

## MIT Open Access Articles

### *Opera by the Book: Defining Music Theater in the Third Reich*

The MIT Faculty has made this article openly available. **Please share** how this access benefits you. Your story matters.

**Citation:** Pollock, Emily Richmond. "Opera by the Book: Defining Music Theater in the Third Reich." *The Journal of musicology* 35 (2018): 295-335 © 2018 The Author

**As Published:** <https://dx.doi.org/10.1525/JM.2018.35.3.295>

**Publisher:** University of California Press

**Persistent URL:** <https://hdl.handle.net/1721.1/125555>

**Version:** Author's final manuscript: final author's manuscript post peer review, without publisher's formatting or copy editing

**Terms of use:** Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike



## Opera by the Book: Defining Music Theater in the Third Reich

EMILY RICHMOND POLLOCK

What was “Nazi opera”? Scholars have long critiqued the most common tropes regarding the aesthetics of opera during the Third Reich—Richard Wagner around the clock, enforced militaristic kitsch, neo-Romantic bombast—and rejected the idea that the Reich’s bureaucratic efforts to control culture had as homogenizing an effect on German music as historians once thought.<sup>1</sup> These tropes, which strategically alienated “Nazi music” from the historical teleology of Classical music and our common sense of musical “quality,” further enabled other, more pernicious myths to flourish: that great music is always autonomous, not political; that “Nazi” art (debased, instrumentalized) was something obviously distinct from “German” art (great,

---

A version of this essay was first presented at the MIT Works in Progress Series and at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society in Pittsburgh (November 2013). It has benefitted from the expertise and support of many friends and colleagues, including Catherine Clark, Brigid Cohen, Gregory Dubinsky, Louis Epstein, Stephanie Frampton, Emily Frey Giansiracusa, Ellen Harris, Michael Heller, Erik Levi, David Richmond, Robin Scheffler, Anicia Timberlake, and the anonymous reviewers for this journal.

<sup>1</sup> On opera during the Third Reich, see, in the Anglophone literature, Michael H. Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era: Eight Portraits* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); idem, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Erik Levi, “Opera in the Nazi Period,” in *Theatre under the Nazis*, ed. John London (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 136–86; and idem, *Music in the Third Reich* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1994), 166–94. In German see Fred K. Prieberg, *Musik im NS-Staat* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1982); idem, *Handbuch Deutsche Musiker, 1933–1945* (Après des Zombry: self-published CD-ROM, 2004); Bogusław Drewniak, *Das Theater im NS-Staat: Szenarium deutscher Zeitgeschichte, 1933–1945* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1983); Hans-Günter Klein, “Viel Konformität und wenig Verweigerung: zur Komposition neuer Opern, 1933–1944,” in *Musik und Musikpolitik im faschistischen Deutschland*, ed. Hanns-Werner Heister and Hans-Günter Klein (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1984), 145–62; Ingo Fulfs, *Musiktheater im Nationalsozialismus* (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 1995); and Michael Walter, “Die Vermählung einer idealen Politik mit einer realen Kunst,” in *Hitler in der Oper: Deutsches Musikleben, 1919–1945* (Stuttgart: Verlag J. B. Metzler, 1995), 213–262. On cultural bureaucracy see Jost Hermand, *Culture in Dark Times: Nazi Fascism, Inner Emigration, and Exile*, trans. Victoria W. Hill (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013); Glenn R. Cuomo, ed., *National Socialist Cultural Policy* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995); and Alan E. Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993). Pamela M. Potter has comprehensively documented and critiqued the literature on music in the Nazi era. See “What is ‘Nazi Music’?,” *Musical Quarterly* 88 (2005): 428–55; “Dismantling a Dystopia: On the Historiography of Music in the Third Reich,” *Central European History* 40 (2007): 623–51; and *Art of Suppression: Confronting the Nazi Past in Histories of the Visual and Performing Arts* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2016).

timeless); and that the years 1933–45 were an incongruous aberration rather than part of a cultural continuity.<sup>2</sup> For these reasons, any scholarly project that engages with the problem of delineating a distinctly “Nazi” aesthetic for opera must acknowledge that a singular definition of “Nazi opera”—that is, a stable identifier—is both impossible and problematic.

The difficulties inherent in defining an aesthetic for opera in the Third Reich likewise confronted scholars during the Nazi era itself. Just as generations of postwar scholars have sought to document how opera after 1933 may have been changed by National Socialist artistic ideals and institutions, German scholars of the Nazi era attempted to explain what the advent of the supposed thousand-year Reich *should* mean for opera—what opera ought to be, what composers should make of it, how it could be staged—in order to carve out a place for it in an artistic landscape constructed as great, true, and monumentally German. This essay treats a volume from 1944, titled *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* (*German Opera of the Present Day*), as a singular material artifact that conveys one version of an aesthetics of opera as pursued in the era of National Socialism.<sup>3</sup> The book was created at a moment in which the artistic goals its authors articulated were as complicated as they now feel distant. The volume represents “contemporary” opera as the Third Reich came to an end, its sense of history intensified by its

---

<sup>2</sup> Potter’s *Art of Suppression* is the most recent and most exhaustive treatment of the historiography of National Socialist culture.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Niessen, ed., *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1944), henceforth *Oper der Gegenwart*. I became aware of this volume thanks to Gregory Dubinsky, who cites it in “Zillig, Winfried,” in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. In correspondence with me in 2011, Dubinsky directed me to this source. The book is accessible to scholars (WorldCat lists 55 copies, including 23 in North America; German catalogs show wide distribution as well). The volume has also occasionally been cited for its stage photographs, as in Erik Levi, “Towards an Aesthetic of Fascist Opera,” in *Fascism and Theatre: Comparative Studies on the Aesthetics and Politics of Performance in Europe, 1925–1945*, ed. Günter Berghaus (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1996), 260–76, 302, plates 15.1 and 15.2. Rebecca Grotjahn cites the book in “‘Ein Kulturgut für das ganze Volk’: Oper, Politik und politische Opern in der NS-Zeit,” in *Kontinuitäten, Diskontinuitäten: Musik und Politik in Deutschland zwischen 1920 und 1970*, ed. Anno Mungen and Heinz Geuen (Schliengen: Edition Argus, 2006), 104–22.

proximity to the pivot point where scholars once conventionally periodized German music and culture: the “Zero Hour” of 1945.<sup>4</sup>

Because of the volume’s self-important heft and pretense to encyclopedic inclusiveness, it rewards close examination as an unusually concrete, full, and wide-ranging statement on opera’s history and generic limits during the Nazi era. As a material object, it serves as a time capsule, complete with the sense of estrangement and distance from its moment of origin that such a metaphor implies. A sustained critique of the book’s ideas and of the ideology of its authors, especially the theater historian Carl Niessen, must be conducted in tension with the volume’s undeniable usefulness and the fascination it still engenders as a mediated, discursive thing. A history of this book must also account for its present-day obscurity, which owes in large part to a justifiable discomfort concerning German scholarship from the Nazi era, a discomfort that itself merits additional historical scrutiny.

For topics in the history of twentieth-century staging and design, the aesthetics of music theater, and the canonization (or lack thereof) of twentieth-century German operatic works and their composers, *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* is an indispensable primary source. It originated in 1942 as an exhibit presenting accounts of twenty living opera composers, commissioned for the opera house in Duisburg to celebrate the premiere of Werner Egk’s opera *Columbus*; the project was subsequently expanded to accommodate additional material

---

<sup>4</sup> The idea of the “Stunde Null,” which holds that culture experienced a decisive break in 1945, had great power as mythology in the postwar era, but such a caesura is discursive and must be carefully criticized. A recent collection is indispensable: Volker Scherliess, ed., “*Stunde Null*”: zur Musik um 1945: Bericht über das Symposium der Gesellschaft für Musikforschung an der Musikhochschule Lübeck 24.–27. September 2003 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2014). In literary history, see Stephen Brockmann and Frank Trommler, eds., *Revisiting Zero Hour 1945: The Emergence of Postwar German Culture* (Washington, D.C.: American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, 1996); Frank Trommler, “Der ‘Nullpunkt 1945’ und seine Verbindlichkeit für die Literaturgeschichte,” *Basis: Jahrbuch für deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur* 1 (1970): 9–25; and Heinrich Vormweg, “Deutsche Literatur 1945–1960: Keine Stunde Null,” in Manfred Durzak, ed., *Deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur: Ausgangspositionen und aktuelle Entwicklungen* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981), 14–31. Some scholars have also reappraised its usefulness; cf. Stephen Brockmann, *German Literary Culture at the Zero Hour* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004).

accumulated from inquiries the authors had made while curating the exhibition.<sup>5</sup> As promised by its title, the contents of the resulting volume focus on the history and status of operatic production in Germany “in the present day” (table 1).

