

Polyphony and Racial Identity: Schoenberg, Heinrich Berl, and Richard Eichenauer¹

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Recent scholarship has stressed the political nature of German and Viennese music criticism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. And yet, the clear-cut categories, particularly with respect to Jewish identity, miss the complicated dynamics of a generation that sought to avoid any politicization of music. Cultural history, prone to generalization from ambiguous evidence, can miss the conflicted agendas of individual artists. The history of polyphony offers a paradigmatic case. The bold developments in scores by Mahler and Schoenberg encouraged the typing of modern polyphony as Jewish, despite the counterexamples of composers such as Max Reger, who were not Jewish yet wrote in a highly contrapuntal idiom. A closer examination of this discourse, however, reveals the discomfort and irony in a generation poised between the universalism of music and its politicization.

In this article I will examine the unusual case of Heinrich Berl, a critic who made his reputation by celebrating the Jewish characteristics of modern music, allegedly its polyphony, above all, in a book the title of which provocatively echoed Richard Wagner's notorious essay, "Das Judentum in der Musik." Berl's reception of polyphony and his role within musical culture remained marginal. However, his work opens as well the larger question of how musicians resisted the ethnic typing of music and how permeable the concept of "Jewish" identity was for detractors and by enthusiasts alike.

The notoriety of Schoenberg's 1907 and 1908 *Skandalkonzerte* in Vienna contributed to the perception that the composer was attacked on anti-Semitic grounds. Negative reactions—or even the alarm at the course of "modern" music—resulted in part from the timing, with the First String Quartet, Op. 7, and First Chamber Symphony, Op. 9, premiered only days apart. Yet disliking music was not tantamount to anti-Semitism, even if the composer was Jewish, a point some critics made clear.

1. Schoenberg in the Concert Hall

Although the florid metaphors of fin-de-siècle criticism seem to invite political interpretation, a closer reading shows instead some reviewers poking fun at the overblown responses of colleagues and perhaps members of the public. Scholars, to their detriment, typically read with great earnestness the reports of the so-called *Skandalkonzerte* of Schoenberg's chamber music in 1908. Despite the physical protests by many at the concert, some journalists felt ambivalence at the intense reactions.

Hedwig von Friedländer-Abel, Eduard Hanslick's young friend for whom he helped secure a position at the *Montags-Revue*,² is perhaps the most interesting example. Notoriously sharp-tongued, like

¹ An early version of this article was delivered at the International Bach Symposium *Kontrapunkt in der Philosophie von J. S. Bach*, at TU Dortmund in Witten-Bommerholz, sponsored by the Universities of Bremen and Dortmund, in 2010, and at the Music Department at the University of California at Santa Barbara in 2011). I am grateful for the numerous suggestions made in those contexts.

² Eduard Hanslick, unpublished letter to Hedwig Abel on 4 December 1895, housed in the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, Handschriftensammlung, quoted from Clemens Höslinger, "'Heilige Hedwig, schreib' für mich!': Zu Eduard Hanslicks Briefen an Hedwig Abel," in *Bruckner-Symposion: Bruckner-Freunde, Bruckner-Kenner: im Rahmen des*

her mentor, Friedländer-Abel scorned Bruckner as a “charlatan of counterpoint” and felt annoyed by the “carping, suffocating polyphony” in Schoenberg’s First String Quartet and Chamber Symphony. As negative as she was, Friedländer-Abel described Schoenberg’s polyphony with a metaphor from nature (“a densely veined net of little canals”) without any ethnic association in the entire review. Like Hanslick, Friedländer-Abel was a highly assimilated Viennese Jew. Whether on personal or musical grounds, she made clear that Schoenberg is ultimately no different from others in his modern cohort: “If he falls away, someone else will take his place.” In this context, she cited the influence of contemporary French composers, Dukas and Debussy, dispelling any sense—at least in the connection to Debussy—that Schoenberg’s Jewish heritage affected his artistry.³

Other examples likewise expose the fissures in a genre, the feuilleton, that served multiple functions—entertainment, reportage, aesthetic judgment, and, if less explicitly, economic control, seeking to shape the market forces in concert life. Albert Kauders, another musical conservative, shared Friedländer-Abel’s mixture of repulsion and respect for Schoenberg’s bold polyphony. In his review, the interaction of voices resembles yapping dogs. “The motives fight each other in a tangle and tumble over each other without any regard to rules; one intimidates and obscures another. Hardly has one graspable idea surfaced, the development of which one would like to follow, then there are two others on its heels like a biting dog, howling at anything that stirs on the ground.” The impossibility of hearing the individual lines led Kauders to invoke the unappetizing metaphor of a *Weichselzopf* (“Polish plait,” or elflock disease – literally a Vistula pigtail: matted uncut hair, sometimes braided, bringing with it lice and scalp infections⁴) for what he called “the unprecedented misuse of polyphony.” Did Kauders feel disgust toward the composer and the new work, such as one might feel at the sight of elflock disease? In fact, in the next paragraph Kauders confessed that he preferred Schoenberg’s Chamber Symphony to Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari’s, which he condemned as dilettantish “platitudes and most bland dessert.”⁵ By invoking such strong metaphors when he himself found virtues in the work, was Kauders perhaps deriding his colleagues who were unable to deal with modern music? A month earlier, in January 1907, Kauders had used his feuilleton coverage of Mahler’s Sixth to address, at some length, the subjectivity of musical listening and pleaded that his colleagues be more open. His specific defense of Mahler, in that review, took the form of an elaborate metaphor, contrasting the composer’s healthy development with that of composers of “decadence”—a cultural diatribe which he deployed only ironically.⁶

Internationalen Brucknerfestes Linz 1994, ed. Othmar Wessely, Uwe Harten, Elisabeth Maier, Andrea Harrandt, Erich W. Partsch, Renate Grasberger (Vienna: Kommissionsverlag, Musikwissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1997), 135.

³ “dann überzieht er sein gesäubertes Terrain mit einem vieladrigen Netz von Kanälchen, das ist jene krittende erstickende Polyphonie, ohne welche die ganze Arbeit auseinanderfallen würde. . . . Fällt [Schoenberg], so tritt ein anderer auf seinen Platz.” Hedwig von Friedländer-Abel, “Konzerte,” *Montags-Revue*, 11 February 1907, clipping from the Arnold Schönberg Center, Vienna.

⁴ Jay Geller, “Hairy Heine, or the Braiding of Gender and Ethnic Difference,” in *Body Parts: Critical Explorations in Corporeality*, ed. Christopher E. Forth and Ivan Crozier (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005), 111.

⁵ “Die Motive balgen sich im wirren Knäuel und purzeln regellos übereinander, eines duckt und verschleiert das andere. Kaum taucht irgend ein greifbarer Gedanken auf, dessen Entwicklung man gern verfolgen möchte, flugs sind zwei andere da, die sie wie bissige Kläffer ihm an die Fersen heften und jede bessere Regung in Grund und Boden heulen. Der unerhörte Mißbrauch der Polyphonie ergibt einen tönenden Weichselzopf, dessen Entwirrung mit nur zwei Ohren nicht gelingen kann. . . . eine Reihe dilettantisch gearbeiteter Stücke von ausgesuchter Platttheit und fadester Süßlichkeit. Dieser Sirip ist wahrhaftig noch unerquicklicher und unverdaulicher, als Schönbergs Höllenbräu.” Albert Kauders, “Modernste Musik,” *Fremden-Blatt*, 11 February 1907, clipping from the Schönberg Center.

