), 111.

<sup>18</sup> Though the records of the meeting do not name the person who made the admission, it may well have been Westien himself, as he also lived in Leipzig.

<sup>19</sup> Joachim Nitsch, “König Midas: eine Kinderkantate von Günter Kunert und Kurt Schwaen,” *Musik in der Schule* 1959/2, 80. Nitsch was praising the librettist of *Midas*, Günter Kunert, for not falling into this trap.

<sup>20</sup> I do not mean to suggest that speech was entirely “free” at VDK meetings. The initial reactions to Hella Brock’s statement quoted earlier in the text demonstrate that (self-)censorship was commonplace. Records of these meetings, however, consistently show statements couched in more direct terms than those opinions that appeared in print. On the plurality of opinions in the VDK and the varying fidelity of meeting records to actual occurrences, see Gilbert Stöck, *Neue Musik in den Bezirken Halle und Magdeburg zur Zeit der DDR. Kompositionen—Politik—Institutionen* (Leipzig: Gudrun Schröder Verlag, 2008), and Laura Silverberg, “Monopol der Discussion?” in Elaine Kelly and Amy Wlodarski, *Art Outside the Lines: New Perspectives on GDR Art Culture* (New York: Rodopi, 2011).



edified [*erzogen*], the effect is usually the opposite of what is intended. Slogans [*Phrasen*] are the worst method of *Erziehung*: they lead to hypocrisy.<sup>21</sup>

Children, in other words, had an innate sense of when they were being (too obviously) improved, and tended to run in the other direction. With its didactic adaptations to a well-known fairy tale, *Dornröschen* would have caused more eye-rolling among its young performers than it did enlightenment. Similarly, the version of *Die Nachtigall* that would have met with Vetter's approval would never have passed a children's jury.

I have opened with these examples because they make plain several issues surrounding new music written for children in the GDR. The first issue is conflict between political necessity and educational goals, which gives rise to differing and incommensurate modes of speech: speech that adults use to communicate with other adults, and speech that adults use to communicate to children. In the former, adults performatively display their own political allegiances; in the latter, adults seek to mold children's evolving political beliefs. These exemplary stories show people intervening in the text not out of a desire to improve children's political education, but in an effort to avoid—or perhaps instigate—politically motivated criticism of themselves or other adults. The resulting libretti ensured political safety for grown-ups, but, according to contemporary expert opinions, were educationally harmful to children.

I make this distinction with some caution. In parsing children's music in terms of speech-for-adults versus speech-for-children, it would be too easy to divide the speakers into state lackeys and resistance fighters, those against and those for the children. Such a division would be misleading for two reasons. First, speakers are mobile, opportunistic, and perfectly capable of using both modes of communication—especially if switching between them works to their advantage. Second, this division, in aligning speech-for-adults with political content, implies that real, effective children's music education is not political. This, in turn, plays into a fallacy of Cold War historiography that would conflate the socialist ideal with the oppressive state that purported to be its manifestation, and moral behavior with resistance to socialism and the oppressive state. The reality was more complex, of course. As is increasingly well documented, many East Germans were personally committed to the ideal of socialism, but not necessarily to the means taken to achieve it: they did not see their particular dictatorship (or, indeed, any dictatorship) as a necessary condition for the future utopian state.<sup>22</sup> To these people, the education of young socialists was meaningful and desirable beyond (and, indeed, in spite of) the state's program of educating state-loyal citizens. Yet at the same time, the state and the Party had to be reckoned with. Individuals' attempts to work towards their ideals of socialism took place within the framework of a paranoid and totalitarian state that claimed socialist ideology for its own; the relationship between the individual's actions and the state's demands had to be continually renegotiated. Thus, it may be useful to differentiate political *Erziehung* (education to

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<sup>21</sup> "Protokoll über die Arbeitstagung der Kommission Jugend- und Schulmusik am 13. und 14. April 1957 in Petzow," SA-AdK VKM 602.

<sup>22</sup> See, for instance, Corey Ross, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass Roots: The Transformation of East Germany, 1945–1965* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000). In addition, Hella Brock reminded me several times during an interview that she had, and still did, consider herself a socialist. Though a member of the SED, she was not a supporter of most Party actions; though dedicated to educating future socialists through music, she did not wish to educate uncritical state loyalists. (Hella Brock, in discussion with the author, 1 December 2012.) Though it is certainly in Brock's current interests to describe her relationship with the Party as one of convenience, that does not make her statements untrue, or invalidate the possibility of holding such a position.

a socialist ideal) from patriotic Erziehung (education towards love for the GDR), with the caveat that these two kinds of education, while distinct, were not mutually exclusive.

A further issue is the relationship between text and music in children's political education. Children, teachers believed, learned not through the (grown-up) tactics of either sloganizing rhetoric or reasoned argument, but through their bodies and their emotions. Thus, according to Brock, the music of school operas was much more important than the text:

The incorporation of music into school theater is very valuable, especially for children. Children of every age are emotionally very impressionable. Especially in the younger classes, feelings are evoked through immediate sensory perception, and less with the help of images and thoughts as the text conveys them.<sup>23</sup>

Vetter had denounced *The Nightingale* solely on the basis of its libretto, making no comments about the music. Nearly all official critiques of educational repertoire (that is, critiques from governmental organizations) focused on texts, it being easier to assess the ideological content of words than of tones. In addition, inasmuch as the critiques in public forums functioned primarily as adult speech, it is understandable that ideological matters should come to the fore. Yet the officials' focus on ideologically appropriate texts effaced the vital importance of music to children's political education. Such critiques scrutinized that which was least relevant to effective education. The narratives themselves were important, as the debate around *Dornröschen* demonstrated: children could recognize when a didactic moral hijacked a conventional narrative arc, and such false tales would be dismissed. But when married to a story with the appropriate childlike justice, the "aesthetic experience" of music could teach ethical behavior, shaping the child's character more surely than even the best tales could do alone.

Further complicating this issue was the fact that music, in these pieces, was to serve a dual function. In addition to activating children's emotions and educating them ethically, school music had the task of educating the young singers to become the musical public of the future—two goals whose relationship could be tense.<sup>24</sup> Composers had a vested interest in using "newer" sounds if they wished to have a future audience for their work. Naumilkat critiqued *Dornröschen* in this connection, chastising Westien for musical backwardness:

I was less impressed by the musical substance of some of the pieces, which seemed to me to be not new enough, and did not correspond to our time. [...] I would like to express my hope that the composer, in further works of this kind, will give his melodies more individual and modern characteristics, and that his harmonies will become bolder and his rhythms more varied.<sup>25</sup>

The musicologist Richard Petzoldt had stronger opinions about Liebscher's *Des Kaisers neue Kleider*, remarking that

[a] sweetened imitation of classical models should no longer be conceivable for a school musician in 1956. How does Liebscher wish to introduce the children entrusted to him to the musical language of our time, if they only know imitations

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<sup>23</sup> Brock, *Musiktheater*, 163.

<sup>24</sup> In German, these two goals are referred to as *Erziehung durch Musik* and *Erziehung zur Musik*.

<sup>25</sup> Naumilkat, "Großartiger Erfolg," 135.

of the old! (But please do not misunderstand! Of course this is not a plea for twelve-tone school opera!)"<sup>26</sup>

Yet other Erzieher worried lest modern sounds threaten the operas' potential for Erziehung. Westien himself warned against music that would lure children into decadent elitism, advocating instead for as folksy a style as possible: "[the composer's] harmony, his melody, and his rhythm should have their roots in healthy folk music. There is no room for experiments!"<sup>27</sup> In addition, many seemed to believe that young children could only handle the simplest tonal style. Joachim Rötger praised Westien for not writing more modern music, which would have been inaccessible to children. After all, he concluded, "a school opera is not a playground for composition virtuosos."<sup>28</sup>

In light of contemporaneous debates about socialist realism, folk music, and Western elitism, many of these more conservative arguments about musical style read more as adult speech than speech for children. At the same time, however, it may be oversimplifying to dismiss these arguments as mere political safeguarding. The panic evident in such phrases as "a playground for virtuosos" betrays, I would suggest, a real fear about the loss of traditional childhood in the new society, an issue to which I will return later in this chapter. These large issues, the multilayered discourse on patriotic-political education and the emotional effects of musical sounds, frame the origins of a specific subset within GDR children's opera, the reinvented Lehrstück.

### *Schwaen, Brock, and the Children's Opera Community*

GDR children's operas of the mid-1950s were mostly adaptations of fairy tales. Fritz Westien's works (*Dornröschen*, but also a setting of *Des Kaisers neue Kleider* and an original work entitled *Gespenstermax*) dominate both published and unpublished discussions from this period. The movement began to change in the early 1960s, largely due to the efforts of Hella Brock and the composer Kurt Schwaen. Schwaen's initial foray into children's stage music came at the initiative of Bertolt Brecht. Brecht approached Schwaen in May 1955 to request that the composer set his Lehrstück *Die Horatier und die Kuriatier* (The Horatians and the Curiatians), written (without music) in 1934.<sup>29</sup> The finished work was premiered on 26 April 1958 in Halle

<sup>26</sup> Petzoldt, "Versuch," 189-190. At the time, Petzoldt was the editor of *Musik in der Schule*.

<sup>27</sup> Eva Bormann and Fritz Westien, "Zum Problem Schulooper," *Musik in der Schule* 1952/5-6, 225.

<sup>28</sup> Rötger, "Schul- und Jugendopern," 418.