TABLE 1. Contents of *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart*

Pages	Contents
1–6	Front matter
7–9	Introduction
10	Blank
11–15	“Zur Opernregie unsrer Zeit” (On Opera Direction in our Time): essay by Georg Hartmann
16–23	“Oper und Gegenwart” (Opera and the Present Day): essay by Kurt Heifer
24–86	“Der Schauplatz der Oper” (The Staging of Opera): essay by Carl Niessen
87–309	Portraits of composers, facsimiles of their handwritten notes, and black-and-white reproductions of photographs and drawings from productions
310–12	“Deutsche Opern im Ausland” (German Opera Abroad): production photographs of German operas as performed in Rome, Stockholm, and Paris
313–34	“Grundlagen der Operninszenierung” (Principles of Opera Staging): production photographs and drawings to illustrate the topics covered by Niessen’s essay “Der Schauplatz der Oper”
335–62	“Werkverzeichnis” (works catalog): comprehensive list of present-day German operas
363–66	Back matter, including advertisements for future publications

Though printed at a time of material scarcity, this is a large volume, measuring approximately 21cm x 30cm and comprising 366 pages of densely written text and finely reproduced black-and-white images, as well as nine colored plates.<sup>6</sup> The book features essays on opera direction, the present condition of opera, and the history of staging. Much of the book is dedicated to profiles of sixty-two mostly German, mostly living opera composers, a canon supplemented by a comprehensive works catalog (Werkverzeichnis). The book is illustrated with more than 250 facsimile drawings and photographs from contemporary productions. With an ambitious scope, serious purpose, and wealth of detail, it was intended to be, or at least to seem,

<sup>5</sup> Niessen, “Vorwort,” in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 8.

<sup>6</sup> Publications were rationed during the war, with shortages of both paper and binding material. Jan-Pieter Barbian, “Literary Policy in the Third Reich,” in Glenn R. Cuomo, ed., *National Socialist Cultural Policy* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 155–96.

definitive and enduring. Its lavish proportion and presentation attest to a desire to present German operatic culture as a dominant aesthetic force.

Pamela Potter has recommended that research into “Nazi music” focus on particularities in order to provide a remedy for the failed, broad generalizations with which music historians have often grappled.<sup>7</sup> To this end this essay considers the volume *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* in three distinct yet overlapping ways: as a concrete material object from the Nazi era, as a repository of historically important information, and as a manifestation of a nationalist discourse on opera in Germany from 1933 onward.

Bound and bounded, with an unsustainable pretense of permanence, the book codifies a definition of opera, identifying that which is worthy of notice and signifying as much by what it omits as by what it includes. Indeed *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* offers an artificially self-defined and self-contained example of the very processes of definition and canonization that with respect to this period have proven problematic time and time again. Several issues come to the fore: the historical validity of works from both the distant and recent past; the definition of an appropriately “German” (or Aryan) aesthetic in staging and style; and the status of Jewish composers and political adversaries. The volume’s authors attempted to answer the question of what a specifically German opera was required to be; as such they collected and enshrined a version of the operatic present that they wished to be definitive, in a manner both nationalistic and prescriptive. Through its comprehensiveness and preoccupation with original documents, the book’s authors addressed scholarly and aesthetic goals that were also explicitly political: the identification, dissemination, and preservation of operas through the documentation of stage designs; the cataloging of repertoire; the narration of history as it had progressed to the present; and the purportedly unmediated presentation of the lives and attitudes of contemporary opera

---

<sup>7</sup> See note 1 above.

composers. These projects may be characterized most productively not as a search for one “great Nazi opera” but as a convoluted path toward an operatic canon appropriate to that idea of greatness. This canon needed to accord with the cultural and political milieu of Nazi Germany and to fill in the gaps left by the haphazard narrowing of the repertoire by the bureaucracy’s inconsistent censorship. The lists and documentation in *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* may be considered a kind of status report on that process (though in historical reality it is more of a postmortem), showing what had been achieved toward these amorphous ends.

The authors’ multivalent organizational methods and emphasis on primary sources suggest the difficulty of distilling a definition and canon of “Nazi opera” in affirmative terms, a problem that still resonates today.<sup>8</sup> Although historians have long been aware of the general desiderata for Nazi-sanctioned contemporary opera (e.g., German mythological or historical topics, diatonic or folk-derived musical characteristics), the reality was more complicated and rife with compromise.<sup>9</sup> Hans-Günter Klein has noted that most statements at the time focused on what was unacceptable, only vaguely outlining positive models. Erik Levi’s account of three main objectives—“the suppression of all repertoire deemed to be unacceptable,” “the revival of material of ‘pure’ German content” from the past, and “the evolution of a new contemporary repertoire”—also suggests that repeated acts of definition, rather than implementation, were central to conceptions of what a canon of “German opera” during the Nazi era might have been.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Many scholars have reproduced repertoire lists to suggest an idea of “Nazi opera.” Cf. Klein, “Viel Konformität,” 148–52 and 159–62; Levi, “Opera in the Nazi Period,” 169–80; and Drewniak, *Theater im NS-Staat*, 328–34. See also the list of operas that were composed during the Third Reich but left unfinished or unperformed until after the war’s end. Prieberg, *Musik im NS-Staat*, 306–7.

<sup>9</sup> In practice official definitions of acceptable opera were very broad. Michael Meyer, *The Politics of Music in the Third Reich* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 309. For the status of atonal music in the period, see Erik Levi, “Atonality, 12-Tone Music and the Third Reich,” *Tempo* 178 (1991): 17–21.

<sup>10</sup> Klein, “Viel Konformität,” 146–48; and Levi, *Music in the Third Reich*, 183.

Indeed these ideas were most fully explored through discursive categorization and construction rather than “actual,” consistent realization.<sup>11</sup> For example, Potter has warned that conflicts between different administrators and bureaucracies at the time, and consequent variations in regional conditions, make attempts to tie patterns of musical activity to “ideology” fallacious; such attempts perpetuate mythologies by misleadingly assigning outsized responsibility to Adolf Hitler and an omnipotent central authority.<sup>12</sup> In a similar vein, Levi has underscored the importance of distinguishing between the “image-building” aspects of the regime’s involvement with opera (as in Bayreuth or Berlin) and the bureaucracy’s limited success in actually implementing political ideas in the development of new opera. “Whereas Nazi propaganda claimed that the regime had radically transformed the cultural climate,” Levi cautions, scholars must not take those claims at face value because “in reality there was a greater degree of continuity” and a greater degree of variation than propagandistic formulations would have admitted.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, it is mainly as a practice of definition that any ideal of “Nazi opera” may be said to exist at all. Niessen conceived *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* to suggest and concretize just such a definition of both “the present” and “opera.”

#### *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart and Its Creators in the Academic Milieu of the Third Reich*

The integration of aesthetics with nationalist politics in Niessen’s volume is consistent with other scholarship during this period, which was incentivized to interpret art music through a

---

<sup>11</sup> Recall, too, the shifting meanings of the term “Volksoper.” Joy Calico has shown that this term continued to be used even after the war in a new linguistic guise (“Nationaloper” in the GDR). Meyer, *Politics of Music*, 308; and Joy Haslam Calico, “Für eine neue deutsche Nationaloper’: Opera in the Discourses of Unification and Legitimation in the German Democratic Republic,” in *Music and German National Identity*, ed. Celia Applegate and Pamela M. Potter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 190–204, at 199–203.

<sup>12</sup> Potter, “Dismantling a Dystopia,” 632–38, 646–51.