⁶ Albert Kauders, *Fremden-Blatt*, 5 January 1907.

The political rhetoric in reviews of Schoenberg's *Skandalkonzerte*, as Esteban Buch shows in persuasive detail,⁷ reveals more than efforts of critics to relate music to its context. The collapse of social and institutional mores, at two performances so close in succession, became more important than what was heard—or not heard, as many reported about the performances. Critics seemed disconcerted, almost paralyzed in their tracks, such that aesthetic discussion became impossible. The large number of reviews—if unsurprising in a city teeming with newspapers and periodicals—may distort the event's wider significance, or lack thereof. Was a *Skandalkonzert* largely an urban phenomenon, possible only when an abundance of concerts fostered a demonstration of opinions, pro and con? Viennese correspondents reported on the fervor of the reactions with curiosity, perhaps disdain. Wilhelm von Wymetal informed his Czech readers somewhat bemusedly about the premieres of Schoenberg's Opp. 7 and 10: "With respect to these two new works, which unite the acerbic and the sweet, overflowing in polyphony and avoiding melody, the composer's friends and enemies raged against one another."⁸

The irony of the outrage at Schoenberg's music was not lost on Max Marschalk, publisher of his first works (Opp. 1-4, 6, and the Quartet, Op. 7) and a critic in Berlin. Reporting on the *Skandalkonzert* to Berlin readers, Marschalk opened with a lengthy paragraph about the leisurely pleasures of the Habsburg capital, from the cafés to the women and dance, a carefree hedonism alien to "North German concepts." He juxtaposed this sketch with the outrage of Viennese colleagues at the performance. Did Marschalk infer a lack of sincerity in the criticism—the hypocrisy of overreacting to innovation in the concert hall while remaining unperturbed by the crudity of the civilized audience? Marschalk, moreover, tried to explain Schoenberg's contrapuntal writing as an extension of Richard Strauss's—therefore, not as that of a Jewish composer. "Schoenberg is surely the boldest and most ruthless contrapuntalist of our era, someone who thinks exclusively polyphonically, and one can imagine the sonic images it produces when he writes a chamber symphony for fifteen solo instruments! Every voice autocratically leads its own life. It was once postulated about Richard Strauss's *Heldenleben* that to understand a Strauss work fully one must listen horizontally and not vertically; this thesis has its validity for Schoenberg's works. Schoenberg thinks polyphonically—horizontally—and the resulting polyphony shows vertical slices that make no sense to the harmonist."⁹

2. Heinrich Berl and "Jewish" polyphony

The most extravagant claims about Schoenberg's "Jewish" polyphony came from the pen of one Heinrich Berl (1896-1953). As scholars have become interested in historical constructs of Jewish identity,

⁷ Esteban Buch, *Le cas Schönberg: Naissance de l'avant-garde musicale*, Bibliothèque des idées (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2006).

⁸ "Gegenüber diesen zwei verwirrend neuen, Herbes und Süßes einigenden Werken von überquellender Polyphonie und gemiedener Melodik gerieten Freunde und Gegner des Komponisten wütend aufeinander." Wilhelm von Wymetal, "Eine Musikwoche: Wiener Brief," *Tagesbote aus Mähren und Schlesien*, Brno, 16 February 1907, quoted from *Die Befreiung des Augenblicks: Schönbergs Skandalkonzerte 1907 und 1908: eine Dokumentation*, ed. Martin Eybl (Vienna: Böhlau, 2004), 130.

⁹ Schönberg ist sicherlich der kühnste und rücksichtsloseste Kontrapunktiker unserer Zeit, ein Kopf, der ausschließlich polyphon denkt, und man kann sich vorstellen, zu welchen Klangbildern es führt, wenn er eine Kammerinfonie für 15 Soloinstrumente schreibt! Jede Stimme führt selbstherrlich ihr Eigenleben, und wenn früher einmal ein Kommentator des Richard Straußschen *Heldenleben* die These aufgestellt hat, daß der Hörer horizontal hören müsse und nicht vertikal, wolle er ein Straußsches Werk vollkommen verstehen, so hat diese These erst recht für den Hörer Schönbergscher Werke ihre Gültigkeit. Schönberg denkt polyphon, er denkt horizontal, und die konsequente Vielstimmigkeit zeitigt vertikale Durchschnitte, mit denen der Harmoniker nichts mehr anzufangen weiß." Max Marschalk, *Vossische Zeitung*, Berlin, 22 February 1907; quoted in *Die Befreiung des Augenblicks*, 142.

Berl's *Das Judentum in der Musik* (1926) has become a standard point of reference—"the apex in the efforts to delineate a national-Jewish music in the 1920s," in the words of Annkatrin Dahm.¹⁰ This recognition in the scholarly community of late, however, is at odds with the book's reception by contemporaries; moreover, the genealogy of Berl's own views on Jewish identity and polyphony in particular, calls into question the authority that scholars have unwittingly bestowed upon his book.

Berl's first publication on the subject of Jewish music, "Das Judentum in der abendländischen Musik," in April 1922, did not mention polyphony. The chief distinguishing feature of Jewish musical creativity, Berl stressed, was the predominance of melody over harmony, which he associated with the Jewish inclination toward the temporal over the spatial. The article, published in Martin Buber's *Der Jude*, provoked a response from the leading authority on Jewish sacred music, Arno Nadel, eighteen years Berl's senior. Nadel offered a rigorous examination of Jewish liturgical music as if thereby to show the futility of defining a Jewish identity in Western art music (only toward the end of the article did Nadel directly engage with Berl's essay, which he politely conceded was *geistvoll*.)¹¹ Whereas Nadel took almost a year to publish his response, in the very next issue appeared Berl's answer.¹²

Berl devoted the first half of his article to Adolf Schreiber, a young conductor and composer who committed suicide in 1920. Schreiber's former student and friend, Max Brod, had recently published a biography and an edition of his songs, and the contrast between Brod's approach and Berl's is telling. Although Brod was a prolific writer on Zionist topics and, unlike Berl, a trained musician, he remained silent on the subject of Jewish musical identity in the biography. Indeed, Brod avoided the subject in general, with a telling exception (that was later misconstrued by the Nazi press—and more recent scholars, who only cite a 1920 reprint of the article in a special Mahler issue of another journal, in an abbreviated form and new title that invite the misrepresentation). The article in question was a brief response to Nadel, in the midst of the latter's ongoing serial articles on Jewish folk songs in the same journal. Writing under the title "Jewish Folk Melodies," Brod had the clear intention of reaching out to the Galician immigrants in Prague: Brod's highly emotional perception of parallels between Galician Jewish song and Mahler's music was a gesture of respect towards the immigrants, not any essentialist musical claim that Mahler was influenced by songs which he had not, as Brod stressed, heard.¹³ Likewise in the Schreiber biography, Brod had an emotionally charged and yet vague reference to the composer's Jewish identity. Schreiber, whom Brod describes as unpolitical and having no knowledge or contact with Judaism, recounted in one letter the first Yom Kippur he witnessed, a description that proved "how deeply rooted Jewishness was in him."¹⁴