<sup>29</sup> Accounts differ as to when Brecht wrote this work, and whether he began it with music in mind. Rainer Steinweg's reading of the sketches to *Die Horatier und die Kuriatier* demonstrates that Brecht began the piece in 1934. Rainer Steinweg, *Lehrstück und episches Theater: Brechts Theorie und die theaterpädagogische Practice* (Frankfurt: Brandes u. Apffel, 1995), 46, 223-224. Brecht claimed in the 14<sup>th</sup> volume of his *Versuche*, in which *Horatier* is published, that he had finished the piece in 1934 as well. Bertolt Brecht, *Versuche*, vol. 14 (1955; repr., Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977), 388. He might not have told the whole truth, however, as his letters to Hanns Eisler from 1935 reveal that he was still working on the piece at that time, and further, that he had begun the piece at Eisler's initiative. Joachim Lucchesi and Ronald Shull, *Musik bei Brecht* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988), 621-623; 151-152. An argument with the composer in the process meant that Brecht finished the work without musical collaboration. Yet he may still have hoped for music to be incorporated: in a set of short instructions for the performers ("Anweisung für die Spieler," which Lucchesi and Shull also believe to be from 1935), Brecht wrote that "one can get by without music, and just use drums." Lucchesi and Shull, *Musik bei Brecht*, 153). The intended collaboration with Eisler corroborates Joy Calico's argument that "the Lehrstück is a musical genre"—even though

by students of the Institute for Musicology, in a performance directed by Hella Brock. Schwaen followed this first work with *König Midas* (King Midas, 1958), a collaborative effort with author Günter Kunert which soon became the GDR's best-loved children's opera.<sup>30</sup> Schwaen and Kunert subsequently wrote *Die Weltreise im Zimmer* (Journey Around the World in a Room, 1960), and *Ein Tier, das keins ist* (An Animal That Isn't, 1961). Schwaen's next works *Der Dieb und der König* (The Thief and the King, 1962), *Paukenemil und Trompete* (Drumming Emil and the Trumpet, 1973), *Ein Krug mit Oliven* (A Jar of Olives, 1975), and *Siedlung Karl Marx* (The Settlement "Karl Marx," 1977) featured his own texts, and his last children's opera *Der ABC-Stern* (The ABC Star, 1984) was a collaboration with librettists Wera and Klaus Küchenmeister.

The continuing success of *Midas* was purportedly what spurred Schwaen's other significant contribution to the children's opera movement: together with the Musikerzieher Ina Iske, he founded and led a children's after-school opera workshop (*Kindermusiktheater AG*) in 1973. According to Iske (who married Schwaen in 1980), Schwaen had been receiving letters from school classes who were rehearsing and staging *Midas* at their own initiative. These letters moved him to write more pieces and to provide children with a space in which to perform the works. Over ten years, directed by Schwaen and Iske, the Leipzig group premiered *Krug mit Oliven* and *Paukenemil und Trompete*, and performed *König Midas*, *Der Dieb und der König*, *Ein Tier, das keins ist*, and *Die Weltreise im Zimmer*. They were the subject of a full-length DEFA documentary film *Im Spiel sich erkennen* (filmed April-May 1979; broadcast 14 and 21 September 1980), and participated in at least three radio recording sessions (1975/76, piece unknown; 1977, *Weltreise*; 1978/79, *Tier*). In addition, they were named an outstanding Collective for Folk Art in 1979/80, and the Karl Marx University Leipzig organized two conferences about their work (78/79, 79/80).<sup>31</sup> Schwaen and Iske's *Kindermusiktheater AG* (which they referred to affectionately as "Kiki") inspired the founding of other, similar groups: in Sandersdorf (about 40 km northwest of Halle), led by Ursula Frotscher; in Berlin, led by a Frau Wieberneid; in Weimar, led by Reinhard Schau; and in Görlitz.<sup>32</sup> The Sandersdorf group, in particular, maintained a close relationship with the Leipzig AG.

Through the early 1960s, the pedagogical journal *Musik in der Schule* continued to report on operas by various composers, but these reports begin to dwindle in favor of articles that commented on Schwaen's works. *Dornröschen*, the most-discussed opera of the 1950s, was never mentioned again.<sup>33</sup> Around the time of *Midas*, Schwaen's name came to be synonymous with children's opera. Though other composers continued writing children's operas, their efforts remained strictly local; they received none of Schwaen's widespread attention. His reputation as

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she notes that *Die Horatier und die Kuriatier* and *Die Ausnahme* are "the only Brechtian Lehrstücke not conceived with a musical collaborator from the start." Joy Calico, *Brecht at the Opera* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 18.

<sup>30</sup> *Midas* was commissioned by Manfred Roost, director of the children's choir of the East German radio station Deutschlandsender, and first broadcast in July 1958 as part of the Third International Children's Chorus Convention (Kinderchortreffen) in Düsseldorf. A second recording was made in 1961, and a 50-minute DEFA film, *Vom König Midas*, followed in 1963. The opera was incorporated into the GDR state curriculum (*Lehrplan*) for the 5th grade in 1966. In VDK discussions of music education, *Midas* is consistently cited as a positive example for the future of children's opera. Many people who were schooled in the GDR have demonstrated to me that they can still sing the songs from *Midas*.

<sup>31</sup> I thank Ina Iske-Schwaen for this information.

<sup>32</sup> Ossapofsky, "'Alles Leichte ist ungewöhnlich schwer': Die Arbeit Kurt Schwaens für Kindermusiktheater." Magister Thesis, Universität Leipzig, 2004: 36. Ossapofsky does not mention Wieberneid's first name, nor does she name a director for the Görlitz group.

<sup>33</sup> As far as I can tell, *Dornröschen* was never published.

the central and defining composer of the genre has become even stronger in the present day, to the exclusion of all others.<sup>34</sup>

Given Schwaen's influence, popularity, and reputation as the leader of the GDR children's opera scene, some aspects of his career in children's opera are surprising. His operas' librettos contain none of the politically ingratiating plot twists so common in the earlier fairy-tale adaptations. They neither praise socialism and land collectivization nor condemn capitalist imperialism: in short, they do not engage in speech for adults. On the contrary, there are several moments in the operas that could easily be read as politically subversive, if seen from the view of a paranoid state. In *Ein Tier, das keins ist*, a child visiting the zoo creeps into a cage, prompting the chorus to sing "A person does not belong behind bars!"<sup>35</sup> Schwaen and Kunert had begun work on the opera in 1958, long before the 1961 construction of the Berlin Wall. The premiere, however, took place on 21 March 1963 as part of a school concert dedicated to Kurt Schwaen in the Albrecht Dürer Secondary School Aue (Saxony). The review in *Musik in der Schule* mentioned the line directly: "The zookeeper gives the child a beneficial lesson: A person does not belong behind bars. He should live and create freely, and not sit in a cage like an animal."<sup>36</sup> Further performances took place in 1977 and 1978, and the *Kindermusiktheater AG* recorded a version for radio in May 1979. The opera also figured in *Im Spiel sich erkennen*—somewhat surprisingly, given the particular history of that film. The documentary's broadcast, originally planned for summer 1979, had been delayed for a year. The reason, it transpired, was that the opening and closing sequences had featured quotations from Günter Kunert. Kunert had recently become *persona non grata* in the GDR, having emigrated to the FRG shortly before the documentary's planned broadcast date. Using his name in the film, then, might be interpreted as tacit support for his decision. The film was finally broadcast without the framing quotations, but with the operatic scenes intact. It seems odd, in retrospect, that a censor who was sensitive to references to *Republikflucht* should not have balked at what could so easily be read as a direct reference to the Wall.

There are a number of possible reasons why Schwaen was granted relative *carte blanche*. First, historians have noted that the 1950s, following the Uprising of 1953—and even after Khrushchev denounced Stalin's personality cult three years later—were a time of increased state paranoia.<sup>37</sup> The kind of textual maneuvers that Westien had performed might not have been as necessary in the more lenient 1960s and 1970s, even if, as the examples of *Nachtigall* and *Im Spiel sich erkennen* demonstrate, arbitrary and incomprehensible censorship was by no means a thing of the past. Second, it may have been Schwaen's impeccable reputation that protected him from having to include pro-state sentiments in his music. He had joined the Communist Party in 1932, and had been imprisoned for two years under the Nazi regime. He was actively involved in GDR musical life, having served as secretary of the VDK from 1953 to 1962. In addition, he received the National Prize of the GDR in 1959 and was elected to the Academy of Arts in 1961. Third, children's opera, which took place outside of the regular school curriculum, occupied a curious place in the hierarchy of state controls. Most children's music-making took place either

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<sup>34</sup> For instance, in her study *Oper für Kinder: Zur Gattung und ihrer Geschichte* (one of the few post-1989 monographs published on children's opera), Andrea Grandjean-Gremminger discusses only Schwaen's operas at length; in addition, she names the Lehrstück as the precursor to GDR children's opera, even though Schwaen was the only GDR composer to give his works that generic title. Andrea Grandjean-Gremminger, *Oper für Kinder. Zur Gattung und ihrer Geschichte* (Frankfurt: Lang, 2008), 89-98.

<sup>35</sup> Schwaen, *Ein Tier, das keins ist* (Berlin: Kurt-Schwaen-Archiv, 2003), 16.

<sup>36</sup> Günter Diezel, "Aus dem Schaffen Kurt Schwaens," *Musik in der Schule* 1962/7-8, 374.

<sup>37</sup> See, for instance, Silverberg, "Monopol der Diskussion?"

in school or in the Free German Youth (FDJ). The Ministerium für Volksbildung determined the music to be taught in school. The songbooks for the FDJ were likewise centrally organized. Children's operas were put on after school, at the initiative of individual teachers or through AGs such as Schwaen and Iske's. The only prior approval teachers needed to form these groups was locally granted permission to use spaces in schools or in FDJ clubhouses, as there was no ministry or commission that directly oversaw such activities. Thus there was no mechanism in place for regular control of children's opera groups. That did not mean that all the ensembles operated completely under the radar. Instead, they often found themselves in a position of having to ask for forgiveness rather than permission—and, in Schwaen's case, this request seems never to have been necessary. Children's opera, with its lack of formalized oversight, provided these Musikerzieher with a space in which they could speak directly to children. Given the fairy-tale examples of pedagogical music in this chapter, the relative freedom of children's opera may not seem that significant. But given the propagandistic nature of songs sung in school, the absence of patriotic slogans in Schwaen's operas is remarkable.