<sup>13</sup> Levi, *Music in the Third Reich*, 176.



German nationalist lens.<sup>14</sup> In 1934 Peter Raabe, a prominent musicologist soon to become President of the *Reichsmusikkammer* (the state music bureau), laid out this program explicitly. In his essay “On the New Construction of German Musical Culture,” Raabe asserted that although it is the artistic judgment of “the Volk” that is paramount in valuing artworks, such judgment requires guidance, especially when appraising contemporary creations:

Art is not there for its own sake, but for the sake of the Volk. Should art offend the Volk, which is possible, then the opinion of the Volk must not be obscured. On the other hand, it is often necessary and useful to give the Volk instruction in the realm of the arts. Writing that can explain the nature and value of artworks and artistic activities to the public in a comprehensible form, whether in books or in journalistic essays, is not only justifiable but thoroughly welcome.<sup>15</sup>

Raabe recommends that writers work to disseminate right-thinking ideas to foster appropriate public appreciation of German artistic products and activities. (The text quoted here was itself part of this phenomenon: originating as a speech, it was later distributed in the *Zeitschrift für Musik* and collected in a volume of essays called *Die Musik im dritten Reich*.)

The publisher responsible for the *Zeitschrift für Musik* and Raabe’s essay collection, the Gustav Bosse Verlag, also printed *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart*. For Niessen’s book this was appropriate company, as his aims as author and editor matched Raabe’s goals exactly: to critique and present art, in this case contemporary opera, in an accessible, attractive manner. A theater historian, Niessen was the founder and original Dozent of the Theater Archive in Cologne; from 1929 until his retirement in 1959 he held one of the first official university chairs in Theater Studies.<sup>16</sup> He was a founder of his field, and his academic record shows that he was

---

<sup>14</sup> Pamela M. Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler’s Reich* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

<sup>15</sup> Peter Raabe, “Vom Neubau deutscher musikalischer Kultur,” *Zeitschrift für Musik* 101 (March 1934): 256–73, at 271. Collected and reprinted in idem, *Die Musik im dritten Reich: Kulturpolitische Reden und Aufsätze*, 25–67 (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1935). Originally a speech delivered to the Reichsmusikkammer on 16 February 1934.

<sup>16</sup> That is, his chair was in Theaterwissenschaft, not Germanistik.

generally productive, even ambitious, during the Third Reich.<sup>17</sup> Niessen's scholarship was strongly nationalistic; he is known as the scholar who coined the term *Thingspiel* (Thing play).<sup>18</sup> The historian Leo Haupts has described him as an enthusiastic anti-Semite, a characteristic that seems to have had both professional and personal manifestations.<sup>19</sup>

Although Niessen was not a member of the Nazi party, he did receive support from the *Reichstheaterkammer* (state theater bureau). Archival sources have shown that he had once served as a *Truppführer* (Sergeant) of the *Sturmabteilung*, also known as storm troopers or “brown shirts.”<sup>20</sup> No particular National Socialist orthodoxy should necessarily be inferred from these affiliations; on the contrary, the historian Gerwin Strobl cites a 1941 Nazi party assessment of Niessen as “displaying considerable indifference” to the cause.<sup>21</sup> Denazification proceedings classified Niessen as “minderbelastet” (less incriminated, or “Category III”), and his academic position was reinstated.<sup>22</sup> According to Haupts's reading of the documentary evidence, however, Niessen's resumption of his academic position occurred in spite of his having been, in reality, “very incriminated” (*sehr belastet*).<sup>23</sup> In this respect, Niessen's political profile was more or less par for the course: many university professors saw robust career continuity during and after the

---

<sup>17</sup> Leo Haupts, *Die Universität zu Köln im Übergang vom Nationalsozialismus zur Bundesrepublik* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2007), 221–23.

<sup>18</sup> *Thingspiel* was the genre of outdoor cultic theater briefly championed in the mid-1930s. William Niven, “The Birth of Nazi Drama? *Thing Plays*,” in John London, ed., *Theatre Under the Nazis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 54–95, at 55. Niven cites Wolfgang Kloss, “Die nationalsozialistischen Thingspiele: die Massenbasis des Faschismus 1933–1935 in seinem trivialen Theater: eine parataktische Darstellung” (Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 1981), 90. Promoting the *Thingspiel*, Niessen delivered a 1934 radio address about the “wonderful symbolic expression” represented in the genre. Carl Niessen, “Thingplätze und ihre Aufgaben,” radio address of 18 October 1934 (from the Theaterinstitut, University of Cologne), quoted in Niven, “The Birth of Nazi Drama?,” 58, who is in turn quoting Kloss, “Die nationalsozialistischen Thingspiele,” 90–91.

<sup>19</sup> Haupts, *Die Universität zu Köln*, 222. Cf. Richard Weber, “Carl Niessen,” in *Neue Deutsche Biographie XIX* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1999), 241–43, at 242.

<sup>20</sup> Weber, “Carl Niessen”; and Gerd Simon, “Chronologie Niessen, Carl (alias Karl Nießen),” *Quellen und Literatur aus dem GIFT-Archiv zum Thema, “Wer und was ist warum und auf wessen Kosten deutsch?”*, University of Tübingen, 2005, <http://homepages.uni-tuebingen.de/gerd.simon/ChrNiessen.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> Gerwin Strobl, *The Swastika and the Stage: German Theatre and Society, 1933–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press: 2008), 255 n123. Here Strobl cites the original source from the Bundesarchiv Berlin: “Politische Beurteilung Prof. Carl Niessen,” 6 January 1941 (R55/127, 194).

<sup>22</sup> Haupts, *Die Universität zu Köln*, 197–98, 221–23.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

Nazi era, notwithstanding records of nationalistic writings. The Allies' "Category III" classification was often at best a gray area—a refuge of implausible deniability.<sup>24</sup>

Niessen's scholarship was ambitious and wide-ranging. In fact, *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* was only the first of a planned series of volumes to be edited by Niessen that would include entries on topics as varied as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Faust, open-air theater (e.g., the *Thingspiel*), design, and (as a parallel to the work under discussion here) *Das deutsche Drama der Gegenwart*.<sup>25</sup> These projects aimed to bolster and concretize an understanding of specifically German topics in theater scholarship and show the persistence of research on the greatness of German art, even in wartime. None of these other large-scale nationalist works materialized as planned, leaving *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* as a kind of "orphan" in the planned series. Niessen did, however, write many other works on German theater history and its figures after 1945. In particular, the multi-volume *Handbuch der Theater-Wissenschaft*, published between 1949 and 1958, suggests some scholarly continuity with the proposed series cited above.<sup>26</sup> It is therefore important to acknowledge that aspects of Niessen's political orientation and personal biography may have had significant continuities with his postwar contributions to theater studies.

The politics surrounding *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* are also inflected by the orientation of the book's publisher. The Gustav Bosse Verlag was a nationalist imprint that controlled the *Zeitschrift für Musik* from 1929 to 1943. Gustav Bosse, the publisher's founder, was a Nazi party member, the leader of the *Kunstring* (artistic circle) of the National Socialist

---

<sup>24</sup> See David Monod, *Settling Scores: German Music, Denazification, and the Americans, 1945–1953* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Potter, *Most German of the Arts*; Levi, *Music in the Third Reich*, 220–27; and A. Dirk Moses, *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>25</sup> *Oper der Gegenwart*, back matter.