Whereas Brod avoided ascribing any Jewish aspects to Schreiber's music, Berl pursued the subject doggedly. The introductory pages align Schreiber with Mahler and Schoenberg in their common ethical commitment, in contrast to the virtuoso Erich Wolfgang Korngold, who is condemned as a craftsman

¹⁰ Annkatrin Dahm, *Der Topos der Juden: Studien zur Geschichte des Antisemitismus im deutschsprachigen Musikschritftum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 264. On earlier writers who deployed Wagner's concepts, see the outstanding studies by James Loeffler: "Richard Wagner's 'Jewish Music': Antisemitism and Aesthetics in Modern Jewish Culture," *Jewish Social Studies* 15, no. 2 (2009): 2-36, and "Do Zionists Read Music from Right to Left? Abraham Tsvi Idelsohn and the Invention of Israeli Music," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 100, no. 3 (2010): 385-416.

¹¹ Arno Nadel, "Jüdische Musik," *Der Jude* 7, no. 4 (April 1923): 235.

¹² Heinrich Berl, "Zum Problem einer jüdischen Musik," *Der Jude* 7, no. 5 (May 1923): 309-320.

¹³ Max Brod, "Jüdische Volksmelodien," *Der Jude* 1, no. 5 (August 1916): 344; rpt. as "Gustav Mahlers Jüdische Melodien," *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 2 (May 1920): 378-379.

¹⁴ Max Brod, *Adolf Schreiber: Ein Musikerschicksal* (Berlin: Welt-Verlag, 1921), 30.

without genius. Claiming to summarize his earlier writings on the two older composers, Berl raised polyphony for the first time:

What Mahler and Schoenberg have done can be explained quite simply: they have led us out of the questionable aspect of our harmonic system, which depends on tonic and dominant; they have led to the liberation of music from slavery of triad-based harmony to the liberation of *melody* from harmonic weight to an enormous development through new *polyphony*. They are the creators of a new melodic-polyphonic style.¹⁵

Proceeding with what he calls a “psychological” concept of race, Berl brought up Mahler and Schoenberg as composers able to cast off the burden of their Jewish heritage by dint of “enormous struggle,” the same burden that, however, led to Schreiber’s demise. Jewish musical identity, as Berl reiterated across the second half of the article on Mahler, has an intensive rhythm, is more melodic than harmonic, and often involves emotional extremes (childlike or demonic qualities).

Berl strengthened his case for “Jewish” polyphony in *Das Judentum in der Musik*—one of the few new portions of the book not previously published. “New research has determined that oriental music is not homophonic, rather *heterophonic*, a concept that corresponds perfectly with polyphony, in particular Schoenbergian polyphony.” He may have been referring to Guido Adler, who made this argument back in 1908.¹⁶

As author of a book that celebrated Schoenberg, in particular, as a Jew, Berl later gained the stature of the first philosemitic writer on music. Yet a closer examination of Berl’s biography, writings, and early reception invites a re-evaluation of authority and the integrity of his thought on “Jewish” music. His output as a whole—speeches, letters, and an array of publications across over thirty years—shows an inconsistency and deep-rooted ambivalence that, I believe calls into question his claims about Jewish music and exemplifies the highly fraught process of ascribing a cultural identity to Jewish Germans in the early twentieth century. In short, positioning himself as the first to embrace Jewish music as such, Berl gained recognition in a way that, arguably, was unavailable to him through traditional routes.

In comparison to the cadre of music critics in Vienna, Berlin, and other German cities, Berl’s training was minimal. He attended Realschule in Offenburg (Baden-Württemberg)—not the more humanistic and elite Gymnasium—and in 1911-1914 pursued a business education and apprenticeship in sales at a factory for stoves and safes, which concluded his formal education. After the War, he attended lectures at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität until illness forced his return to Offenburg and subsequent recovery with relatives in Basel, where he studied anthroposophy at the Goetheanum.¹⁷ Berl settled in Karlsruhe, supporting himself as an intellectual broker of sorts—directing a lecture series and briefly a book series—and publishing extensively.

From the outset, Berl expressed ambiguous views about the role of the Jew in culture and society. In the weeks that revolution blazed across Germany, he penned “Der Jude als Revolutionär” under the name Heinz Berl in Moritz Lederer’s new independent leftwing weekly *Der Revolutionär*. Without

¹⁵ Mahler and Schoenberg “haben die Fragwürdigkeit unseres ganzen *harmonischen* Systems, das auf Tonika und Dominant beruht, heraufgeführt, sie haben die Befreiung der Musik von der Knechtung der Harmonie des Dreiklangs heraufgeführt, die Befreiung der *Melodie* von der harmonischen Beschwerung zur ungeheueren Entfaltung einer neuen *Polyphonie*.” Berl, “Problem einer jüdischen Musik,” 310.

¹⁶ Guido Adler, “Über Heterophonie,” *Jahrbuch des Musikbibliothek Peters* 15 (1908): 17-27.

¹⁷ Ulrich Weber, “Heinrich Berl,” in *Badische Biographien: Neue Folge*, vol. 1, ed. Bernd Ottnad (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1982), 44.

acknowledging the anti-Semitic literature of the day, Berl outlined a double-edged role for the Jews from the opening lines of his article:

It is both a marvelous fate and harrowing tragedy that the Jew is the agent of revolutionary ideas.

I repeat: *a marvelous fate*.

The article swerves from philo-Semitism (divine intervention that Jews possess the very traits that impart superiority, “energy and acuity”) to crass yet obscure generalizations—“A brief look at the specific fields of [the Jew’s] intellectual development shows us clearly enough its destructive nature. We can therefore safely say that it is a purely racial/psychological feature.”¹⁸

Das Judentum in der Musik had little resonance, least of all among musicians, who were leery of admitting any specifically Jewish musical identity. *Die Zeitschrift für Musik* commissioned its review from a twenty-three-year old doctoral student at the Universität Wien, Albert Wellek, who had studied composition and conducting but was shifting to the psychology of music. His judgment was scathing, his prose shot through with exclamation marks, sometimes double. Berl, as Wellek saw it, “borrows from anti-Semitic criticism unquestioningly, in order to justify and ‘interpret’ it.”¹⁹ Even within the Zionist community, one senses merely perfunctory respect. Rudolf Réti, on the staff of *Menorah: Jüdisches Familienblatt für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur*, opened his review by recounting his own reservations, when he accepted a position on the journal, about the very notion of addressing Jewish musical identity. He then immediately launched into praise almost too emphatic:

[The book] is more than one of the best music books of our time, and far more than merely an informative presentation of the most solid scientific and artistic expertise (if not without gaps) regarding Jewish musical longing and ability. Rather, like most great achievements, even scholarly, it is, above all, *itself an artistic deed of the first order*, a creative experience of the deepest roots of Jewish creativity, in many ways—this can certainly be said—in many ways can be placed side by side with Buber’s magnificent interpretations.²⁰

After apologizing for an apparent contradiction, Réti then undertook a detailed critique that constitutes the bulk of his review. The Jewish critic clearly felt uncomfortable, in the pages of a Zionist publication, criticizing work on Jewish identity.