### *Brecht and the New GDR Lehrstück*

Both Schwaen and Brock saw themselves as part of a Brechtian progressive theatrical tradition.<sup>38</sup> It was fitting, then, that their careers in children's opera had both begun with Brecht's *Lehrstück Die Horatier und die Kuriatier*. Schwaen's later works paid homage to that model: he designated as *Lehrstücke* all the works he had made with Kunert, as well as the pieces for which he was also the librettist.<sup>39</sup> In choosing that genre, Schwaen was invoking Brecht's works for amateur performers that aimed to teach through participation, not observation.<sup>40</sup> Brecht defined his pedagogical genre as follows:

The *Lehrstück* teaches in that it is played, not in that it is seen. In principle, no spectators are necessary for the *Lehrstück*, though they may be used. The *Lehrstück* is based on the assumption that the performer can be socially influenced by the performance of certain behaviors, the use of certain attitudes, the saying of certain speeches.<sup>41</sup>

Further, Brecht planned for the performers to rotate roles so they would not over-identify with any one character, a technique that Schwaen and Iske adapted by having all the participants in their AG learn all the parts before it was decided who should perform a role in the final show.

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<sup>38</sup> See Brock, *Musiktheater*; interview with Brock in Fröde, *Gleiches Bestreben*; "Gespräch mit Kurt Schwaen" in *Lehrstücke in der Praxis*, ed. Joachim Lucchesi and Ursula Schneider, Arbeitsheft der Akademie der Künste 31, Berlin 1979, 123.

<sup>39</sup> Lucchesi and Schneider, *Lehrstücke in der Praxis*, 123-124.

<sup>40</sup> In 1977, Schwaen explained that he copied Brecht's attitude for these works, but not the author's style. Lucchesi and Schneider, *Lehrstücke in der Praxis*, 123. In addition, it's worth noting that Schwaen has referred to these same works as "szenische Musik für Kinder" and "Kinderoper." These labels, however, are not in conflict with the *Lehrstück* genre. They simply indicate that children are to perform the pieces, and imply no comment about the didactic method.

<sup>41</sup> Bertolt Brecht, "Theorie des *Lehrstücks*" in *Schriften über Theater*, ed. Werner Hecht (Berlin: Henschelverlag Kunst und Gesellschaft, 1977), 137.

Using techniques from epic theater such as the *Verfremdungseffekt*,<sup>42</sup> performers were to “estrangle” the processes depicted in the pieces, revealing them to be socially determined rather than natural or self-evident.<sup>43</sup> Concomitant with learning to perform the piece, then, was learning to critique its inner logic.

Brecht scholars disagree about whether the *Lehre* of the Lehrstück is simply this—a method of critical thought—or if there is a more directed message as well. This lack of clarity is in large part a result of Brecht’s own caginess about the Lehrstück’s didactic intent. Based on an extensive study of Brecht’s writings on the topic, Reiner Steinweg maintains that “the Lehrstück does not contain a ‘lesson,’ it does not teach Marxism or another philosophy or social theory; instead, it instructs in how to perceive reality more exactly.”<sup>44</sup> The pieces reveal underlying problems, not solutions: they “depict the deep structures of social reality, at the neuralgic points of society: conflicts and the ways in which they are resolved or not resolved—with violence, pressure, coercion, and without coercion.”<sup>45</sup> They are “exercises” that bring the personal in contact with the political.<sup>46</sup> Thus, they do not teach ideology; they do not, in the manner of fairy tales, present the inevitable, satisfying victory of good over bad. Rather, they teach participants to view the self-evident logic of ideologies as socially determined. Brecht himself made a similar statement in a 1956 interview, contending that Lehrstücke do not contain

proposition or counter proposition, arguments for or against certain opinions, pleadings or indictments that represent a personal point of view, but only physical exercises meant for the kind of athletes of the mind that good dialecticians should be. Well- or ill-founded judgments are a wholly different affair that bring into play elements that I have not introduced into these debates.<sup>47</sup>

Or, even more simply, as he said about *Der Jasager (He Who Says Yes)*: “With this piece, I wanted to force the pupils to think.”<sup>48</sup>

This utopian vision does not hold up particularly well against the pieces’ characteristically unsentimental plots, in which Brecht seems to tip his hand.<sup>49</sup> Many of the plots push an agenda of acquiescence [*Einverständnis*] between individual and collective, which usually resolves at the expense of the individual. In *Die Maßnahme (The Measure)*, for instance, four communist agitators bring a case before the Party court: they have shot their youngest

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<sup>42</sup> In short: the actors avoid a complete transformation into the characters they depict, performing instead in ways that acknowledge the artificiality of their performance.

<sup>43</sup> Brecht, “Theorie des Lehrstücks,” 138.

<sup>44</sup> Steinweg, *Lehrstück*, 19-20. Michael Richardson echoes this view, arguing that “[y]et that what they [the audience] learn—Brecht’s “doctrine” as Jameson puts it—is not some sort of synthesis of political messages or critiques derived from individual works, but rather the method itself, the process of estrangement and contradiction. Brecht’s works therefore show the audience not what to think, but how to think—how to draw their own conclusions from each play.” Michael David Richardson, *Revolutionary Theater and the Classical Heritage: Inheritance and Appropriation from Weimar to the GDR* (New York: Lang, 2007), 53.

<sup>45</sup> Steinweg, *Lehrstück und episches Theater*, 20.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> As quoted in Roswitha Mueller, “Learning for a New Society: the Lehrstück,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*, ed. Peter Thomson and Glendyr Sacks, 2nd. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 107.

<sup>48</sup> As quoted in Steinweg, *Lehrstück und episches Theater*, 17.

<sup>49</sup> In addition, as Calico points out, even if the only goal of epic theater and Lehrstücke is the production of a “critical attitude,” there is an unspoken assumption that this critical attitude would mirror Brecht’s own. Calico, *Brecht*, 41.

comrade because, though a revolutionary in spirit, he lacked the necessary discipline and had inadvertently endangered the movement through his actions. The court finds that the agitators were correct to shoot their comrade. Writing about this piece, Brecht commented that “the purpose of the Lehrstück is to show politically incorrect behavior, and thereby teach correct behavior.”<sup>50</sup> He did not bother with coy statements about learning to perceive reality: *Die Maßnahme* prescribes conduct. Lehrstücke, strict and heartless as their plots may be, aimed to teach on two levels: method and message. The method—“exercises” in critical thinking—was learned through the act of doing, that is, of rehearsing, discussing, switching parts. Meanwhile, the message (if it existed) was a moral, a lesson about correct behavior. Method and message, then, could exist simultaneously; in the ideal case, the method would provide the pupil the tools with which to critique the message.<sup>51</sup>

Brock envisioned the new GDR children’s opera movement on this Brechtian model: it was to be the dialectical unification of the progressive pedagogy of Dalcroze and his ilk, which was designed to educate children, with the Marxist political lessons of Brecht’s Lehrstücke, which were designed to educate adults.<sup>52</sup> The progressive pedagogy movement had been developed in reaction to an “over-intellectualized” educational system.<sup>53</sup> Reformers believed the child should be encouraged to explore independently her own natural creativity through musical and movement-based games that would unify body and intellect; she was to guide her own education rather than being forced into a mold.<sup>54</sup> Yet Brock found that the focus on musical experience, improvisation, and play for its own sake meant a neglect of educational content: though enjoyable, the play was essentially pointless. She saw Brecht and Hindemith’s *Lehrstück* from 1929 as a welcome antidote to this excess of enjoyment: in its “protest” against “culinary opera,” it inspired the creation of further pieces in which “music was put in the service of a specific lesson.”<sup>55</sup> With *Der Jasager* (1930), designed for performance in schools, Brecht and Weill created the first work of music theater in which the political content and pedagogical efficacy of the new Lehrstück genre was made available to young people.<sup>56</sup> Brock saw the

<sup>50</sup> Bertolt Brecht, “Das Lehrstück ‘Die Maßnahme,’” in *Schriften über Theater*, 136.

<sup>51</sup> As Calico notes, it is worth considering whether the pedagogical exercise, the creation of a critically detached mindset, really gives the pupil license to critique everything—even the entire enterprise. Calico, *Brecht*, 42.

<sup>52</sup> Although Brecht may have been a clear choice pedagogically, he was not uncontested politically. During his lifetime, Brecht had a tense relationship with the SED and its aesthetic policies—the example of *Lukullus* is only the most public of a number of clashes. It was only after his death in 1956 that the SED attempted to “claim” his work as part of the revolutionary heritage. See Werner Hecht, *Die Mühen der Ebenen: Brecht und die DDR*, 1. Auflage (Berlin: Aufbau, 2013); Loren Kruger, *Post-Imperial Brecht: Politics and Performance, East and South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), Introduction, chapters 1–2. Brock was, in effect, following the call that Walter Benjamin had issued for a “proletarian children’s theater.” Walter Benjamin, “Programm eines proletarischen Kindertheaters,” in *Eine kommunistische Paedagogik; Spielzeug und spielen; Programm eines proletarischen Kindertheaters; Baustelle* (Berlin: Zentralrat der sozialistischen Kinderläden West-Berlin, 1969).

See also Brock, *Musiktheater*; interview with Brock in Fröde, *Gleiches Bestreben*; “Gespräch mit Kurt Schwaen” in *Lehrstücke in der Praxis*, ed. Joachim Lucchesi and Ursula Schneider (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1979), 123.

<sup>53</sup> Jürgen Oelkers, *Reformpädagogik: Entstehungsgeschichte einer internationalen Bewegung* (Seelze-Velber: Klett/Kallmeyer, 2010).

<sup>54</sup> The classic example of this kind of education is the Eurythmics exercises developed by Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, still practiced today in Waldorf schools. Brock, *Musiktheater*, 14–16.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>56</sup> Brock, *Musiktheater*, 65. Karl Laux, then editor of the musicological journal and VDK organ *Musik und Gesellschaft*, had traced a similar genealogy of school opera. See Laux, “Zum Thema Schulooper,” 182.



pedagogical premise of this piece—though not its specific message—as the foundation on which GDR children’s opera could build.<sup>57</sup>

Brock’s advocacy of a dialectical unification of progressive pedagogy and Brechtian politics may seem wishful. On the surface, the two approaches towards learning have little in common: Brecht is known for being unromantic, critical, and *sachlich*, an attitude that stands in stark contrast to progressive “life affirmation.” But although Brecht and Dalcroze may differ in tone, they find common ground in their approach to the relationship between body, music, and learning. Daniel Albright argues that the two share “the modernist urge to restore corporeality to art”: they see the body in all its immediacy, not the removed intellect, as the primary site of expression and learning.<sup>58</sup> Thus the new operas would teach children in a way most appropriate to their developing bodies: through the emotional impact of music and physical action, in addition to the intellectual “lessons” of narrative.