<sup>26</sup> *Handbuch der Theater-Wissenschaft* (Emsdetten: Verlag Lechte, 1949–58). This "Handbuch" series was itself apparently projected to consist of ten volumes in total. Each of the three extant volumes is around 600 pages; if the proposed volumes had been similar in scope, covering subject matter similar to the prospectus on the back of *Oper der Gegenwart*, it would have been a similarly massive and encyclopedic undertaking.

organization “Kraft durch Freude” (Strength through Joy), and a business opportunist (he had tried to appropriate the publisher C.F. Peters during the Aryanization of music publishing).<sup>27</sup>

Niessen lauded Bosse for his nationalist efforts, praising him for leading the *Zeitschrift für Musik* with “so much love and healthy German cultural politics.”<sup>28</sup> Bosse’s death in March 1943 was soberly mourned by many, including in explicitly nationalistic terms: the music critic Erich Valentin wrote in *Musik im Kriege* that Bosse’s “takeover in 1929 of Schumann’s *Zeitschrift für Musik* signaled that the goal of the journal in its historical sense was made manifest, a ‘spiritual renewal of German music,’ a goal that Gustav Bosse served up to his last breath.”<sup>29</sup> Considering the seriousness of commitment implied by that phrasing, it is a notable coincidence that the dedication page of *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart*, which also honors Bosse, praises the publisher in strikingly similar language for his “fond support of this book up to his last breath.”<sup>30</sup>

An advertisement listing music books from Bosse Verlag in the back matter of *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* promotes several works by Raabe, among other writers (fig. 1), confirming a close association between this publishing house and the head of the Reichsmusikkammer.<sup>31</sup> The list—Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Weber, Schumann, Liszt, and Bruckner—implies a canon of properly “German” masters. As Potter has shown, much of the

---

<sup>27</sup> Bosse was a NSDAP member from 1 May 1933. Prieberg, *Handbuch Deutsche Musiker, 1933–1945*, 662–65. Prieberg also provides evidence of Bosse’s politicized publishing activities. Kater refers to him simply as the “Nazi music publisher Gustav Bosse” in *The Twisted Muse*, 121. See also Sophie Fetthauer, *Musikverlage im “Dritten Reich” und im Exil* (Hamburg: Von Bockel Verlag, 2004), 175–78.

<sup>28</sup> *Oper der Gegenwart*, 335.

<sup>29</sup> Erich Valentin, “Obituary: Gustav Bosse,” *Musik im Kriege* 2 (1944): 232–33. The subtitle of *Zeitschrift für Musik*, “for the spiritual renewal of German music,” though more acutely politicized during Bosse’s tenure, dates to the 1920s. For Valentin, who praised German culture for representing “the unity of art and politics, of music, and the people [Volk],” German cultural greatness was based in a spiritual and artistic purity that he saw Bosse upholding. Erich Valentin, “Musik und Volk,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, Vienna edition, no. 171, 4 September 1938. Quoted in Prieberg, *Musik im NS-Staat*, 260.

<sup>30</sup> *Oper der Gegenwart*, 5.

<sup>31</sup> Potter refers to Raabe as one of the “early apologists for the new order and its policies” in *Most German of the Arts*, 51. Kater also discussed Raabe in *The Twisted Muse*, 20–22 and elsewhere. The most extensive account of Raabe’s biography and career is Nina Okrassa, *Peter Raabe: Dirigent, Musikschriststeller und Präsident der Reichsmusikkammer (1872–1945)* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2004).

purportedly scholarly work on music in this era was laced with nationalistic and racist ideas.<sup>32</sup>

Scholars with nationalist motivations worked zealously to define what was best for (and what qualified as) German music.<sup>33</sup>

FIGURE 1. Back-matter advertisement for other Bosse-Verlag publications

## Wege zu den Meistern

Band 2: Erich Valentin, Wege zu Mozart

Band 3: Wege zu Beethoven (Wiemann)

Band 4: Karla Höcker, Wege zu Schubert

Band 11: Peter Raabe, Wege zu Weber

Band 12: Erich Valentin, Wege zu Schumann

Band 13: Peter Raabe, Wege zu Liszt

Band 18: Peter Raabe, Wege zu Bruckner

Jeder Band 3 Mk.

This effort had many targets. Levi has documented the “Germanization” and Aryanization of Mozart; Bogusław Drewniak has detailed the institutional support for nationalistic research into opera, such as the investigation into Wagner’s racial heritage and the celebration (through scholarship) of Richard Strauss and Hans Pfitzner.<sup>34</sup> There were also attempts to rewrite or replace certain canonical works; for example, new translations into German were commissioned for Lorenzo Da Ponte’s librettos, because the standard translations were by a Jewish writer, Hermann Levi.<sup>35</sup> Such activities—research and publication, not to

<sup>32</sup> Potter, *Most German of the Arts*; and David B. Dennis, *Inhumanities: Nazi Interpretations of Western Culture* (Cambridge University Press: 2012), 198–217, 269–85.

<sup>33</sup> Potter, *Most German of the Arts*, 200–234.

<sup>34</sup> Erik Levi, *Mozart and the Nazis: How the Third Reich Abused a Cultural Icon* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); and Drewniak, in *Theater im NS-Staat*, 283–301.

<sup>35</sup> Drewniak, *ibid.*, 283.

mention celebration and subsidy—were integral to the process by which certain music was canonized as “German.”

*Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* is part of this compromised system of academic work and publication. The book engages in the same scholarly activities—codification, canonization, and the nationalistic telling of history—that characterized, almost self-evidently, the work of German humanistic inquiry before, during, and after the Third Reich. Potter has argued that many aspects of so-called “Nazi musicology” had deep roots in the conservative university environment of the Weimar period (e.g., nationalism, monumentality, attention to folk music, and a backlash against modernism), and that after the war the publications, institutions, and preoccupations that had characterized scholarship during the Third Reich persisted in German musicology. “Nazi scholarship” must therefore not be separated from its chronological and biographical continuities.<sup>36</sup> Despite the rhetorical force of “Zero Hour” and denazification, only the most obvious cues were eradicated—anti-Semitic designations in dictionaries, for example, and an overt obsession with race—and only a handful of figures in the humanities suffered serious consequences.<sup>37</sup> When it comes to German scholarship of this era, the notion of ideological “contamination” is therefore fraught with contradictions. To label such scholarship “Nazi” and confine it to obscurity is to let the German academic legacy off too easily.

### *Canons of the Present and Past*

Amid the political, biographical, and scholarly context described thus far, Niessen’s *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* defines opera through a process of canonization. For scholars at the time, no issue was more significant or persistent than the practice of defining what counted as

---

<sup>36</sup> Potter, *Most German of the Arts*, xv–xvi.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 235–65.

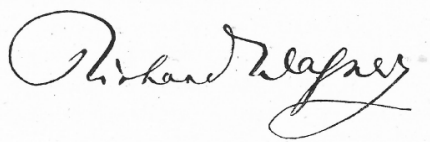
“German.” In its representation of the state of the art, the book presents an ideologically slanted timeline for (and narrative about) contemporary opera. The volume catalogs and documents, with a pretense to objectivity and self-evidence; it erects boundaries that curate the present, predict the future, and account for the past. Curating the present the book is nationalistic in purpose and tone, beginning with Niessen’s opening assertion that “no opera in the world can compete with German opera in the present day.”<sup>38</sup> Predicting the future, Kurt Heifer ends an essay by quoting the young Egk:

We see that the new path is already trodden, and we hope that struggling and wrestling for the new music to correspond to this German present may not be so terribly difficult for us young people. Though it may not always be so easy for some to follow the new objectives, it is the music for us to make, and we must do so by recapturing and persuasively reshaping basic musical elements.<sup>39</sup>

Accounting for the past, Niessen’s histories suggest a teleology leading to the Nazi era, and the book’s epigraph nods back to Wagner (fig. 2): “Kinder, macht Neues—Neues—und abermals Neues!” (Children, make it new, new, and once again, new!).

FIGURE 2. Epigraph “signed” by Richard Wagner

„Kinder, macht Neues, — Neues, — und abermals Neues!“



And who are Wagner’s “children”? The opera composers of Germany’s present and purported future, or so the book primes its audience to interpret: the composers contained and cataloged, genealogically and lovingly, in this very volume.

*Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* establishes its version of the operatic canon with a theme of conservation and continuity that runs parallel to a more dominant focus on new

<sup>38</sup> Niessen, “Vorwort,” in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 7.

<sup>39</sup> Kurt Heifer, “Oper und Gegenwart,” in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 23.

developments, contingency, and instability. The volume's multifaceted organization results in multiple angles adding up to an account of "opera of the present day." The book's contents suggest a series of filters on the genre, each focused on different values and narratives. For example, the list of sixty-two profiled composers certainly represents the primary canon, but it is also a revealing subset of a second, more inclusive canon presented through the works catalog.<sup>40</sup> Other groupings emerge, such as a canon of composers singled out for particular visual emphasis (e.g., pages in color or more numerous stage pictures), a canon of stage directors and designers (as treated in Niessen's prose history of staging), a canon of negative examples (as singled out for critique), and a historical musical canon (e.g., emphasizing Mozart or Wagner). The subsections that follow demonstrate how each of the book's conceptual and material divisions creates a distinct filter on an imaginary, comprehensive list of composers and pieces.