Berl himself would later write for *Menorah*, in 1929. His self-presentation in the listing of contributors, especially in contrast to Réti’s, suggests his marginal status—ambitious yet insecure about his

¹⁸ “Es ist zugleich eine wundersame Prädestination und eine erschütternde Tragik, daß der Jude zum Träger der revolutionären Idee geschaffen ist. Ich sage: *eine wundersame Prädestination*. . . . Ist es nicht von göttlicher Gewalt, wenn man allen anderen das voraus hat, was den Menschen über den Menschen hebt: die *Tatkraft* und den *Scharfsinn*? . . . Ein Blick in die einzelnen Provinzen seiner geistigen Entwicklung zeigt uns greifbar genug das Destruktive seines Naturells. Wir dürfen also ruhig sagen, daß es ein rein rassenpsychologisches Moment ist.” [Heinrich Berl,] “Der Jude als Revolutionär,” *Der Revolutionär* 1, no. 5 (26 March 1919): 10, 11.

¹⁹ “der antisemitischen Kritik widerspruchslos entlehnt, um sie zu rechtfertigen und zu ‘deuten.’” Albert Wellek, review of Berl, *Zeitschrift für Musik* 93, no. 11 (November 1927): 638.

²⁰ “Berl’s *Das Judentum in der Musik* (Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart) ist mehr als eines der besten Musikbücher unserer Zeit, weit mehr als eine auf gründlichster wissenschaftlicher und künstlerischer Sachkenntnis fundierte Information (. . .) über jüdisches Musikwollen und –können. Es ist vielmehr vor allem, wie die meisten großen, auch wissenschaftlichen Leistungen, *selbst eine künstlerische Tat erster Ordnung*, eine schöpferische Erfüllung der tiefsten Wurzeln jüdischen Künstlertums, vielfach—dies kann ruhig gesagt werden—den großartigen Darstellungen *Bubers* an die Seite zu stellen.” Rudolf Réti, “Ein Buch unserer Zeit: Heinrich Berl, *Das Judentum in der Musik*,” *Menorah: Jüdisches Familienblatt für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur* 5, no. 3 (March 1927): 198.

non-traditional education. Réti—who had studied with Eduard Steuermann, premiered Schoenberg’s Op. 11, and helped to found the Salzburg Music Festival as well as the International Society for Contemporary Music—offered a brief biographical sketch, calling attention to his compositions for chorus and theater that were of “Socialist coloring.”²¹ Berl, eleven years younger, prepared a blurb four times in length, claiming a position as “Dozent für Musikwissenschaft (Akustik, Ästhetik, Philosophie),” at the Badische Hochschule für Musik—which is doubtful, given that he had no university degree, and the Hochschule as such was only established that same year, 1929. Berl listed several philosophical manuscripts on the brink of publication (yet never to appear). He promised a substantial revision of *Das Judentum in der Musik* under the title *Die asiatische Krise in der europäischen Musik* and claimed that an excerpt entitled “Die Juden in der modernen Musik,” on Bizet, Mahler, Schonberg, was to appear in *Menorah*, but neither would come to fruition. Among the “cultural and philosophical manuscripts which Berl listed were such broad topic as *Die Weltendung der Deutschen im 20. Jahrhundert* and *Das neue Weltbild* and *Geist der Zeit*, none of which saw the light of day.²² This self-fashioned biography found its way into the 1932 supplement of the authoritative *Grosse jüdische National-Biographie*, in which his unpublished manuscripts become books.²³

Just what led this autodidact, who was in fact not Jewish, to develop an interest in Jewish musical identity and secure numerous platforms for his thoughts, despite his nontraditional education? The very idea of pursuing Jewish music was sufficiently newsworthy that in 1930 the Berlin *Jüdische Rundschau* posed the question to five musicians involved with Jewish music, among them Berl. Berl listed numerous reasons for his interest in the subject, including the woman he married. “She was an anti-Semite, but I quickly realized that she was more Jewish than many Jews, and I led her back to Judaism.”²⁴ Was he attracted to Friedel Kassewitz in part because she seemed exotic and alien—according to the writer Alfred Döblin, she “had an interesting mind; dark, she was a Jew, with something of a gypsy about her”?²⁵ As Berl had explained in *Judentum in der Musik*, regarding his use of Wagner’s title, the composer’s notion of the Jew as Other was true, if undervalued: “Nothing is clearer in this book than how right Wagner was when he perceived Jewish identity as alien (*als Fremdkörper*). However, the question is whether being alien is to be considered positive or negative.”²⁶ In other contexts, as well, Berl seemed to understand Jewish identity as a divergence from the norm. Berl travelled to Paris in 1923 to visit Henri Bergson shortly after the latter received the Nobel Peace Prize. (The philosopher was recovering from an operation and unable to accept the visitor.) Recounting his visit with Bergson’s wife, years later (in 1946), Berl wrote:

²¹ “Unsere Autoren,” *Menorah* 7, no. 5-6 (May 1929): 322.

²² *Menorah* 7, no. 9 - 10 (September 1929): [n. p.].

²³ Salomon Wininger, *Grosse jüdische National-Biographie, mit mehr als 8000 Lebensbeschreibungen namhafter jüdischer Männer und Frauen aller Zeiten und Länder: Ein Nachschlagewerk für das jüdische Volk und dessen Freunde* (Cernăuți: Orient, 1932), 6:461-462, discussed in Heidy Zimmerman, “Was heißt ‘jüdische Musik’? Grundzüge eines Diskurses im 20. Jahrhundert,” *Jüdische Musik?: Fremdbilder, Eigenbilder*, ed. Eckhard John, Heidy Zimmerman, Reihe jüdische Moderne, vol. 1 (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004), 23n.33.

²⁴ “Sie war Antisemitin, aber ich merkte bald, daß sie jüdischer war als viele Juden, und ich führte sie zum Judentum zurück.” *Jüdische Rundschau* 29 no. 30 (16 April 1930): 215; citation from Zimmerman, “Was heißt ‘jüdische Musik’?,” 21.

²⁵ “Die Frau etwa gleichaltrig mit ihm, Ende 40 oder Anfang 50, war ein interessantes Geschöpf, dunkel, sie war Jüdin, und hatte etwas von einer Zigeunerin an sich.” Alfred Döblin, *Autobiographische Schriften und letzte Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Edgar Pässler (Olten: Walter, 1977), 497.

²⁶ “Inwiefern Wagner recht hatte, da er das Judentum als *Fremdkörper* empfand, geht nirgends klarer hervor als aus diesem Buch. Es fragt sich nur, ob dieser Fremdkörper mit positiven oder negativen Vorzeichen zu betrachten ist.” Heinrich Berl, *Das Judentum in der Musik* (Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1926), 10.