As a genre that taught through action, the *Lehrstück* relied on Brecht’s notion of *gestus*.<sup>59</sup> Here is Joy Calico’s definition:

Gests are stylized behaviors designed to reveal the socially constructed nature of human interaction, and the theory emanates from Brecht’s rejection of the bourgeois notion of split subjectivity. Externalizing everything once understood as internal in order to reveal its social construction requires a body, and at its most fundamental, both *gestus* and its relative *Haltung*, or “attitude” (Brecht himself did not consistently distinguish between the two), emanate from the body.<sup>60</sup>

A *gest*, then, is a motion or “attitude” made by the body that reveals something about the interactions between people—not on a “merely” interpersonal level, but about the structures that determine these interactions. A *gest* can reveal and “emancipate” a normally hidden thing (emotions, for instance, or inequality) for sensory apprehension, enabling the contemplation of the larger social reality that made it possible: in David Barnett’s words, “the actor’s body is involved in a dynamic relationship with its social contexts as a way of establishing a visible connection between the two.”<sup>61</sup> Thus, in Brecht’s example, “[t]he attitude of chasing away a fly is not yet a social *gest*, though the attitude of chasing away a dog may be one, for instance if it comes to represent a badly dressed man’s continual battle against watchdogs.”<sup>62</sup> In addition, *gests* are constructive: they create emotions as they externalize them. “Just as moods and thoughts lead to attitudes and *gests*, attitudes and *gests* lead to moods and thoughts,” wrote Brecht. Or, more emphatically still, “operating with certain *gests* can change your character.”<sup>63</sup> *Gests* could therefore communicate on a different level of meaning from the plot, inscribing

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>58</sup> Daniel Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other Arts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 102.

<sup>59</sup> “*Gestus*” is the concept, whereas “*gests*” are the motions themselves.

<sup>60</sup> Calico, *Brecht*, 44. Albright also notes that for Brecht, “*gestus*” can also refer to the rhythm of a text. Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent*, 120.

<sup>61</sup> Bertolt Brecht, “Neue Technik der Schauspielkunst,” in *Schriften über Theater*, ed. Werner Hecht (Berlin: Henschelverlag Kunst und Gesellschaft, 1977), 94; Barnett, *Rethinking Brecht*, 94–95.

<sup>62</sup> Bertolt Brecht, “On Gestic Music” in *Brecht on Theatre: the Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 26.

<sup>63</sup> “So wie Stimmungen und Gedankenreihen zu Haltungen und Gesten führen, führen auch Haltungen und Gesten zu Stimmungen und Gedankenreihen”; “das Operieren mit bestimmten Gesten kann dein Charakter verändern/ändere ihn.” In Steinweg, *Lehrstück und episches Theater*, 17–19.

emotions, beliefs, and attitudes—all a product of social structure—in the body of the performer. Gestus, then, was essential to Lehrstück practice.

Gestus can also be a feature of language and music—which, after all, are organized through rhythm the same way that physical motion is. Many scholars note that Brecht and Weill's discussions of gestus in music are particularly complex and inconclusive, even inconsistent.<sup>64</sup> Weill maintained that musical rhythm determined gestus, whereas Brecht argued that gestus had its origin in the expressive intent of the performer's body, not in the musical score.<sup>65</sup> Further, Weill's own examples of gestic music reveal that, for him, gestic music communicates primarily through what in music theory might be called topics, conventional musical characters. Musical gestus need not be contemplated or deciphered. Instead, it is "that which the audience understands on first contact, usually in terms of musical style."<sup>66</sup> If gestus is meant to bring a hidden thing to the surface for examination, to reveal an obscured relationship, then it would be counterproductive if, in order to perform this unmasking, the musical gestus itself required hermeneutic decoding. As Albright writes,

The highest goal of the gestus is to eliminate all ambiguity of interpretation: it is a hieroglyph, but without oracular fog. The composer strives to create a pattern of sound that specifies a precise bodily movement, a precise inflection of speech: the gestus is a multidimensional fixity, in which pantomime, speech, and music cooperate toward a pure flash of meaning.<sup>67</sup>

Through its unmistakable gestus, music could communicate emotions concretely; through the physical activity of making music, those emotions would be engendered in the performing body. In turn, the tension between the music's gestus and the text, which typically worked in counterpoint, provided one more opening for estrangement.<sup>68</sup> Music and text spoke to the emotional and rational faculties, respectively. As Brock argued, quoting Brecht, the differing messages that each faculty received would work dialectically, sublating unconsidered emotion and unfeeling reason into critical thinking: "Our feelings push us to the utmost tensing [*Anspannung*] of reason, and reason purifies our feelings."<sup>69</sup>

In Brecht's work, Schwaen and Brock found a theory which promised to use music's supposedly inherent ability to activate the emotions, to which children were naturally primed to respond, and then to turn these emotions into objects of contemplation, training the child's critical abilities. Yet translating Brecht's Lehrstück theory, which was developed for adult amateur performers, to new children's opera was not a frictionless process. The pedagogical success of a Lehrstück depends not only on the piece itself (how well it enables its own estrangement) but also on the individual practice (how well the actors realize the estrangement). Practice is arguably the central category in determining what and how well a particular Lehrstück

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<sup>64</sup> See, for instance, Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent*, Calico, *Brecht at the Opera*, and Kenneth Fowler, *Received Truths: Bertolt Brecht and the Problem of Gestus and Musical Meaning* (New York: AMS Press, 1991). On Brecht's musical collaborators, see especially Fowler, *Received Truths*, chapter 2.

<sup>65</sup> Calico, *Brecht*, 50-51.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent*, 112.

<sup>68</sup> Calico, *Brecht*, 60-61.

<sup>69</sup> Bertolt Brecht, "Einige Irrtümer über die Spielweise des Berliner Ensembles," 2. Sonderheft Bertolt Brecht, *Sinn und Form*, Berlin 1957: 259; as quoted in Hella Brock, "Die Horatier und die Kuriatier. Zur Uraufführung der Schuloper von Bertolt Brecht und Kurt Schwaen in Halle," *Musik und Gesellschaft* 1958/5, 273.

teaches: the text is only a set of suggestions. However clearly this information is presented, it must necessarily take a distant second place to any real instances of learning and performing. But as the relationship between practice and text is always determined by human actors, it can be frail. Calico has suggested that Brecht developed the concept of *gestus* in order to control this relationship from afar: he planned that musical *gestus* would act as a sort of stage direction, communicating a character's emotions as unambiguously as text conveys actions.<sup>70</sup> This theory assumes a performer both mature enough to read conventional musical codes and already critical enough to recognize a possible disconnect between the music's emotional messages and the text's meaning.

However, neither of these capabilities could be taken for granted in children, who were immature performers and qualitatively different from adults—as GDR *Musikerzieher* were well aware. As *Musikerzieher* believed that children learned primarily through their senses rather than through thoughts and images, their rational faculties being undeveloped, it is no wonder that, even as Brock touted music's ability to activate emotions, she worried about its potentially negative effects. She warned composers of school operas that music must clearly identify evil characters, lest children be seduced into identifying with them and copying their behavior.<sup>71</sup> The adult leadership in children's *Lehrstück* practice, then, was of vital importance. Adults were needed, in Brock's words, to "lead children to a critical performance."<sup>72</sup>

The primacy of practice in *Lehrstücke* has further implications for the scholar. Operas are often hermeneutically analyzed from the point of view of a listener able to decipher all of the possible relationships and meanings encoded in the interaction of text, music, and staging. Thus, when Andreas Aurin considers dialectics in the music of *Die Horatier und die Kuriatier*, he writes that the dialectical thinking is conveyed through hearing a difference between the music that characterizes the Horatians and the music that characterizes the Curiatians.<sup>73</sup> Brock, too, framed her discussions of that piece's music in terms of the listener.<sup>74</sup> But since *Lehrstücke* are meant to teach through performance, not through observation, the information received through audition is certainly less relevant than the experience of doing. Analysis of GDR children's *Lehrstücke*, then, must consider not only the texts and final performances of these pedagogical works, but also the practice through which they were realized, and attempt to view the musical experience from the standpoint of its young performers.

### "*Lehrstücke in der Praxis*"—*Die Horatier und die Kuriatier in the GDR Classroom*

The tenuous relationship between text and practice is neatly illustrated by a project to bring *Die Horatier und die Kuriatier* to four secondary schools (the 12th, 18th, 32nd, and 25th) in the Prenzlauer Berg district of Berlin.<sup>75</sup> The project was sponsored by the Academy of Arts and the

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<sup>70</sup> Calico, *Brecht*, 43.

<sup>71</sup> Brock, *Musiktheater*, 167–168.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>73</sup> Andreas Aurin, "'Viele Dinge sind in einem Ding': Zur Dialektik im Lehrstück *Die Horatier und die Kuriatier*," *Sonderheft der Mitteilungen des Kurt-Schwaen-Archivs* (2009), 31–32.

<sup>74</sup> Brock, *Musiktheater*, 72, 77.

<sup>75</sup> Following its 1958 premiere, *Die Horatier und die Kuriatier* was performed publically a further eight times in the GDR and twice in the FRG. Of course, there is no way of knowing how many times it was rehearsed without performance, which is also in keeping with *Lehrstück* theory; Kurt Schwaen knew of at least two attempts that did not result in performances. Kurt-Schwaen-Archiv 104. The GDR performances were: 26 April 1958, Theater der

Theater of Friendship Berlin (a children's theater, today known as Theater an der Parkaue) and was led by Joachim Lucchesi and Ursula Schneider. The rehearsal and performance work took place from summer 1974 to summer 1976. At the end of the period, the groups (some of which were entire school classes, some of which were groups of children taken from several classes) convened for performances and a symposium. Documents from the symposium, as well as published interviews with teachers and pupils, reveal a relationship to Brecht and Schwaen's piece that is tempered by non-Brechtian ideas about childhood, by current political realities, and, unsurprisingly, by classroom expediency.