### *1. The Composer Profiles and the Works List*

The volume's most obvious canon is its series of profiles of contemporary German opera composers, which accounts for fully two-thirds of the volume's pages (table 2). The composer profiles not only richly represent the visual presence of these composers as part of the artistic life of the Third Reich, but also construct the importance of this set of composers as a group. The book devotes space to their aesthetic musings and planned projects, treating them as living legends. Their portraits and signatures are reproduced in fine-grained facsimile, and their artistic statements, autobiographies, and so on are included in unedited form in the composers' original handwriting, a format that trades on the familiar mystique of unedited autograph manuscripts. Most of the written profiles fit on a single page. Approaches varied within assumed parameters:

---

<sup>40</sup> Compare the list of composers in table 2 to the list in Niessen's works catalog in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 335–62. In the table, some names have been supplied with diacritics missing in Niessen.



some composers wrote detailed narratives of their lives, some gave bullet-point chronologies, and others included artistic ideas.

TABLE 2. Composers profiled (\* indicates those who premiered other operas after 1945)

Boris Blacher*	Hugo Herrmann	Hans Pfitzner	Kurt Striegler*
Eugen Bodart*	Ludwig Hess	Carl Friedrich Pistor	Heinrich Sutermeister*
Fritz von Borries	Paul Höffer	Josef Reiter	Herbert Trantow
Hans Brehme*	Leo Justinus Kauffmann	Hermann Reutter*	Hermann Unger
Cesar Bresgen*	Wilhelm Kempff	Emil von Reznicek	Theodor Veidl
Erwin Dressel*	Robert Alfred Kirchner	Ernst Richter	Georg Vollerthun
Werner Egk*	Paul von Klenau	Ludwig Roselius	Rudolf Wagner-Régeny*
Ottmar Gerster*	Friedrich Klose	Ernst Schliepe	Fried Walter*
Kurt Gillmann	Gustav Kneip	Clemens Schmalstich	Julius Weismann
Paul Graener	Hans Ludwig Kormann	Othmar Schoeck	Franz Wödl
Hans Grimm	Arthur Kusterer	Norbert Schultze*	Bodo Wolf*
Arthur Grüber*	Mark Lothar*	Erich Sehlbach	Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari
Joseph Haas	Ludwig Maurick	Marc-André Souchay	Hermann Zilcher
Robert Heger*	Ernst Meyer-Olbersleben	Leo Spies	Winfried Zillig*
Albert Henneberg*	Carl Orff*	Hans Stieber	
Hermann Henrich*	Wilhelm Petersen	Richard Strauss	

Most profiles are biographical, beginning with a date and place of birth, parental occupations, and schooling, then listing positions and major works. Artistic statements are also relatively common, as in Paul von Klenau's musings on opera and the techniques of modern music ("What opera means to me is: sung drama," etc.).<sup>41</sup> The typical composition and layout of these profiles can be grasped through a reproduction of Cesar Bresgen's profile, which includes a headshot and signature, pictures from a production of his opera *Dornröschen*, and a single-page, handwritten notice reproduced in facsimile (fig. 3). The length of these texts varies. Carl Orff's was by far the shortest submission, stating only: "Carl Orff, born 1895 in Munich, lives in the same place" (fig. 4).<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Niessen, *Oper Oper der Gegenwart*, 159.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

FIGURE 3. Full profile of Cesar Bresgen

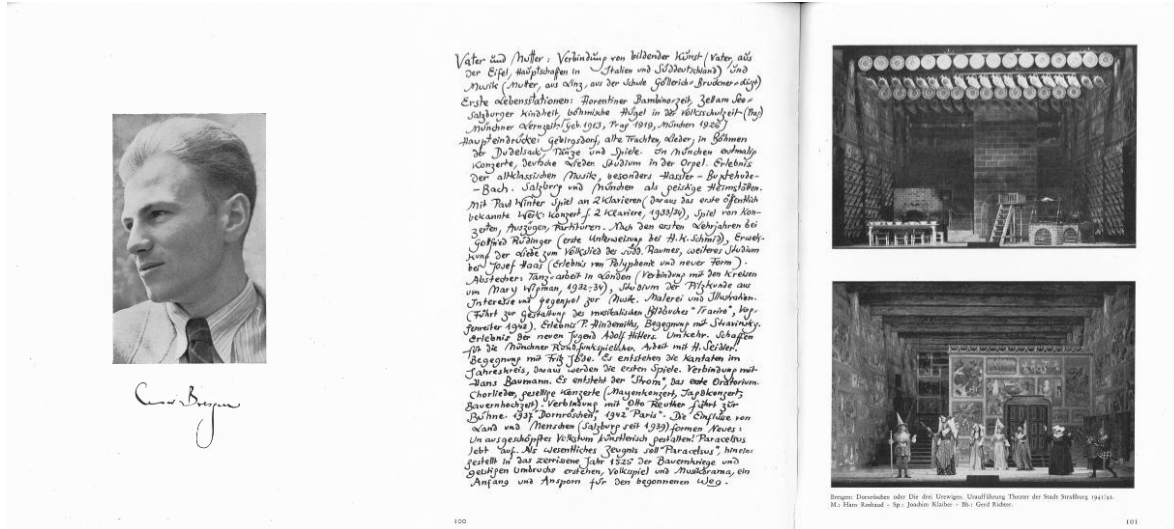
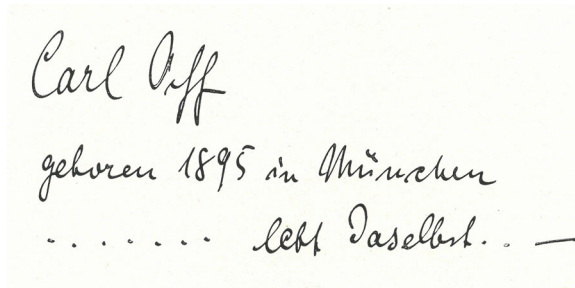


FIGURE 4. Carl Orff's laconic entry



Niessen’s commitment to reproducing the documents he received in their full, unmediated form is one of the book’s most interesting features. Such unusually “personal” touches, including the autographs, connect the profiles back to the aura around composer handwriting first evidenced by the “signed” epigraph from Wagner that opens the volume (fig. 2). This fetishistic treatment of original handwriting is further exemplified by the entry for Strauss, who presumably could have deigned to supply a biographical note but is instead represented only by an autograph page from *Der Rosenkavalier* (his fraught relationship with the Reichsmusikkammer could account for this absence). This entry might be read as evidence that, for Niessen, it would have been an obvious violation of the contemporary canon to omit Strauss

even if he had not technically participated; the manuscript score stands in for the intimacy of the written word.<sup>43</sup>

The choice and presentation of just sixty-two composers is misleadingly justified as an objective necessity. Niessen explains in his introduction that limiting the works to “the previous decade, that is, since 1933” merely helped to narrow down an “overabundance” of composers; a preference was shown for works that had made some “contribution” to German theater culture.<sup>44</sup> Operetta and musical “bubblegum” are explicitly excluded.<sup>45</sup> Although choices still had to be made about whom to include, Niessen wrote, these reflect less a determination of value, of which “only opera history can speak,” and more the objective (but not encyclopedic) function of a works catalog expanded by pictures.<sup>46</sup> To further its “usability” as a catalog, the sixty-two composers are listed alphabetically rather than by generations, as Niessen had originally planned.<sup>47</sup> All of these explanatory statements evince a wish to appear objective and scholarly, as if no “slant” were placed on the volume’s canon. Nevertheless, and despite Niessen’s claim that “only opera history” could decide the works’ true worth, it is clear that the composers who made the cut *were* considered significant by virtue of their inclusion.