[Bergson] interested me above all from the perspective of Jewish identity. What is intrinsically un-French . . . is for me intrinsically Jewish in him. I drew parallels between Einstein in physics, Bergson in philosophy, Schoenberg in music, Freud in psychology—and found in each of them a characteristic element: the emphasis on time over space.²⁷

Given the disinterest—even antipathy—others held towards the subject of Jewish identity, Berl, eager to make his contribution to an intellectual world in which he lacked credentials, may have seen these reflections as offering an entrée otherwise unavailable to him. How, otherwise, could a twenty-six year-old autodidact contribute to a journal with the stature of *Der Jude* (arguably the leading German-language publication for Jewish intellectuals)? Buber, as editor and in other contexts, often took unpopular positions (such as urging cooperation between Jews and Arabs to form a binational state), so it is not surprising that he found the polemical subject of Jewish identity in music worthy of more attention in his journal. Indeed it seems unlikely that *Der Jude* could have found a music critic to address the subject of Jewish identity in Western music. One factor in the particular choice of Berl may have that Buber had enjoyed recognition from Berl. In fact, the first non-fiction that appeared under Berl's name, playing off Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*, was his *Martin Buber und die Wiedergeburt des Judentums aus dem Geiste der Mystik: eine Rede*.²⁸

The subjects and timing of Berl's journalistic forays call into question his later reputation as an early warrior of Zionism in music. Chastened by Nadel, perhaps, Berl's next contribution addressed the recreation of old Hebrew vocal music, and in 1924 appeared his final two articles in *Der Jude*: on Jews in contemporary visual arts (which became fodder for later Nazi attacks on Expressionism in the visual arts as Jewish), and on arrangements of Jewish melodies. Although the journal continued until four more years, during which Berl gained a secure position as an intellectual broker, editing journals and founding a society devoted to intellectual exchanges, he published nothing in its pages.

Berl, however, turned to another venue to spin articles from his unpublished manuscript on Jewish music. A Viennese monthly in the planning stages, *Das Zelt: Eine jüdische illustrierte Monatsschrift*, proved hospitable, no doubt because Berl had secured credentials by publishing in *Der Jude*. In its very first issue, Berl contributed "Erich Wolfgang Korngold: Ein jüdischer Musiker," examining (in what irked his contemporaries) Korngold's Viennese sentimentality and Pucciniesque triviality." That same year, 1924, Berl reviewed *Neue Musik*, the third volume of Paul Bekker's collected writings, for *Das Zelt*. His lavish praise of Bekker, who was enmeshed in rancorous debate with Hans Pfitzner, soon bore fruit; as he acknowledged in the *Jüdische Rundschau* interview, Bekker's support was decisive in securing a publisher for his book manuscript. Judaism had meant very little to Bekker, who was raised Catholic by his mother. Despite the lack of personal interest in the subject matter, Bekker had sustained a fierce attacks as a supporter of Jewish music and Jewish causes, by not only Pfitzner but also a range of authors, from the conservative musicologist Georg Schünemann to the highly assimilated Jewish critic Heinz Pringsheim (brother to Katia Mann). Around the time Bekker endorsed Berl's *Judentum in der Musik*, he moved away

²⁷ Heinrich Berl, *Gespräche mit berühmten Zeitgenossen* (Baden-Baden: H. Bühler, jr., 1946), p. 50. This quotation is shortened and misquoted (*Hervorhebung* in lieu of *Hervorkehrung*) in Helmut Gipper, "Imagologie in Sprachwissenschaftlicher Sicht," in *Europa Provincia Mundi: Essays in Comparative Literature and European Studies*, ed. Joep Leerssen and Karl Ulrich Syndram, (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1992), 205.

²⁸ Berl used the same young Heidelberg publisher who had printed his previous (and first) books, two volumes in a planned series of ten in the genre of fantastical fiction, each with the subtitle *kosmische Wanderung*.

from music journalism, resigning as longtime critic of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* to become director of the state opera house in Kassel.

Berl went on to publish an excerpt from his book manuscript, “Ignaz Moscheles: Der Jude als Virtuose,” before *Das Zelt* closed. The only music journal in which Berl would publish, *Die Musik*, apparently would not stomach any positive discussion of Jewish identity in western music; however, the year his book appeared, Berl contributed a brief excerpt, entitled “Music of the East,” from his book. Berl’s final publications on Jewish music appeared in *Menorah*, after the magazine had moved to a more intellectual format and could benefit from the air of authority that Berl now commanded. After the journal reviewed his book, Berl published an article on music of the ancient Jews (1928) and “Jews in Romantic music: Meyerbeer, Mendelssohn, and Offenbach” (1929)—after which he fell silent on the subject of Jewish music.

Berl’s interest, instead, turned to social politics, from the women’s movement and communism to the underclass, if still some literary subjects such as Nietzsche and Judaism, and Alfred Mombert’s mysticism. It is difficult to reconcile Berl’s incendiary prose with the venue. For example, in “Judentum und Feminismus” he characterized the Jew as “the most feminine of person in the world,” which—he explained obscurely—is why the most towering intellects are physically dirty, repulsive, and stigmatized.²⁹ Perhaps in part to secure a venue outside the specialized audience of Jewish community journals, Berl founded his own press, Kairos Verlag, in Karlsruhe, in 1931. Kairos continued until the National Socialists came to power in 1933, when Berl withdrew from his public professional life in Karlsruhe, moving to Baden-Baden. In sum, the Kairos Verlag published four of Berl’s own books or booklets: the anti-feminist tract, two on the “fifth” class, and *Der Kampf gegen das Rote Berlin, oder Berlin: eine Unterwelts-Residenz*.³⁰ Berl’s turn to social politics resembled conservative attacks on the Weimar democracy: anti-feminist and reactionary in his views on the underclass. To Margarete Veeh, in her 1932 dissertation on the ideology of the women’s movement, Berl’s *Die Männerbewegung: ein antifeministisches Manifest* (1931) exemplified the common pairing of anti-feminist and anti-Semite.³¹

It is difficult to pin down Berl’s political orientation, except to note the contradictions in his life and output. At the same time he was contributing to *Menorah*, Berl organized the 1930 Badener Heimattag, Karlsruhe.³² (Berl here acted in his capacity as executive director of the Gesellschaft für geistigen Aufbau; the initiative for the conference came from the Landesverein Badische Heimat, and financial support from the city of Karlsruhe.) In the opening speech, Berl was explicit about the political meaning of the gathering, organized in the anticipation of the “historical moment for the evacuation and liberation of occupied territories”³³—presumably the zones on the West Bank of the Rhine occupied by France after World War I until 1931. Many of the participants had political leanings to the right and would later join

²⁹ Heinrich Berl, “Judentum und Feminismus,” *Menorah* 9, no. 7/8 (1931): 371; partial quotation in Claudia T. Prestel, “Frauen und die Zionistische Bewegung (1897-1933): Tradition oder Revolution?” *Historische Zeitschrift* 258, no. 1 (1994): 68.

³⁰ The other publications released by Kairos Verlag were: *Die Krisis im Recht*, originally a lecture at the Gesellschaft für Geistigen Aufbau (which Berl directed) by Karl Fees, who was the lawyer of Berl’s close friend Leopold Ziegler, and three books on homeopathy, his wife’s chief interest.