*Die Horatier und die Kuriatier*, based on a fable by Titus Livius, tells a story of two neighboring tribes. The Curiatians, plagued by internal strife despite (or perhaps because of) their wealth, decide to invade the poorer Horatians. Each tribe has a set of triplets as its warriors: an archer, a lance fighter, and a swordsman, each of whom is (symbolically) in charge of a certain number of army cohorts. The piece is scored for two choruses, a choir of Horatians and a choir of Curiatians, who stand facing each other on opposite sides of the stage. The three warriors from each side are solo spoken roles. The choruses, in usual Brecht fashion, take on several functions while representing each tribe. They do not obey usual laws of space: they hold advisory conversations with their warriors, even when these warriors are supposedly far away, yet do not always realize when these warriors have fallen.

Brecht subtitled this work "A Lehrstück about Dialectics for Children" (*Ein Lehrstück über Dialektik für Kinder*). Indeed, *Horatier* presents a scenario in which dialectical thought helps a poorer, less well-equipped tribe achieve victory over a richer tribe with superior weapons.<sup>76</sup> In the first battle, the Horatian archer chooses an advantageous place in the morning sun, shooting the Curiatian while remaining unharmed, to which the latter exclaims:

"Ich habe vergessen / Dass die Sonne nicht nur leuchtet / Sondern auch blendet. /  
Zum Zielen brauchte ich Licht, aber / Auch auf seine Richtung kam es an."  
["I forgot / That the sun does not only illuminate / But also blinds. / I needed light  
to aim, but / It depended on its direction."]<sup>77</sup>

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Jungen Garde Halle (premiere), general leadership: Hella Brock, musical director: Carlferdinand Zech, director: Kurt Hübenthal; 26 May 1958, Wernigerode (same cast as Halle; part of the Schulmusiktage Wernigerode); 7 and 14 December 1962, Kulturhaus Tanne, Pirna; Choir of the Rainer-Fetscher-Oberschule, members of the Staatliches Kulturorchester Pirna, music director Ludwig Müller (music teacher at the R-F-O, assisted by Kurt Schwaen), director: Herbert Klug; 21 June 1963 as part of the 5. Arbeiterfestspielen in Cottbus (same cast as Pirna); 29 June 1974, Berlin, Staatsoper unter den Linden, Berliner Singakademie, members of the Staatskapelle Berlin, music director: Dietrich Knothe (concert performance); 24 October 1970, Berlin, Akademie der Künste der DDR, school classes from Berlin schools; 25 (?) March 1975, Berlin, Akademie der Künste der DDR, pupils from the 32nd Oberschule Berlin-Prenzlauer Berg (music from tape). The FRG performances were on 13 and 14 July 1968, Lörrach, auditorium of the Hans-Thomas-Gymnasium, choir and instrumentalists of the Hans-Thomas-Gymnasium, directed by Dr. Gerhard Kirchner and Ursula Willmann (performance with shadow puppets). My thanks to Ina Schwaen for this information.

<sup>76</sup> As Steinweg details, Brecht avoided committing to a definition of "dialectics," maintaining that it was to be learned through a practical process rather than through mere explanation. Steinweg's own attempt at a definition of Brechtian dialectics has it as "a method that enables the subject to *intervene* in the development of social reality [...] and change it; the decisive factor is that this *method of thought*, or this *following of intelligible methods* pits *real practice* against *ruling ideology*, and leads to a corresponding *action* that will change society." *Horatians* both portrays characters engaging in this sort of dialectics, and (presumably) teaches it through the act of rehearsal and performance as well. Reiner Steinweg, *Das Lehrstück: Brechts Theorie einer politisch-ästhetischen Erziehung*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1976), 111–112 (emphasis original).

<sup>77</sup> Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Schwaen, *Die Horatier und die Kuriatier* (Berlin: Verlag Neue Musik, 1958), 33b.

The chorus urges the Horatian to go forward and finish the deed with his fists. But by the time he finds his courage, the sun has moved. The Horatian finds himself blinded, and the Curiatian shoots a fatal shot. The sun has proven both help and hindrance; the usefulness of advice depended on the situation in which it was carried out.

In the second battle, the Horatian lance fighter's task is to prevent his enemy from advancing further into the mountains. To achieve this end, he uses his lance not as a weapon—it is, after all, shorter than the Curiatian's, and would offer no advantage—but as a tool to loosen some rocks, which he plans to push onto his opponent from above. "Viele Dinge sind in einem Ding!" ("Many things are in one thing!"), he proclaims—a statement that could become a rallying cry for junior dialecticians.<sup>78</sup> However, exhausted from his efforts, he falls asleep and misses the moment at which he should attack. The Curiatian, meanwhile, passes him and advances through a narrow river valley, which ends in a waterfall. Upon waking, the Horatian breaks his lance in half to use it as a pole to steer a raft down the river, attacking the Curiatian, whose longer lance makes it impossible for him to maneuver within the valley. The Horatian injures his enemy, but dies in the process.

The final fight looks, at first, to be a lost cause. The Horatian sword fighter faces all three Curiatian warriors, two of whom are injured. He decides to run, in the hopes that the Curiatians will follow. As they run, they separate; due to their injuries, they cannot keep pace with each other. Finally, the Curiatian sword fighter stops, exhausted by having to carry his heavy armor. He is an easy target for the Horatian, who then goes on to finish off the other two and win the war. The heavy armor seemed a great advantage at first, but recontextualized, it was a liability. What seemed like a retreat was in fact an attack.

Morally, the Horatians are without doubt several cuts above their attackers, who are such despicable lowlifes that they have to launch an unprovoked invasion just to dampen their own internal strife. Yet the Horatians' victory is not a result of inherent moral superiority, but rather due to their ability to understand that "Viele Dinge sind in einem Ding": that thick armor can be a weakness and a retreat can be an attack. The Horatians' virtue does not count for much when the tribe's future is on the line, as the Horatians remind their lance fighter, with characteristic asperity, after he falls asleep on the job:

*Chor der Horatier:* Alles, was du verbracht hast / Gelte zu deinem Ruhm, wenn du den Feind aufhältst. / Aber nichts sei dir angerechnet, wenn du / Nicht den Feind aufhältst. / Sieben Mühen sollen für nichts gelten / Aber wenn du die letzte auf dich nimmst / Und den Feind aufhältst / Sollst du für acht Mühen gepriesen werden.

[*Horatian Chorus:* All that you have completed / Will count towards your fame, if you stop the enemy. / But nothing will be credited to you, if you / Do not stop the enemy. / Seven labors count for nothing / But if you take on the last / And stop the enemy / You shall be praised for eight labors.]<sup>79</sup>

In this Lehrstück, moral superiority is in no way a precondition or guarantor of victory. The war between the Horatians and the Curiatians is unjust, but its outcome is not predetermined

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 50a-54.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 56a-56b.

or predicated on its injustice. The dialectically superior tribe won, and their moral superiority was incidental to their success.

Accounts of practice, however, tell a different story. Luccesi and Schneider's conversations with teachers and pupils from the Prenzlauer Berg schools revealed that the participants understood the story as being about just and unjust war, the teachers having presented it as a morality tale rather than an exercise in problem-solving. A pupil from the 18th school summarized the story thus: "The rich are waging a war of aggression, the poor a war of defense. It's about just and unjust war."<sup>80</sup> Klaus-Peter Pietsch, a German teacher at the 35th school, remarked that most of his pupils wanted to play the good Horatians, because "they had considered the content of the piece."<sup>81</sup> According to theater pedagogue Monika Genzel, the point of the piece was too simple for its complicated presentation:

Depending on their age, the children managed to understand the lesson of the piece quite quickly. Their capacity for abstract thought was well developed. In this regard, the piece poses no difficulties. Most of the children, in fact, thought that the piece's message was already familiar, and decidedly simple. The contrast between this simplicity and the—for them—complicated form, which demanded hard work from them, made their involvement with *Die Horatier und die Kuriatier* boring.<sup>82</sup>

This emphasis on morality was the focus of the entire rehearsal process. In the symposium, teachers described how they had taught the children to understand the tribes' motivations and develop convincing characterizations. When asked how he had presented the children with Brecht's "complicated ideological problem," Pietsch described how the pupils portrayed aggressiveness on stage: the Curiatians were to trample a bed of flowers indiscriminately [*willkürlich*] in their attack, demonstrating the "underlying conflict."<sup>83</sup> Another of Pietsch's pupils had the following idea:

By the way, Daniel suggested that, at the moment when the Curiatians declare their victory, he should speak as choppily as a certain man in the "thousand-year Reich." That went over especially well. One could notice his aggression in his voice. He was the lance fighter, and played his role using this voice as well. His eyes flashed when he spoke. The child playing opposite him made a very different figure. He had a wholly different language, soft, pleasing.<sup>84</sup>

Monika Genzel addressed characterization by asking the children what they loved the most, and what they would be most willing to defend. After realizing that the Horatians might feel protective about their houses, fields, and tools, the children "developed personal relationships to the Horatians. This created, necessarily, the need to characterize, depict, understand these people!"<sup>85</sup> Both of these teachers, in their pedagogical work on the piece, saw their main task as

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<sup>80</sup> Lucchesi and Schneider, *Lehrstücke in der Praxis*, 84.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 100. Pietsch's school affiliation is inconsistent in Lucchesi and Schneider: he is also said to be the German teacher at the 18th school.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

getting the pupils to understand and portray the nature of aggression. When asked directly about the work's dialectical aspect, however, Pietsch had little to say:

[Interviewer:] Collective action, discussing each situation, always making new plans, agility in every situation: that's what dialectic action is (to speak of the subtitle "Lehrstück about Dialectics for Children").

[Pietsch:] The term "dialectic," of course, doesn't play a role yet. But practically, we're working out maxims of dialectical action.<sup>86</sup>

Pietsch was much more interested in discussing how the pupils developed their own ideas about the production and put these ideas into practice.