Significant gaps emerge. By no means was every living composer of opera considered worthy of a profile. Taking Levi’s list of German opera premieres in 1933–44 as a reference, only about 45% of the composers who premiered operas during this period were profiled in

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 245. For practical reasons, Friedrich Klose, who died in 1942, also lacked a biography and is similarly represented by a page of score notation from his opera *Ilsebill* (1903). This is somewhat early to be represented as “contemporary” opera, but production designs from the “correct” time period were available thanks to a recent staging (Karlsruhe, 1942). Ibid., 162.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., “Vorwort,” 8.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Niessen's book—though most composers of multiple operas are represented.<sup>48</sup> Only ten composers appear in Niessen's book without having had a premiere within Levi's timeline, meaning that the authors really did define "contemporary composers" mainly as composers who were writing operas for current premieres.<sup>49</sup> One finds considerable agreement between Niessen's "present-day" canon and the composers discussed in Drewniak's 1983 monograph *Das Theater im NS-Staat*.<sup>50</sup> But mismatches between the two lists—Niessen's profiles compared with Drewniak's survey, nearly forty years later—clarify the gaps in Niessen's coverage (and their possible aesthetic and/or racist rationales). For instance, according to Drewniak, the composer Heinrich Kaminski was considered "not Aryan," which accounts for his absence in Niessen's profiles, whereas Hans Ebert and Richard Mohaupt, also neglected by Niessen, were married to Jewish women.<sup>51</sup> Although these simple omissions are less overtly racist than the explicit negative judgments rendered elsewhere in the volume, they are still a manifestation of Niessen's anti-Semitic orientation.

Expanding the focus to consider the gaps in Niessen's more comprehensive works catalog, many composers that scholars today associate with German opera in the Weimar Period are conspicuously absent: these musicians evidently represented a recent past that had been rendered anathema. Arnold Schoenberg, Ernst Krenek, Franz Schreker, Walter Braunfels, and Kurt Weill are all excluded. Some of these omissions were aesthetic, some racial, some a

---

<sup>48</sup> Only three composers who (according to Levi's list) premiered more than one opera were left out of Niessen's profiles. If one further considers the composers in Niessen's works catalog, then 97% of the composers Levi lists are represented with two or more premieres.

<sup>49</sup> Levi, "Opera in the Nazi Period," 169–80. Most of those who appear in Niessen's profiles but not on Levi's list were older composers (e.g., Klose, Pfiztner, Reiter, Reznicek, Unger, Veidl, and Zilcher).

<sup>50</sup> Drewniak, *Theater im NS-Staat*, 301–16. Several composers Drewniak discussed had not actually premiered an opera by 1944, even if they had been commissioned; this is presumably why they were not profiled by Niessen, who prioritized composers for whom production photographs were available. These composers were nonetheless included in Niessen's works catalog (Josef Messner, Robert Keldorfer, Hans Bullerian, and Matthias Josef Weiss).

<sup>51</sup> Drewniak, *Theater im NS-Staat*, 301–16. These composers are included in the works catalog but are not profiled in the body of *Oper der Gegenwart*.

combination of both. Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* does not appear in the works catalog, but his unfinished *Lulu* does, with *Lulu* explicitly described as having been "limited to isolated performances abroad since the Umbruch [i.e., 1933]" owing to Berg's "atonality" (strangely, this is the only such editorial note in the works catalog).<sup>52</sup> This example reveals how the expurgation of a certain version of the recent past in a book about "opera of the present day" emerges as one of the book's major programmatic functions. In addition, composers known to be Jewish are nowhere to be found in the works catalog, whereas Jewish librettists are, by convention, designated as such (e.g., Stefan Zweig for Strauss's *Die schweigsame Frau*).<sup>53</sup> These interlocking judgments of inclusion and exclusion indicate that certain works simply do not belong to "German opera of the present day," which begins not coincidentally in 1933; some composers once (and now) considered indispensable were here strategically ignored.

On the other side of the coin, many operas and composers that *are* included in Niessen's volume are now forgotten, corroborating Prieberg and Walter's research showing that of some 164 operas premiered during the Third Reich, few had any life onstage after 1945.<sup>54</sup> Any contemporary canon of contemporary opera is necessarily contingent; figures lionized at one moment will often seem less significant with the passage of time. Still, for Niessen's canon this is more true than ever. The majority of the sixty-two composers profiled are absent from the *New Grove*, and only just over half are listed in either edition of *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*<sup>55</sup>—even though these composers collectively premiered at least an additional forty-seven operas after 1945. (At least five of these were composed primarily during the war.) Many

---

<sup>52</sup> Niessen, "Werkverzeichnis," in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 337.

<sup>53</sup> Alexander von Zemlinsky has an entry in the works catalog (not marked by a J), but only his *Kreidekreis* is listed, and not the Weimar-era works.

<sup>54</sup> Walter, *Hitler in der Oper*, 214, citing and interpreting Prieberg, *Musik im NS-Staat*, 307.

<sup>55</sup> Thirty-three of the sixty-two composers have entries in each edition of *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (MGG), though there are eight discrepancies as to which thirty-three are covered: Erwin Dressel, Hermann Unger, Josef Reiter, and Kurt Striegler are in the second edition but not the first, whereas Hans Brehme, Leo Spies, Norbert Schultze, and Robert Heger are in the first edition but not the second.

of Niessen's composers transitioned to careers as performers, conductors, and teachers: forgotten, perhaps, but hardly gone.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, a few (such as Egk, Orff, and Boris Blacher) gained exceptional influence during the postwar era, taking on important institutional roles and meriting prominent premieres. Others may owe their postwar obscurity to the discursive barrier erected by the mythologized "Zero Hour" of 1945, and to the discomfort, in certain postwar musicological and contemporary music communities, with acknowledging the continuities between the Third Reich and the postwar period. An intentional preference for composers seen to have less baggage meant that modern music after the war, like mainstream music history now, no longer considered these figures as important as Niessen evidently had.

## 2. *The Staging Pictures*

For historians of opera the book's overall visual extravagance is one of its most valuable aspects. Niessen's volume provides visual evidence of productions that are unavailable in other secondary sources on German opera staging. Production images are reproduced from either stage designs or photographs, providing a rich cross-section of design practice from 1933 onward for everything from fairy-tale operas to Classical tragedy and modern-day drama. As Niessen worked from a theatrical perspective, his reflections on the state of opera after 1933 focused on principles of design and staging, which the pictures served to exemplify:

The change [Umbruch] of 1933 transformed staging astonishingly quickly. From that point on, a historical sense awoke and brought to the stage an increase in objectivity [Gegenständlichkeit]. The desire for a new factuality [Tatsächlichkeit] brought on the advent of scenic realism.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> This figure was compiled with reference to the *New Grove*, MGG, Fred K. Prieberg's database *Handbuch Deutsche Musiker*, and Stanford University's online resource <http://operadata.stanford.edu/>. Musicals, revues, radio operas, children's operas, incidental music, ballets, theater music, and other genres are not included. Only Franz Wödl proved impossible to trace in any source. The five operas that had been composed during the war but premiered afterwards are Heger's *Lady Hamilton*, Zillig's *Troilus und Cressida*, Orff's *Antigone*, Egk's *Circe*, and Blacher's *Romeo und Julia*.

<sup>57</sup> Niessen, "Der Schauplatz der Oper," in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 82.

The visual representation of composers through stage designs for their works is also a distinct filter through which the book's overall canon of composers is interpreted. The number of pictures in a given profile may roughly correlate to status, implying a more elite sub-canon within the larger list. Many composers are represented by just two pictures, but significantly more pictures are included for composers of particular importance: Strauss (allotted ten pictures for his profile, plus one elsewhere in color), Pfitzner (eight plus two in color), Egk and Heinrich Sutermeister (each with eight plus one in color), and Rudolf Wagner-Regeny and Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari (eight apiece).

Color reproduction is rare. The composers whose production photos are reproduced in color constitute an elite group (table 3). This allocation of space and full-color attention indicates that these are “show pieces,” treated with the greatest fidelity, expense, and care.