³¹ Margarete Veeh, *Ausbreitung und ideologische Begründung der deutschen Frauenbewegung in der Gegenwart*, diss. University of Heidelberg (J. Kruse & Soehne, 1932), p. 73.

³² Franz Vonessen, “Heinrich Berl,” in *Leopold Ziegler. Briefe und Dokumente*, ed. Theodor Binder et alia (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005), 222.

³³ Heinrich Berl’s speech “Festigung der Heimat” was reported in the *Karlsruhe Zeitung*, 14 July 1930, excerpted in *Nachlese zu Heidegger: Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Denken*, ed. Guido Schneeberger (Bern: Suhr, 1962), 11.

the Nazi party. The honorary head of the planning committee was Eugen Fischer, founder and director of the leading eugenics center (Institut für Anthropologie, menschliche Erblehre und Eugenik), whom Hitler appointed rector of the Universität zu Berlin in 1933.³⁴

Perhaps more surprising is that Berl wrote the afterward to a novella that was taken as seeking to legitimize the Third Reich, *Der besiegte Lurch: ein Gleichnis des Kampfes gegen das Leiden* (1933). The author, Hermann Strübe (pseudonym: Hermann Burte), forged ties to National Socialism as early as 1925 and from 1924 to 1932 co-edited a periodical that tried to undermine the Weimar Republic.

Contrary to the recollections of friends and sympathetic observers, Berl did not pursue an “inner emigration” during the Third Reich.³⁵ Rather, as a freelance writer, he accepted opportunities that presented themselves, remaining active through 1938, although as early as 1937 he fell into financial straits and accepted assistance from the philosopher Leopold Ziegler. Berl confessed his discomfort and guilt about his involvement, in so many words, in a letter to Ziegler. Persisting, and accepting fate as it presents itself, require more courage than giving up, Berl stressed; “He who has a clearer conscience than I should be the one to throw the first stone at me!”³⁶

3. Eichenauer and polyphony in the Third Reich

Even as Berl turned to other subjects, never to return to music, *Das Judentum in der Musik* proved useful to National Socialists. In 1932, when Richard Eichenauer corrected proofs on *Musik und Rasse*, he learned about Berl’s 1926 book. In a footnote, Eichenauer stressed that, although a lengthy response would be needed, he concurred with Berl’s descriptions of *facts* though not, however, with the *value* Berl placed on “Jewish” music.³⁷ Eichenauer later returned to *Musik und Rasse* to improve and expand the book, the second edition of which appeared in 1937. Much had changed by that point, of course, and he noted that “a lengthy response [to Berl] is no longer necessary”—perhaps, in part because the Institut zum Studium der Judenfrage, which was founded in 1934 by the Propaganda Ministry, dealt with Berl’s text at some length the following year in its 416-page tome *Die Juden in Deutschland*, released in several editions through 1939. Despite its numerous quotations from Berl, the text avoided the passages on polyphony; indeed the words *Polyphonie*, *Kontrapunktus*, and *Mehrstimmigkeit* are absent from the chapter on Jews and music.³⁸ By this point, it seemed paramount to establish the procedure as German (Aryan), and yet the task was left to amateur musicologists such as Eichenauer, who perhaps had less difficulty ignoring the developments of Mahler and Schoenberg in their retelling of music history.

³⁴ Victor Fariás, *Heidegger and Nazism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 69.

³⁵ For example, Berl was paired with another writer from Baden-Baden, Otto Flake, as both living in “inner emigration,” in Oswald von Nostitz, *Muse und Weltkind: das Leben der Helene von Nostitz* (Munich: Piper, 1991), 405. Flake joined Helene von Nostitz and eighty-six other writers in signing a Gelöbnis treuester Gefolgschaft to Hitler in October 1933. For a critical treatment of so-called “inner emigration,” with reference to Flake, see Reinhold Grimm, “In the thicket of inner emigration,” in *Flight of Fantasy: New Perspectives on Inner Emigration in German Literature, 1933-1945*, ed. Neil H. Donahue and Doris Kirchner (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 30.

³⁶ *Heinrich Berl*, letter to Leopold Ziegler, 23 August 1937, *Ziegler. Briefe und Dokumente*, 353. “Und wer hier ein reineres Gewissen haben kann als ich, der soll den ersten Stein auf mich werfen!”

³⁷ Richard Eichenauer, *Musik und Rasse* (Munich: J. F. Lehmann, 1932), 268n.1; cited from Michael Walter, *Hitler in der Oper: deutsches Musikleben, 1919-1945* (1995; Stuttgart: Metzler, 2000), 133.

³⁸ *Die Juden in Deutschland*, ed. Institut zum Studium der Judenfrage, 8th ed. (Munich: Franz Eher Nachf., 1939), consulted via Internet Archive.

Eichenauer has held a curious position within musicology as an influential, or at least oft-cited, outsider. Born into an upper middle class household in Iserlohn (North Rhine-Westphalia), Eichenauer studied or spent time in Munich, Leipzig, Paris, and England. He enlisted in active duty in World War I, serving until he sustained an injury to his nose. Eichenauer completed his teacher training and taught in the Reformrealgymnasium Bochum from 1919 to 1936.³⁹ In the 1920s Eichenauer published extensively within the so-called Nordic movement but under a pseudonym. The decisive change for him took place in 1932, when he joined the SS and NSDAP and, in August, completed his first book, *Musik und Rasse*. The political utility of the book is obvious—and Eichenauer would benefit significantly from his allegiance to the NSAP. In fact, the preface is dated August 1, 1932, when the radios were abuzz of news that the landslide victory of the NSDAP in the Reichstag elections the previous day, a full 37.3%. The opening sentences of paragraphs flanking the preface show Eichenauer protesting too much that his subject matter is unfashionable:

This book appears at a time when fighting over the “racial question” seems to have lost some of its fervor. This can, of course, compromise any sympathy for the subject of my research; on the other hand, it has the advantage that true sympathizers will read the book without their support being colored by circumstances. . . .

My first thanks are owed to the publisher, who decided to publish a study on a relatively remote topic, despite the economically bad times.⁴⁰

Polyphony figures prominently among the few changes that Eichenauer felt compelled to make in the 1937 “expanded and revised” edition. Eichenauer insisted that his basic argument about Wagner had not changed since 1932—and his ambivalence about the composer, whose person and music constituted a racial mixture, is testimony to an independence of thought, despite the Führer’s love of Wagner. Only a brief sketch of Wagner’s detractors (as well as the concession that Wagner might be Jewish on his father’s side) had to be excised in 1937:

Those who, as they say, “do not like” his music are no less numerous among serious musicians than the unconditional Wagner enthusiasts. It is similar with aestheticians: some esteem him as the Urbild of a Germanic artist, as the culmination of Germanic artistic will; others see in him something like the evil demon of German music.⁴¹

Eichenauer thanked those whose criticism of the first edition led to various changes in “details.” Perhaps most striking is his chief explanation as to why Wagner was a Nordic composer. In 1932, the permutations to the Leitmotif were the sole reason, but in 1937 Eichenauer inserted into the old passage a second reason—the polyphonic writing (which appears in boldface):

In Wagner’s **late style, there evolves further a particular type of leitmotivic polyphony (or polythematik) through the psychological branching out of events. Both—the transformative technique as well as the proclivity to polyphony**—position Wagner on the side of the Nordic composer: they reveal as well that strength of musical building, the

³⁹ Biographical information on Eichenauer is drawn from the outstanding research in Hans-Christian Harten, Uwe Neirich, and Matthias Schwerendt, *Rassenhygiene als Erziehungsideologie des Dritten Reichs: bio-bibliographisches Handbuch* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), 260-261.