According to the subtitle, *Die Horatier und die Kuriatier* is a practical exercise in dialectical thinking.<sup>87</sup> Teachers and pupils, however, reported that the bulk of rehearsal time focused on finding credible motivations for the characters and appropriate movements to portray these motivations. Following Brecht's statement that people can be "socially influenced" by the performance of "certain ways of behaving, and the adoption of certain attitudes," the pupils learned, through their physical performance of trampling flowers, a lesson about the nature of moral and immoral people. Though the children, in Pietsch's words, were engaged in "a practical working-out of maxims of dialectical behavior," it seems that their physical gestures and emotional energy—and thereby a large part of their learning—were dedicated to the question of morality.<sup>88</sup> The German teacher Wolfgang Lange at the 32nd school observed that with regard to teaching dialectical thought, performing the work itself "achieves more than any treatise," which is to say that these aspects did not need to be discussed in order to be pedagogically effective. However, he also remarked that he couldn't claim that his pupils now knew more about dialectics than they would have otherwise.<sup>89</sup> This was borne out by a survey that Genzel did of her group after the process:

What did the children learn from the piece? History, "how it was back then." There are "good" and "evil" people and states. There are people who wish to increase their wealth at the expense of others. There is injustice in the world. Good always triumphs, and evil is punished. Even today there is the danger that peaceful people can be attacked. We would defend ourselves against attackers exactly as the Horatians did. — Other children saw the relationship to their own lives in the fact that there are good and bad people today as well, and that there are people in the world who want to take things away from other people, because they're not satisfied with what they have. Two children could not articulate the relationship of the *Horatier und Kuriatier* to their own lives.<sup>90</sup>

This particular emphasis on unjust war may have been a result of the GDR's political atmosphere in the 1970s. The Vietnam War was a source of constant outrage, and the topic of wars of aggression was politically current: Genzel noted that the older children in her group had learned

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>87</sup> See also Andreas Aurin, "Viele Dinge sind in einem Ding," 9.

<sup>88</sup> Lucchesi and Schneider, *Lehrstücke in der Praxis*, 91.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 114.

about just and unjust wars in school.<sup>91</sup> The focus on right and wrong could also have been due to the fact that, according to Genzel, identification with the characters was the only way to hold the children's interest. She explained that her pupils' difficulties might have been a result of their previous literary experience, "that the children, schooled in simple stories, felt too challenged with the Horatians. The more we tried to penetrate into the work, the more they missed the emotionality of their experiences with fairy tales."<sup>92</sup> As Lucchesi and Brennecke also found out, the children had a strong sense of the narrative conventions of stories, making it difficult for them to understand the Lehrstück's didactic aims in terms of anything other than a traditional moral:

[Child:] I always thought: we are the attackers, and we will also be defeated. That was somehow clear from the beginning. The good people usually win. [...]  
[Interviewer:] Do good people really always win?  
[Child:] Not in real life, but in the play [*Stück*].<sup>93</sup>

However, Genzel's group, which abandoned the project earlier than the other groups, was the only one that found the piece too difficult and alienating, suggesting that the pupils' desire to stick to fairy tales may have had as much to do with their teacher's preferences as with their own degree of readiness to accept new narrative forms.<sup>94</sup>

### *Music and the Lehrstück*

Calico argues that the Lehrstück is "essentially a musical genre." Literocentric scholarship considers Lehrstück texts without their music, occluding the role of Brecht's musical collaborators and treating the music as an encumbrance to the text rather than a foundational aspect of the piece.<sup>95</sup> Citing Andrzej Wirth, Calico considers the Lehrstück texts to be "librettos," a word that "connotes an essential rather than optional relationship with music," and carries with it the expectation of performance.<sup>96</sup> In addition, music "disciplines" the performers and the piece in that it both requires rehearsal and "imposes a pace and a sequence on an event. [...] The music thus performs two crucial functions in dialectic with the rest of the Lehrstück agenda: it imposes a degree of order on an otherwise flexible text, and it facilitates communal participation."<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>94</sup> Pietsch, who rehearsed and performed the piece with his fourth-grade class (9-10 years old), reported that his pupils had absolutely no problems with the material, and that he himself found that they were the ideal age to learn it, as they were both easy to reach (*ansprechbar*) and enjoyed discussions. In addition, he felt that pupils would be too old after the sixth grade, especially if the group was a school class and not a club. Lucchesi and Schneider, *Lehrstücke in der Praxis*, 100. Genzel, who worked with a volunteer group of children from 5 to 15 years old, found that the children were bored by the contrast between the simple content and the complicated form, and that a performance of the piece would be too challenging for children younger than the 6th grade. Ibid., 115.

<sup>95</sup> Calico, *Brecht*, 22.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.



Following Calico, I would also maintain that *Die Horatier und die Kuriatier*, considered as a musical work, provides a pedagogical “libretto” that is different from the text alone, and would inspire a different practice. Most participants in the 1974–76 workshop, meanwhile, ignored the music. They took a decidedly pragmatic approach to the work, reporting that they rehearsed the whole piece, or just scenes; that they used props, or none; that they blocked the piece as if on a stage, or imagined a performance with no audience. This pragmatism extended to an almost complete exclusion of music. The teachers were primarily teachers of German classes, who were more familiar with texts than with music theater and did not feel themselves capable of teaching music. They seemed to find the music incidental to the text, a sort of “prop,” as Lange put it.<sup>98</sup> Though all of the groups were given a recording and playback device to work with, only one, Pietsch, used music throughout the working process. Even he adapted it, however. Considering the musical numbers too difficult for the children to sing themselves, he read the texts of the choruses with the class, and played the music directly afterwards. Sometimes the children acted silently to the music.<sup>99</sup> Horst Hawemann played the music for the pupils, but reported that they could not develop a relationship to it; in addition, the pupils thought it strange that they would act to a recorded music played and sung by grown-ups.<sup>100</sup> Wolfgang Lange of the 32nd school found that the music was interesting to the pupils, but for them to do any of their own music-making would require too much cooperation with the music teacher.<sup>101</sup>

In response to these teachers, the composer Ruth Zechlin countered that the work would have turned out differently had the pupils proceeded from the music:

The opposite route could have been taken, that the music demands a *gestus*, and I actually find it to be so strong (but of course I’m a musician) that it communicates the diction of the text, and makes the attitudes that Brecht defined immediately accessible.<sup>102</sup>

She was suggesting, as Weill had done, that the *gestus* in the music conveyed much about the moment that is not directly legible from the text.<sup>103</sup> Pietsch, similarly, noted that as soon as he took the time to listen to the music, he realized that it did not have “a background function,” but rather “a dramaturgical function.”<sup>104</sup> He then regretted not having started with the music, because it “gave [the work] a mood [...] It created a preparation for the story long before the story unfolded.” This had a positive effect on the pupils’ gestures and speech: “All of this affected the pupils such that they could adapt their previously awkward gestures and their speech to the music, without my having to guide them.”<sup>105</sup> The music did not just “create a mood,” but also acted like a stage direction: it helped communicate to the children ways to speak the words and move their bodies. Hella Brock reported a similar instance in her work for the premiere of the piece. In the F-minor chorus in which the Horatian men ask their wives who will plow the fields in their absence, the wives respond with a melody that includes a non-diatonic A natural:

<sup>98</sup> Lucchesi and Schneider, *Lehrstücke in der Praxis*, 91.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 94-95.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>103</sup> According to Calico, Brecht also came to see music as offering a kind of performance direction via *gestus*. Calico, *Brecht*, 43, 60.

<sup>104</sup> Lucchesi and Schneider, *Lehrstücke in der Praxis*, 86.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.



According to Brock's analysis, this A clearly expressed an attitude to the actors: "As it happened, during the rehearsals the Horatian women spontaneously started making a gesture of rejection with their hands, and a simple turn of the head to express pride."<sup>106</sup> The music, in this case, would seem to have prompted a specific physical motion in the singers. One has to wonder, of course, how "spontaneous" this gesture really was, especially if Brock had shared her reading of the emotional message of this chorus with the pupils. Still, there are some musical elements that require almost no expertise to interpret, such as the fact that Horatian and the Curiatian women together sing a chorus expressing their fear that the men won't return from war; the slow, minor melody makes it hard to dismiss the Curiatian women as heartless warmongers. It seems plausible that a school group who first learned *Horatier* from the music, as Zechlin had recommended, would have relied at least in part on musical gestus to guide their dramatic interpretation.

Though musical gestus should convey emotional content effortlessly, this seems not always to have been the case. Brock's readings of the gestus of various numbers from *Horatier* sometimes present conclusions that are less than self-evident. Starting from the music, however, might have afforded the school groups more than just gestus—it might well have organized their spoken performance of Brecht's difficult text, which the pedagogue Kristin Wardetzky described as "not well-suited for the mouth."<sup>107</sup> As Brecht finished the piece without a musical collaborator, the sung words are not formally differentiable from the spoken words: they are not set apart through meter or rhyme scheme, nor do they differ in terms of content.<sup>108</sup> For instance, at the beginning of the battle of the lance fighters, the choir of Horatians sings,

Der Feind rückt in unsere Täler ein.  
 Im Troß der Heere ziehen die Fronvögte  
 Die geblutet haben, müssen jetzt zahlen.  
 Das fruchtbare Ackerland gibt nicht mehr als der Steinboden,  
 denn das Korn nimmt der Feind weg.  
 Der Bauer wischt den Schweiß aus den Augen,  
 aber das Brot ißt, der das Schwert hat,  
 aber das Brot ißt, der das Schwert hat.

[The enemy invades our valleys.  
 The oppressors march into the baggage trains of the army,  
 Those who have bled must pay.]

<sup>106</sup> Brock, *Musiktheater*, 77.

<sup>107</sup> Lucchesi and Schneider, *Lehrstücke in der Praxis*, 102.

<sup>108</sup> Brecht's printed text to *Horatier* does not note which choruses were to be sung and which were to be spoken. For the 1955 collaboration, Isot Kilian, Brecht's assistant at the Berliner Ensemble, reported that Brecht and Schwaen discussed which pieces would be set, occasionally specifying which forms and instruments. Schwaen, however, maintained that Brecht had made "no concrete suggestions" about which numbers were to be set to music. Lucchesi and Schneider, *Lehrstücke*, 126–127; 123.

The fertile farmland yields no more than stony ground,  
Because the enemy takes the grain away.  
The farmer wipes the sweat from his eyes,  
But he who has the sword eats the bread,  
But he who has the sword eats the bread.]<sup>109</sup>

The text is metrically irregular, and does not lend itself intuitively to a musical setting with regular accents or equal phrase lengths. Schwaen changes the internal rhythms of each line to produce four-bar phrases for the first three lines of text (with the fourth bar of the second phrase as a rest):

**Allegretto**

2 Trompeten in B

1 Posaune

Chor der Horatier

Klavier

Kontrabaß

*mf*

*mf*

*8...i pizz.*

*mf*

Der Feind rückt in un-se-re

5

Trpt. I

Pbs.