TABLE 3. Color plates in *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart*

1. Hans Pfitzner's *Palestrina*, Breslau, 1933 (premiered in Munich, 1917)
2. Erich Sehlbach's *Signor Caraffa*, Duisburg, 1937/38 (premiere)
3. Pfitzner's *Palestrina*, Breslau, 1933 (premiered in Munich, 1917)
4. Carl Orff's *Die Kluge*, Frankfurt, 1942/43 (premiere)
5. Hermann Reutter's *Odysseus*, Frankfurt, 1942/43 (premiere)
6. Richard Strauss's *Die ägyptische Helena*, Munich, 1939/40 (premiered in Dresden, 1928)
7. Werner Egk's *Peer Gynt*, Berlin, 1938/39 (premiere)
8. Heinrich Sutermeister's *Die Zauberinsel*, Dresden, 1942/43 (premiere)
9. Paul von Klenau's *Die Königin*, Berlin, 1940 (premiere)

Indeed this list of colored plates becomes a hall of fame of sorts. The pride of place given to Strauss, Pfitzner, Orff, and Egk is consistent with the historiographical truism that these are the most famous musical success stories of the era.<sup>58</sup> But composers on this list who are less remembered today also saw significant career success during the Third Reich. Von Klenau and

---

<sup>58</sup> n.b. These composers are the subject of four of Kater's “eight portraits” in idem, *Composers of the Nazi Era*, the other four being Hindemith, Weill, Hartmann, and Schoenberg, all of whom not coincidentally enjoy significantly more positive postwar historiographical status than the composers listed in table 3. For a critique of the focus on biographical guilt in treatments of music in the Nazi period, see Potter, “What is ‘Nazi Music’?,” 430–33.

Erich Sehlbach, for example, each premiered three operas in the short interval between 1933 and 1939, and Sutermeister's *Romeo und Julia* and *Die Zauberinsel* were given prestigious premieres in Dresden. Hermann Reutter's masterpiece was considered to be *Doktor Johannes Faust*; it was declared exemplary by the Nazi cultural officer Hans Hinkel and performed in twenty-two different opera houses between 1936 and 1944.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, Niessen reproduced two different images from a 1933 production of Pfitzner's *Palestrina*, the conservative "artist opera" from 1917.<sup>60</sup> The recent production date allowed a canonical work from the past to be incorporated into a canon of the opera "of the present," keeping the timeline of the book neatly within the politically strategic range 1933–1944 while still acknowledging an important older model.

Color was used mainly to document works composed during the previous eleven years—a narrow conception of what counts as contemporary. As we have seen, the only exceptions were the renowned elder masters Pfitzner and Strauss.<sup>61</sup> This pattern is generalizable: from the dates of the black-and-white production images printed with the composers' portraits, it emerges that the book's operatic canon as a whole is built almost entirely out of productions from 1933 to 1944 (even for works that had premiered in previous decades). Such chronological boundaries

---

<sup>59</sup> Levi, "Opera in the Nazi Period," 169–80; Prieberg, *Musik im NS-Staat*, 278; and Prieberg, *Handbuch Deutsche Musiker*, 5720. Reutter's music was the subject of a controversy surrounding plans for a production of *Doktor Johannes Faust* for the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein in 1936; see Levi, *Music in the Third Reich*, 93.

<sup>60</sup> Claire Taylor-Jay, *The Artist-Operas of Pfitzner, Krenek and Hindemith: Politics and the Ideology of the Artist* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004); Michael H. Kater, "Culture, Society, and Politics in the Cosmos of 'Hans Pfitzner the German,'" in *Music and German National Identity*, ed. Celia Applegate and Pamela M. Potter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 178–89; John Bokina, "The Aesthetic Politics of the German Artist-Opera: Pfitzner's *Palestrina*, Hindemith's *Mathis*, and Schoenberg's *Moses*," in *Opera and Politics: from Monteverdi to Henze* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 128–66; Leon Botstein, "Pfitzner and Musical Politics," *Musical Quarterly* 85 (2001): 63–75; and Karen Painter, "Symphonic Ambitions, Operatic Redemption: *Mathis der Maler* and *Palestrina* in the Third Reich," *Musical Quarterly* 85 (2001): 117–66.

<sup>61</sup> All of the productions but Pfitzner's (*Palestrina*) and Strauss's (*Die ägyptische Helena*) were premieres. The representation of later productions allows these two composers to be "grandfathered in" to the book's preferred aesthetic order while still maintaining a relatively tight definition of "the present day." On Strauss, see Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse*, 203–21; Bryan Gilliam, "'Friese im Innern': Strauss's Public and Private Worlds in the Mid 1930s," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57 (2004): 565–98; and Pamela M. Potter, "Strauss and the National Socialists: The Debate and Its Relevance," in *Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer and His Work*, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 93–114.



seem to insist that an entirely different “present”—indeed, a different canon—had been in effect before the all-important date of 1933.

### 3. *The Prose Essays*

The scholarly essays in *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* articulate a nationalistic relationship between the present and the past and between the German present and that of other countries. Niessen and the authors of the volume’s other essays repeatedly justify their focus on repertoire from 1933 to 1944 with reference to an idea of artistic dominance. The book itself aims to reinforce this same dominance: “This book proves that German opera has sought new paths, despite its substructure of abundant older and more recent pasts.”<sup>62</sup> This dominance is bolstered by references to the cultural priorities of the Third Reich and justified through quotations from Hitler.<sup>63</sup> The “new” opera is said to be particularly good for staging, with creative directors using these works to break false conventions from the past, in what Georg Hartmann calls a “new artistic epoch destined for our theater, for our German art.”<sup>64</sup> The new opera is further characterized by its cleanliness (“Sauberkeit”) and connection to the people (“Volksverbundenheit”); the power of these new productions comes from the force (“Gewalt”) of the music, put onto the stage.<sup>65</sup> All of this rhetoric is political, using propagandistic keywords to strengthen this canon’s claims to have broken with an unclean past.

Aesthetic generalizations about opera in the Third Reich provide a strong sense of Niessen’s concept of an appropriate “contemporary” aesthetic.<sup>66</sup> Niessen describes the newest

---

<sup>62</sup> Niessen, “Vorwort,” in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 7.

<sup>63</sup> Georg Hartmann, “Zur Opernregie unsrer Zeit,” in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 11.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 12, as part of a discussion on 11–13..

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>66</sup> The essays may be compared with F. C. Lange, “Zur Oper der Gegenwart,” *Jahrbuch der deutschen Musik* 1 (1943): 90–91, and Hermann Killer, “Gestaltungsfragen der zeitgenössischen Oper,” *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* 14 (1943): 208–19, quoted respectively in Walter, *Hitler in der Oper*, 242–44, 257–60. Levi has noted

offerings as synthesizing naturalism with the symbolism of light; he also emphasizes a renewal of the Classical and the historic (especially the medieval).<sup>67</sup> Examples of new forms of opera that are explicitly said to be enabled by National Socialism include Orff's back-to-basics approach, fairy-tale opera, which comes closest to the ideal of *Volksoper*, and a renewed interest in the chorus (as the voice of the people) and song.<sup>68</sup> New creations, said to arise in the face of wartime destruction ("Zerstörung"), are among the most "impressive evidence of the inextinguishable cultural will [Kulturwillen] that lives on in German theater, and that bore unforgettable witness to a quiet heroism [Heldentum] even at the most extreme escalation of the war."<sup>69</sup>

This historically self-conscious, heroic narrative for German culture finds a discursive parallel in how Niessen describes the book. Citing the Allied attack that destroyed much of the material on which the book was based (everything "went up in flames"), the material was a victim ("Opfer") of bombing and the book was part of the cultural "Passion" of the war.<sup>70</sup> The exhibition was also stalled, as Niessen recounts: "We had just prepared for publication the beautiful exhibition material entrusted to us with such exemplary cooperation by composers, theater management, stage designers, and publishers, when about thirty British firebombs destroyed our great Opera House."<sup>71</sup> Niessen's account of the book's creation grants it a mythological cast, as if the volume and its canon of great artworks had been forged by fire and strengthened by adversity, its eventual publication evidence of tenacity in the face of destruction. Its very existence in material form is portrayed as a testament to wartime heroism.