⁴⁰ Eichenauer, *Musik und Rasse* (1932), [5].

⁴¹ Eichenauer, *Musik und Rasse* (1932), 225.

growth of the manifold out of the single, and the eternal becoming—thus the traits that always again appear in truly Nordic music.⁴²

In 1938 Eichenauer published *Polyphonie—die ewige Sprache deutscher Seele: der Jugend des Dritten Reiches*. In the preface, he traced the origins of the book to a lecture Wolfgang Stumme invited him to give within the Reichsmusiktage of the Hitler Youth in Braunschweig, fall of 1936. It is unsurprising that Eichenauer was invited to speak in the context of the youth of the Third Reich (discussed further below), or that the publisher, Kallmeyer, had interest in the subject. Kallmeyer was responsible for the Hitler Jugend *Musikblätter* and *HJ Liederblätter*, and the previous year had initiated a series “Feierliche Musik,” supplying music for official party events and ceremonies.⁴³ What is surprising, however, is that Friedrich Blume published Berl’s text as the second book in his series *Schriften zur musikalischen Volks- und Rassenkunde*. (Curiously, the book listed as the first in the series, Blume’s *Das Rasseproblem in der Musik: Entwurf zu einer Methodologie musikwissenschaftlicher Rasseforschung*, appeared the following year, in 1939.) The two men wrote on similar topics, with some antipathy, at least on Blume’s part.

Eichenauer, despite his lack of training, was a good choice for Blume’s series, from a practical and political standpoint. As Pamela Potter has pointed out, many in this generation of musicologists felt frustrated by the gap between scholarship and communal, amateur folk song.⁴⁴ Eichenauer could bridge these two worlds—educated enough to theorize about race and yet functioning chiefly as an educator—with the credentials for success in the Nazi regime.

By the time of his book on polyphony, Eichenauer had a strong position politically. Immediately after the National Socialists came to power, Eichenauer produced two publications that supplied practical advice on race in discrete areas: pedagogy (German and History) and the SS. He was soon invited to join the division “Sitte und Brauchtum” in the Rasse- und Siedlungsamt, which intervened on his behalf when an incident of “undisciplined” behavior, in the fall of 1933, led the Nationalsozialistische Lehrerbund to initiate the process of expelling Eichenauer from the NSDAP. Unable to teach in Bochum as a result, Eichenauer became a SS Schulungsleiter and was promoted to Hauptschulungsleiter of the SS division 25 in 1934. The following year, Richard Walther Darré, Reich Minister of Food and Agriculture, who knew Eichenauer from their service in the war, appointed him as director of an agricultural college in Goslar, where he remained until budget cuts during in World War II led to the closure of the college. Eichenauer still continued to enjoy promotions and honors within the SS, and yet, following his internment after the war, there were insufficient state funds for him to be subjected to a denazification process.

That Eichenauer targeted his polyphony book at German youth was consistent with his earlier writings. In 1934, he published a book on race as a principle governing history and culture, subtitled “a guide for German youth”; his teacher, Hans F. K. Günther, published with the same press, B. G. Teubner, that year and may have established the contact.⁴⁵ Teubner, largely an educational and technical press, released several books on race in 1934, as well as conference proceedings for the Nationalsozialistische

⁴² Eichenauer, *Musik und Rasse* (1932), 232; Richard Eichenauer, *Musik und Rasse*, 2d rvd ed. (Munich: J. F. Lehmann, 1937), 257.

⁴³ Kerstin Reichwein, “Deutsche Musikalienverlage während des Nationalsozialismus,” *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 61 (2007): 20n7.

⁴⁴ Pamela M. Potter, “Did Himmler Really Like Gregorian Chant? The SS and Musicology,” *Modernism/Modernity* 2, no. 3 (1995): 57.

⁴⁵ Günther’s book was entitled *Die Verstädterung: ihre Gefahren für Volk und Staat vom Standpunkte der Lebensforschung und der Gesellschaftswissenschaft*.

Lehrerbund, of which Eichenauer was a member.⁴⁶ Eichenauer, not a musicologist by training or profession, did not speak at the conference on race held by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Musikwissenschaft in 1938; however, he published a brief essay on “the basics of a racial contemplation of music” for a volume commissioned by the Reichsjugendführung in 1939, in keeping with Goebbels’s 1938 edict that arts criticism be replaced by the “contemplation” (*Betrachtung*) of art. Moreover, Eichenauer was invited to publish two surveys of “racial music research” for journal associated with the Nordische Gesellschaft, to which he had longstanding ties.⁴⁷

Eichenauer again devoted a chapter to counterpoint in his 1943 *Von den Formen der Musik*, which appeared in a music education series at the same press, Kallmeyer, that had published *Polyphonie, die ewige Sprache deutscher Seele*. Despite general title, the book deals almost entirely with song forms, which is consistent with Eichenauer’s focus on communal music and farm songs in particular.⁴⁸

In 1937, Eichenauer spoke about his “research,” joining two other musicologists who worked on music and race outside the parameters of the university, at an event in Berlin, held at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musikerziehung und Kirchenmusik and sponsored by the NS German Student Union and the student branch of the NS Kulturgemeinde.⁴⁹ As his lecture was summarized by Walter Abendroth in *Deutsches Volkstum*, one of the most influential anti-Semitic periodicals going back to the Weimar Republic, polyphony is not only “the most decisive trait of Nordic music”; it also shows a productive quality: “independence of individual entities (or voices) working together to a common cause.” Most important, he implies, is that polyphony is suggestive of “the joy of pursuing one’s goal in the face of resistance and difficulties, indeed even simply a totally German will to achieve.” Abendroth dismissed the accusation of “learnedness” as coming from the South and defended polyphony as both spiritual (“precisely in its most magnificent manifestation, polyphony possesses the greatest spiritual tension, the deepest intellectual “content,” the most powerful and simultaneously the most secretive life energy”) and practical (“The active youth of today vigorously assert the primacy of polyphony in musical education.”)⁵⁰ Nevertheless, apart from church music, polyphonic writing did not in fact have a secure place in an aesthetic milieu that stressed accessibility and the Volk. The absence of counterpoint from Carl Orff’s *Carmina burana*—a remarkable achievement for a work that is largely choral—seemed beside the point for most who reported on the premiere and other early performances. (Admittedly, as Goebbels had imposed a ban on music criticism, reviewers preferred to describe rather than analyze or judge.) One who dared to point out the absence of counterpoint was Edwin von der Nüll (1905-1945). Was von der Nüll outspoken thanks to his cozy relationship to Hermann Göring, a relationship discussed at length by Furtwängler in

⁴⁶ These include, for example, Ludwig Schemann’s *Gobineau und die deutsche Kultur*; Cäsar Schäffer’s *Volk und Vererbung: eine Einführung in die Erbforschung, Familienkunde, Rassenlehre, Rassenpflege und Bevölkerungspolitik*; and Erich Thieme’s *Vererbung, Rasse, Volk*.