Chor d. H.

Tä-ler vor. Im Troß der Hee-re zie-hen die Fran-vög-te.

Klav.

*8...i*

Kb.

<sup>109</sup> Brecht und Schwaen, *Die Horatier und die Kuriatier*, 47-49.

After the song, the choir continues immediately with this spoken text:

Der Feind rückt in unsere Berge vor.  
 Er marschiert durch Schluchten  
 Entlang einem reißenden Fluss.  
 Du sollst ihn aufhalten, Lanzenträger!  
 [The enemy advances into our mountains.  
 He marches through glens  
 Along a torrential river.  
 You should stop him, lance fighter!]<sup>110</sup>

This spoken chorus is, thematically, a continuation of the previous song. The first line, beginning with “Der Feind,” is metrically identical and a parallel construction; it would have been equally plausible, given the structure of the text, for Schwaen to have set the spoken quatrain as a third verse to the song. These strong parallels between sung and spoken text suggest to the performers that they could easily speak to a similar rhythm, or with a similar rhythmic gestus, as that to which they sung the text. Put another way, after learning the difficult and rhythmically catchy sung version of the phrase beginning “Der Feind,” they might be hard pressed not to speak the text to that rhythm. (In that case, a different decision about the delivery of the spoken text would have to be reached in dialogue with the song.) In this instance, applying a song rhythm to the spoken text would result in a delivery that paused after “Feind.” The phrase “rückt in unsere” would follow at a slightly quicker pace, leaving “Berge” and “vor,” falling on strong beats, to be emphasized at the end. This, as an interpretation, places emphasis on the enemy, and gives an iconic presentation of his action. It is, as Brecht might have said, a “gestically strong” presentation.

This interpretation (with emphasis on “Feind,” then speeding up through “rückt”) could have been dreamed up without the help of music, though the speech rhythm might then have been different. What the music contributes to this delivery of the text, in addition to specific rhythms, is a sense of tempo and pacing: a measured *allegretto*. The irregular internal phrase rhythms and the unexpected rests of the sung text, combined with the steady marching staccato

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 50.

piano ostinato and double bass notes marking the rests, encourages the chorus to sing marcato, in part so as to establish themselves against the band. This marked, measured song, in turn, discourages a spoken rendition in which the chorus speaks hastily and excitedly. Both versions connote an urgency, but one is sober, or *sachlich*, the other fearful.<sup>111</sup> In addition, speech that the performers view primarily through a filter of song will operate differently from speech designed to convey content. It will sound like speech whose most significant characteristic is rhythm, not expression. Viewing speech as song-like estranges it, objectifies it, making it into an object of contemplation according to the aims of *Lehrstücke*.

That there is no significant difference in construction between spoken text and sung text has two effects on the performance of *Horatier*. The first is the local effect just discussed: through the strong rhythmic gestus of the music, certain spoken passages can take on the rhythmic characteristics of related sung passages. In this way, the music's rhythmic gestus functions as a performance direction for nonmusical moments as well. The second effect is more general: the association of speech and song that occurs by way of parallel, comparable texts creates the possibility of rhythmicizing other—even all—spoken passages, organizing them in time as if they were music. The result is both an expansion of possibilities in the performance of speech and an overall blurring of the distinction between speech and song. Thus, speech, which in *Horatier* has no strong metered characteristics of its own, can become more song-like—a quality which may help overcome the awkwardness of speaking in a group, which is for most an unaccustomed activity. Kurt Schwaen referred to this problem when he reported that “the switch between sung and spoken words causes problems for the choir, especially, and I can understand the reactions of the pupils who say, well, we don't speak chorally, we speak individually.” His solution was to make some spoken passages more musical, though in his case the rhythmicizations adopted did not borrow directly from the musical text: “Thus, in the Pirna performance, we let the chorus leaders speak alone sometimes, and rhythmicized other parts. Those were learned without using music.”<sup>112</sup>

In addition, as noted in the case of the chorus “Der Feind,” the unaccustomed nearness of speech and song can serve to estrange both. As Calico writes of the double estrangement of music:

Song is a prime vehicle for estrangement because the music does double duty in this context [in a number opera]: It renders that moment in the play strange, because it is irrational for a character who has otherwise been speaking to burst into song; and that moment in the play renders the music strange, because it reveals the ways in which the audience is constantly manipulated in a regular opera-going experience.<sup>113</sup>

This first sort of estrangement, where the audience wonders “why is she singing?”, relies on a clear distinction between speech and song. In a number opera (or in epic theater), song is separated from speech categorically—therein lies its power to estrange. By the same token, it is

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<sup>111</sup> Opinions differ, of course, in interpreting the gestus of this music. In Hella Brock's analysis, the “percussive” emphasis of the phrases and the frequent rests express “extreme unease.” Brock, *Musiktheater*, 80.

<sup>112</sup> Lucchesi and Schneider, *Lehrstücke in der Praxis*, 87.

<sup>113</sup> Calico, *Brecht*, 38.

possible for a listener to use this difference to justify or overcome the strangeness of the moment of song: the singing seems motivated by something, be it the expression of the character's inner feelings, or something that the audience hears but the other characters on stage cannot. This local moment of estrangement can then be assimilated into a larger set of theatrical conventions—which is why, perhaps, the structure of Broadway musicals does not seem strange at all. In *Horatier*, by contrast, it is the fluid boundary between speech and song that serves to make each one strange. If the chorus switches between speech and song with no apparent motivation, if speech and song have no clearly separate functions within the piece, and if speech takes on the characteristics of song, as song has already been composed to be speech-like, there is no act of verbal communication that does not seem unnatural. In the present case, it is not the moment or the music that is made strange, but the acts of speaking and singing altogether: neither is unmarked.

If rhythm estranges all words, it becomes difficult for performers to develop a connection to either Horatians or Curiatians. Their bizarre mode of communication makes them even more allegorical, hindering personal identification. Children might, then, gain practice approaching a narrative without pre-established emotional and moral biases—learning, perhaps, to be “good dialecticians.” Yet children's access to a musically based approach depended on their having teachers willing to use music as more than a “prop,” and the Academy of Arts experiment, at least, showed that such teachers were in short supply. More generally, the Brecht critical-thinking project relied for its efficacy on enlightened Erzieher who had studied Brecht's theories. *Horatier* in the GDR, however, presents the opposite case. The teachers were unwilling to abandon morality in favor of dialectics. Perhaps they felt that the children would have no access to, or understanding of, the piece without an emotional connection and moral conclusions. Perhaps they themselves believed that the piece was about right and wrong. Clearly, the children who participated in the Akademie project had strong ideas about the natural structure of the world (or at least of art): the good win and the bad are punished. But their ideas did not find any challenge from their teachers, suggesting that perhaps it was the teachers who were most in need of Brecht's desired disillusionment.

The political-educational ideas and strategies that composers and Musikerzieher explored through children's opera were not subject to the kinds of state intervention that regulated other children's music. Accordingly, these people could write for children without having to engage in counterproductive or distracting speech intended for adults. Music and music-making, rather than the inculcation of ideological orthodoxies or moral lessons, thus became crucial. By focusing their attention on pedagogical practice, the composers and Erzieher whom I have discussed here sought to unite what they took to be the pre-rational, emotional power of music with the reasoned moral messages of a plot and a text to instigate critical thought among children. Such a delicate enterprise relied on the cooperation and understanding of other adults. Brecht had developed the concept of *gestus* to instruct others' practice from afar.

It was unfortunate, then, that in local adaptations of *Horatier* (adaptations that, in accommodating the messy realities of their imperfect contexts, were arguably Brechtian in spirit), many Erzieher chose to excise what, according to the GDR Brechtians' principles, promised to set in motion the most effective learning processes. Many of these adults seemed unable to imagine that children could connect emotionally with, and learn from, a work that did not fit the model of the traditional fairy tale. This tension had been evident in GDR Musikerziehung from the very beginning, as Hans Naumilkat's criticisms of *Dornröschen*

demonstrated. Was Naumilkat defending the inherited plot because children would resist such blatant “adulteration” of their fairy-tale tradition? Or was he, even as he sought to shape a new society, displaying a stubborn nostalgia, an allegiance to an older—and distinctly un-Marxist—conception of ideal childhood experience, with its secure symmetries of right and wrong? Thus was practice, so central to subject formation, often weakened in the course of its practical application, as educators struggled with their own inherited conceptions of childhood and the child.

For all that, the broadly Brechtian take on musical-dramatic practice that Brock and Schwaen developed seems to have challenged the GDR’s own official educational policies as well as our prevailing images of children’s music-making in that state, both of which assume that children are empty vessels that the state might fill, and that music can unequivocally convey the content of an ideologically sound text. By contrast, the GDR Brechtian tradition treated children as essentially different from adults, and music as essentially different from words. Highly discerning and outspoken, children—like the ones from the (original) *Des Kaisers neue Kleider*—can see through the artificial posturing of adult speech. Analogously, music conveys an untranslatable emotional content that can unsettle, if not undermine, the meanings of words.

Even so, Brock evidently felt that children’s clairvoyance came at the expense of an uncritical reliance on the emotions, as she was concerned that music might persuade young performers to over-identify with their characters. Though childhood innocence could work to dismantle the artifice of the adult world, children remained problematically irrational. While Brecht had maintained that the dialectic between body and mind, emotion and reason could produce purer forms of each, Brock worried that the bodily immediacy of children would still come out on top. In this belief, GDR Erzieher placed themselves squarely in the Schillerian tradition that conceives of the human subject as divided between the stimulations of sensation and the injunctions of reason—a division that art might help to overcome. To this extent, one might describe the political project of these educators as a cleverer, more nuanced form of coercion: an attempt to circumvent clumsy, ineffective propaganda simply by paying better attention to the nature of children. Yet that sounds tendentiously sinister—and perhaps too well-organized. For, crucially, this practice ceded control to the child’s own particularity, its essential intractability to adult logic; it played a sort of wishful catch-up to the actual behavior of children.