⁴⁷ Richard Eichenauer, “Wo steht die rassenkundliche Musikforschung? Ein Übersichtsbericht (1),” *Rasse*, 9, no. 4 (1942): 145-152; Eichenauer, “Wo steht die rassenkundliche Musikforschung?” *Rasse* 10 (1943): 108-116.

⁴⁸ Although Eichenauer had no connection to farming in his own upbringing or family, his leadership of an agricultural college undoubtedly contributed to his publications such as “Bauernlied der Gegenwart,” *Deutsche Musikkultur* 5 (1940); and “Musik im Bauerntum,” in *Musik im Volk: Gegenwartsfragen der deutschen Musik*, ed. Wolfgang Stumme (Berlin-Lichterfelde: C. F. Vieweg, 1944).

⁴⁹ The other two speakers were Fritz Metzler (whose dissertation and subsequent publications were on German and Nordic song) and Paul Treutler, a song composer and a teacher who was active in the NS Lehrerbund in Hamburg.

⁵⁰ Walter Abendroth, “Musik und Rasse,” *Deutsches Volkstum* 19, no. 4 (April 1937): 299-300; Abendroth’s article is excerpted in Joseph Wulf, *Musik im Dritten Reich: Eine Dokumentation* (1966; rpt. Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1983), pp. 353-354. See also the discussion in Painter, “Musical Aesthetics and National Socialism,” in *Music and Dictatorship in Europe and Latin America*, ed. Roberto Illiano and Massimiliano Sala, *Speculum Musicae*, general ed. Roberto Illiano (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 121-140.

the conductor's denazification proceedings? (Furtwängler was so livid after von der Nüll praised the young Karajan at his expense, in a review crucial to the latter's career, that he may have used his connections to undermine the critic and have him drafted into military service.)⁵¹ In his review of *Carmina burana*, von der Nüll observed that the music was burdened by neither counterpoint nor spiritual conflict. "Here is shown what happens to everyone."⁵² As a young man, in 1927, von der Nüll had written Bartók, apparently questioning the composer's turn away from counterpoint, prompting Bartók to reflect on stylistic changes in his music: "Why I use counterpoint less? I am tempted to answer, because it's what comes into my head. But I realize this is not an answer, so I will try to explain the circumstances."⁵³

The political valence of polyphony perhaps became more uncertain after the Reichsmusiktag in May 1938, where Goebbels's speech outlined the ten basic principles of German music. The first stressed the importance of melody, leaving no space for polyphony.⁵⁴ Some writers in turn invoked polyphony in metaphorical terms. Was Karl Laux referring ironically to counterpoint, increasingly marginalized after 1938, when he commended the Conservatorium Choral Society, as its concerts "contrapuntalize Dresden musical life in a most lively fashion" by juxtaposing canonic works with contemporary music, with the result of encouraging the younger generation to debate and learn the value of new music? Debate had its place, within the Third Reich, and Laux was on safe ground: he assured readers that the debate was factual, not cheeky; moreover, the series was directed by a Nazi loyalist, Walther Meyer-Giesow.⁵⁵ After theaters and public performances (apart from the Berlin Philharmonic) were closed in September 1944 as part of Goebbels' declaration of total war, the literary journalist Wilhelm Emanuel Süskind summarized the highlights of the previous concert season. In particular, he remembered the Munich performance of *Carmina burana* at the Deutsches Museum on February 2, 1944, and cited the powerful counterpoint formed between the choreography and the rotating wheel of fortune in the production—in effect, recalling dramatic counterpoint where there was none musically.⁵⁶

Counterpoint, in sum, became drained of its musical value, remaining largely a metaphor. Hans Sündermann, in his biography of Johann Strauss, could write of the composer's mastery in "welding two differing ideas welded together into one entity." His specific examples seem to be the juxtaposition of

⁵¹ Elizabeth Janik, *Recomposing German Music: Politics and Tradition in Cold War Berlin* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 37; Fred K. Prieberg, *Trial of Strength: Wilhelm Furtwängler and the Third Reich* (1986), trans. Christopher Dolan (London: Quartet Books, 1991), 244-254.

⁵² Edwin von der Nüll, *Dresdner Nachrichten*, 14 June 1937, clipping from the Carl Orff Zentrum, Munich. On the ideological valence of Nüll's writings, see Friedrich Geiger, "Edwin von der Nüll—ein Bartók-Forscher im NS-Staat," *Musikforschung—Faschismus—Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Isolde von Foerster, Christoph Hust, and Christoph-Hellmut Mahling (Mainz: Are, 2001), 359-369.

⁵³ The letter is quoted from von der Nüll's *Béla Bartók: Ein Beitrag zur Morphologie der neuen Musik* (Halle: Mitteldeutsche Verlags AG, 1930), 108.

⁵⁴ "Nicht das Programm und nicht die Theorie, nicht Experiment und nicht Konstruktion machen das Wesen der Musik aus. *Ihr Wesen ist die Melodie.* Die Melodie als solche erhebt die Herzen und erquickt die Gemüter; sie ist nicht deshalb kitschig oder verwerflich, weil sie ihrer Einprägsamkeit wegen vom Volke aufgenommen und im Volke gesungen wird." Goebbels's text was summarized and quoted in several newspapers, and published the following month as "Zehn Grundsätze deutschen Musikschaffens," *Amtlichen Mitteilungen der Reichsmusikkammer*, 1 June 1938; quoted from Michael Walter, "Die Melodie als solche erhebt die Herzen und erquickt die Gemüter: Musikpolitik und Oper nach 1933," *Frankfurter Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 1, no. 1 (1998): 2.

⁵⁵ Karl Laux, review of *Carmina Burana*, *Dresdner Zeitung*, 23 June 1943, clipping from Orff Zentrum. Meyer-Giesow had been involved in the Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur early on, before the National Socialists came to power. Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 15-16.

⁵⁶ W. E. Süskind, "Nachfolge des Theaters. Ein Rückblick zum Abschluß der Münchener Spielzeit," *Das Reich*, Berlin, 17 September 1944, clipping from the Orff Zentrum.

different expressive characters or moods, yet he stressed the musical dimension of the procedure, maintaining that “the heart of every true music theorist beats higher with the word ‘counterpoint.’”⁵⁷

Thus polyphony completed a remarkable trajectory over four decades: caught up in the sharply divided opinions on the value of modern music, it was claimed as a key component of Jewish music by a critic seeking to probe its special identity, then reclaimed as the major characteristic of the music of the Volk and finally dismissed as too highbrow and intellectual for the same community. In fact a half century of politicization and racial codification had rendered it vacuous, and to borrow a phrase from another context, we might speak about the banality of counterpoint.

⁵⁷ Hans Sündermann, *Johann Strauss: ein Vollender* (1937; 3d ed. Innsbruck: Innverlag, Drießlein, 1949), 18, citation from Zöe Lang [personal communication].