This is to say that—surprisingly, perhaps—the GDR Brechtians were preoccupied with the foundational problems not of communism, but of liberalism. How can one allow free subjects to emerge who will nonetheless choose the “right” course of action? How can a desirable social order emerge from the ground up—out of the competing freedoms of individuals? Though these questions were never broached in official articulations of state ideology, the transgressively not-yet-formed figure of the child more or less compelled educators to return to them—a recourse to intellectual frameworks of long standing in the German tradition, which socialism had ostensibly superseded. Even as GDR Musikerzieher championed the ideals and the rhetoric of Marxism-Leninism, they struggled with the central dilemma of bourgeois ideology. Liberal paradoxes, here, had not been sublated, but rather left unsolved.

## Afterword

This dissertation begins and ends with a story of lingering Romantic beliefs. A central theme is the *longue durée* of ideas: how people built socialism on the cultures and ideologies of previous societies. Of course, that is what Marx maintained would happen: a socialist society was meant to be the dialectical sublation of what came before. But in these details of music education, what emerges is not a process of sublation, but rather an odd collage of older ideas and newer aims. One of these inherited ideas was the childhood innocence so familiar from Romantic thought; another was the faith in corporeal joy that had characterized the art and pedagogy of the Weimar era. German socialism was thus founded on a set of ideas about the individual—her emotions, her body, her unconscious—that ultimately informed the ways that a work-focused and collectivist society could develop.

Another legacy that shapes this story—albeit one much less frequently acknowledged by its participants—is fascism. Aside from the infamously outspoken Hugo Hartung, most Musikerzieher preferred to deal with the terror of those years by never mentioning them. Yet in their insistence on Weimar progressive pedagogies, they were, of course, availing themselves of pedagogical methods and premises that had been used more continuously than they might have liked to admit. Of course, as this dissertation has argued, many Musikerzieher saw music and music pedagogy as apolitical, by which they meant that musical practice could not to be mobilized to legitimize a state. This view belonged to a liberal tradition of political thought: on a Schillerian model, such aesthetic education instructed children how to negotiate their emotional and rational faculties. In any case, pedagogical practice carries its own ideological weight. A method founded, for instance, on a belief of the closeness of children to nature, where “nature” means both rhythmic music and “primitive” people, cannot immediately be refashioned into a technique to teach musical skill alone. Pedagogical techniques always communicate something about the concept of the citizen as she is already understood to be and the citizen as she should become. This is especially true of music pedagogy (and of dance and sport), as music, especially music performance, is so plainly bodily. A society may have ditched the idea of primitives, but pedagogies that are built on the idea of an Ur-form of humanity that civilization has tamed will always reproduce those ideas in some form.

This story comments on the stubbornness not of art *an sich*, but of German ideas about art: the magnetic attraction and repulsion of art and society, which had plagued German states since at least the Napoleonic era. Under German socialism, ideas about citizen formation and about the socialist state had to contend with the idea that music was ultimately a black box, that its essence was both counter to and unknowable by mundane concerns. This is not to say that these ideas distorted the development of socialism, or that they persisted beneath a façade of social change, but that practice has a lifespan and a rhythm that does not respond immediately to orders. What I have chronicled here are just the beginnings of German socialist Musikerziehung, beginnings that involved some awkward negotiations between Soviet mandate and German tradition. As it happened, teachers and musicologists continued to adapt practice to fit the needs of socialism, just as “socialism” inevitably bent towards the gravity of practice.



Hugo Hartung, for one, never gave up the fight against solfège. In 1952, parallel to the Lehrplan *Methodenstreit*, he had been trying to publish his text *Musikunterricht im ersten Schuljahr*, which laid out his method in full. After the (for him) disastrous meeting detailed in Chapter 1, the MfV revoked the imprimatur for the book. Not to be deterred, Hartung had 100 copies of the proofs made at his own cost, and distributed them to schools in Thuringia in early 1953, apparently claiming them to be officially sanctioned.<sup>1</sup> This text was published again in 1958 under the title *Musiklesen im Gesangunterricht der Unterstufe*.<sup>2</sup> Until his death in 1963, he exchanged heated written sallies with Siegfried Bimberg and Bimberg's allies Fritz Bachmann and Christian Lange about solfège, melodic consciousness, and music psychology.

Bimberg, for his part, got involved in every aspect of Musikerziehung, publishing methodological and theoretical texts in the GDR and the FRG—a full bibliography of Bimberg's publications would take a chapter in itself. He continued his dissertation work, begun in the 1950s, on the psychological basis of tonality, maintaining that, contrary to a number of older ideas about children's musical abilities, children are not predisposed to prefer major tonalities.<sup>3</sup> He wrote a number of methodological guides for inexperienced teachers, and edited song collections for children, many of which featured his own compositions. He even tried his hand at two children's operas, *Das singende Pferdchen* (1961) and *Eulenspiegels Brautfahrt* (1987).<sup>4</sup> In addition, he continued to publish on the issue of musical reception.<sup>5</sup>

Hella Brock wrote several more articles on children's opera and Brecht. Beginning in the 1970s, she co-authored several music textbooks, and began work on musical reception and the connections between musical and historical content, publishing two monographs in addition to a number of shorter articles.<sup>6</sup> *Die Nachtigall* was revived at the Usedom Music Festival in July 2009. At the time of this writing, Hella Brock lives in Leipzig. Kurt Schwaen, meanwhile, continued in the Brechtian vein, composing a number of Lehrstücke (listed in Chapter 4). *Die Horatier und die Kuriatier* was most recently performed at the Berlin Konzerthaus in 1998. Ina Iske-Schwaen now runs the Kurt Schwaen Archive in Berlin-Mahlsdorf.

Mostly unnamed but ever-present in this dissertation are the classroom teachers: those who rejected Hartung's new "scientific" method in favor of methods tried and true; who championed the "living joy" of Dalcroze and Orff; who held fast to the idea that young children can best understand simple instrumental pieces with unambiguous "character"; who approached Brechtian estrangement from the perspective of emotional identification and fairy-tale visions of right and wrong. These teachers' methodological preferences are proof—if proof were needed—

<sup>1</sup> Wenzel (Abt. Volksbildung des Bezirkes Suhl) to MfV (Abt. Methodik), 9 Feb 1953; Siegel (Volk und Wissen) to Stöhr (MfV), 16 Feb 1953; and Rebisch (MfV Abt. Methodik) to Abt. Volksbildung des Bezirkes Suhl, 21 Feb 1953, SAPMO-BArch DR 2/3870.

<sup>2</sup> Hugo Hartung, *Musiklesen im Gesangunterricht der Unterstufe. Ein Beitrag zur Methodikdiskussion* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1958).

<sup>3</sup> Siegfried Bimberg, *Einführung in die Musikpsychologie* (Wolfenbüttel: Mösseler Verlag, 1957).

<sup>4</sup> *Das singende Pferdchen* is a classic of its sort: a story in which a hard-working young boy chases a magical horse, only to find at the end that he will never actually catch it, because the horse is a metaphor for progress. Meanwhile, the grownup characters in the opera learn a lesson about efficient agricultural planning.

<sup>5</sup> Siegfried Bimberg, *Der Komponist und sein Adressat: musikästhetische Beiträge zur Autor-Adressat-Relation* (Halle (Saale): Martin-Luther Univ., 1976); Siegfried Bimberg, *Musik Erleben Lernen: pädagogische und ästhetische Grundlagen für eine dialogische Musikaneignung* (Kassel: Bosse, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> Hella Brock, *Literatur, Musik, Kunsterziehung: ihr Zusammenwirken im Unterricht* (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1978); Hella Brock, *Verfahrenkenntnisse zur Erschließung des Gehalts von Musik* (Leipzig, 1980); Hella Brock, *Musik hören, Musik erleben*, 2. Aufl. (Berlin: Volk und Wissen Volkseigener Verlag, 1987). For a complete list of Brock's publications, see her webiste, <http://www.hella-brock.de/htm-seiten/biblio.htm>.

that practice and the ideologies attendant on it cannot shift overnight. But this is true in both directions. Pedagogical theories and practices continued to develop over the forty-year history of the nation, as the brief outline of the main players' further activities should demonstrate: as German socialism normalized, so too did pedagogical practice. Many schoolteachers kept their jobs after Germany was reunited in 1990—the politically motivated purges experienced in universities did not extend to the mundane work of teaching primary school. Those still-unnamed teachers have likely also retained the pedagogical methods and ideals in which they, too, were trained: *Jale*, the idea of content in listening lessons, Kurt Schwaen's popular opera *König Midas*, even some of the techniques of rhythmic Erziehung (if not the Schulwerk). Post-reunification Germany—like the early GDR—has not seen any efforts to brand non-texted music as politically risky. The strangely inert status of music in German political and pedagogical discourse, once again, has meant that visions of a German citizen constructed through music can survive state-level changes in political and economic ideology. The end of socialist Germany did not mean the end of its tradition of aesthetic education: on the contrary, just as the music-pedagogical traditions of Weimar formed early socialism, so the pedagogical ideals and practices that came to shape socialist Germany continue to build Germany's musical citizenry in the twenty-first century.

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Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste (SA-AdK), Berlin

*Archive of the Academy of Arts, Berlin*

Verband der Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler der DDR (VKM)

Hanns-Eisler-Archiv

Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO-BArch), Berlin

*Archive of the Parties and Mass Organisations of the GDR in the Federal Archive*

Ministerium für Kultur (DR 1)

Ministerium für Volksbildung (DR 2)

Freie Deutsche Jugend (DY 24)

Kulturbund der DDR (DY 27)

Bibliothek für Bildungsgeschichtliche Forschung des Deutschen Instituts für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung (DIPF/BBF), Berlin

*Research Library for the History of Education at the German Institute of International Educational Research*

Deutsches Pädagogisches Zentralinstitut

Archiv der Institut für Musik der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle, Abteilung Musikpädagogik

*Archive of the Institute of Music of the Martin Luther University Halle, Department of Music Pedagogy*

Staatsexamenarbeiten

Kurt-Schwaen-Archiv, Berlin

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*Musik in der Schule*

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