---

that in 1934 Fritz Stege suggested a plan by which ten percent of operas performed in German opera houses should be by living German composers. Fritz Stege, "Zum deutschen Opernspielplan," *Zeitschrift für Musik* 101 (1934): 1267–69, cited in Levi, "Opera in the Nazi Period," 140.

<sup>67</sup> Niessen, "Schauplatz der Oper," in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 83–86.

<sup>68</sup> In *Oper der Gegenwart* see respectively Heifer, "Oper und Gegenwart," 19–22; and Niessen, "Schauplatz der Oper," 85–86.

<sup>69</sup> Niessen, "Schauplatz der Oper," 85, in *Oper der Gegenwart*.

<sup>70</sup> Niessen, preface to "Werkverzeichnis," in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 335.

<sup>71</sup> Niessen, "Vorwort," in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 8.

Such political urgency (and destruction) helps explain why the written portions of *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* are overwhelmingly concerned with defining and defending the worth of present-day German opera within a longer timeline. The essays include several explicit assertions of German superiority and critiques of other national approaches.<sup>72</sup> The English and Americans “cannot be counted” among the “musically gifted peoples,” the French are said to have kept going with the “old odds-and-ends of illusion,” and British staging, with the exception of Edward Gordon Craig, is stuck in the past.<sup>73</sup> Such assertions of superiority in staging practice are presented as valid even considering the variety of approaches at different houses and festivals (Niessen approves heartily of German festival opera) and the persistence even in Germany of older styles for certain types of works, with their postcard-realistic landscape scenery and conventional acting styles.<sup>74</sup>

Such a German-slanted view of what merited attention also comes across, at times, as surprisingly anti-Italian. Verdi is ignored almost entirely, and Puccini and the whole practice of “verismo” are critiqued in favor of more abstract and symbolic approaches.<sup>75</sup> One of the first critical statements in Niessen’s staging essay, furthermore, blames the genre’s origins in Italy for the conventionalism, lavishness, spectacle, and lack of actorly “discipline” in staging practice, asserting that only with the German *Singspiel* could any emphasis on the craft of acting be possible.<sup>76</sup> Such an account of operatic history effectively casts much of the repertoire common

---

<sup>72</sup> Niessen, “Vorwort,” 7, and “Schauplatz der Oper,” 58, in *Oper der Gegenwart*.

<sup>73</sup> Niessen, “Schauplatz der Oper,” in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 58. Not coincidentally, Craig himself became attracted to fascism in the 1930s. Christopher Innes, *Edward Gordon Craig: A Vision of Theatre* (London: Routledge, 1998), 136.

<sup>74</sup> Niessen, “Schauplatz der Oper,” in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 36–39, 45–49.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 43–44. Niessen’s disdain for Italian opera contradicts his desire to stress the common ground between German and Italian aesthetics, as in Hans Engel, *Deutschland und Italien in ihren musikgeschichtlichen Beziehungen* (Regensburg: Bosse, 1944). See also Gundula Kreuzer, *Verdi and the Germans from Unification to the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 191–244.

<sup>76</sup> Niessen, “Schauplatz der Oper,” in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 24–26.

both then and now as negligible; Niessen uses few adjectives more pejoratively than “Baroque,” “Romantic,” and “Neo-Romantic.”<sup>77</sup>

Other politically motivated aesthetic evaluations come to the surface in Niessen’s historical account of staging practices, which doubles as a canon of directors.<sup>78</sup> Niessen enumerates the achievements of particular directors and designers whose work is influential and innovative in a way that is considered consistent with the values of the Third Reich.<sup>79</sup> It is striking that some directors he champions are equally canonical in the history of staging as told today. Adolphe Appia, for example, is praised repeatedly for his scenic “reform” against convention through attention to parameters such as space, light, symbolism, and abstraction, all meant, as Niessen explains, to achieve a sense of timelessness.<sup>80</sup> Other important figures in Niessen’s history of staging include Émile Jacques-Dalcroze, the founder of eurythmics, and Edward Gordon Craig.<sup>81</sup> Niessen repeatedly cites dance as a fruitful replacement for stilted formal gestures, but warns against the intellectualization and industrialization of bodies. His accounts of Isadora Duncan and Loie Fuller assume an uneasy tone.<sup>82</sup>

Yet another operatic canon in the essays devoted to staging comprises composers and works that have been a particular focus for stage design, acting, and directing. This canon, too, is decidedly German: stagings of *Fidelio* become exemplary, and successive waves of change are described for the staging of Mozart, with productions lauded to the extent that they are “Wagnerized” (“gut verwagnert”).<sup>83</sup> Niessen draws attention to how the Handel revival challenged staging norms by providing new solutions to accommodate long arias, and discusses

---

<sup>77</sup> Examples can be found in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 47, 53, and 59.

<sup>78</sup> In *Oper der Gegenwart* see Niessen, “Schauplatz der Oper,” 25; and Hartmann, “Opernregie unsrer Zeit,” 13.

<sup>79</sup> Niessen, “Schauplatz der Oper,” in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 41, 80–82.

<sup>80</sup> *Oper der Gegenwart*, 32, 34, 36, 49, 70, and 75–77.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 34–35, 49–50.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 34, 36, 49, 70, 75, 77.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 30, 39–41, 56.

Strauss and Pfitzner, who nobly succeeded where other contemporary composers had failed.<sup>84</sup> Unsurprisingly, Wagner emerges as the most important figure in the canon. From the aforementioned epigraph to an emphasis on Bayreuth as the touchstone of influence in stage design, Wagner positively dominates the volume's histories.

Familiar enough, even cliché, is Niessen's re-inscription of Wagner's claim to have saved the future of opera from the Jewish excesses of Giacomo Meyerbeer and grand opera, among other demons.<sup>85</sup> More particular to Niessen's narrative, though at the same time oddly reminiscent of modern histories of staging, is the connection he repeatedly makes between different innovations and their origins in, and effects on, Wagner productions. Wagner serves as a refrain: whether the subject is the use of film in operatic illusion, the dangers of neo-Romanticism, or a new attention to naturalism after 1933, Wagner is a perennial test case.<sup>86</sup> To demonstrate the absence of a unified national staging style around 1914, Niessen cites a cross-section of *Parsifal* productions, and in Hartmann's essay, the end of the Bayreuth monopoly on *Parsifal* in that year is posited as a watershed of theatrical innovation.<sup>87</sup> Niessen bemoans the retention of older Wagner productions in the repertory; at the other end of the spectrum, the Weimar-era excesses of the Krolloper in Berlin are condemned through a reference to their production of *Der fliegende Holländer*.<sup>88</sup>

Most revealing of all is the close relationship between the challenges of Wagner staging and the positive valuation placed on the right kind of progress in contemporary German practice. Progress for its own sake is not universally valued, but Wagner's own frustrations with the limits

---

<sup>84</sup> In *Oper der Gegenwart* see Niessen, "Schauplatz der Oper," 41, 52, 74–75; cf. Heifer, "Oper und Gegenwart," 18–19.

<sup>85</sup> Niessen, "Schauplatz der Oper," in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 26–27.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 49, 53, 82.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 54–55. Also in *Oper der Gegenwart* see Hartmann, "Opernregie unsrer Zeit," 11.

<sup>88</sup> Niessen, "Schauplatz der Oper," in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 65, 78–79.

of contemporary practice are said to have led to important developments that pushed the art of staging continually forward.<sup>89</sup> Citing the new techniques necessarily created for the realization of the *Ring Cycle*'s warhorse, dragon, or gods crossing rainbows, Niessen problematizes the relationship between theatrical development and "illusion," a word that for him has some positive but mainly negative connotations.<sup>90</sup> Elsewhere, one of Niessen's many positive evaluations of the importance of light and color in visually emphasizing the strength of an opera's music claims that this aesthetic is tailor-made for Wagner (Niessen positions the use of light and color as a kind of "parallel to the Leitmotiv").<sup>91</sup> All of this coalesces into a value system that considers Wagner staging (if not Wagnerian musical styles per se) the ultimate asymptote toward which directors infinitely and iteratively progress.

#### 4. *The Anti-Canon*

Political and racial resonances operate not only in the affirmative, in constructing German greatness, but also often as critique. In both his prose and the accompanying images, Niessen presents, contains, and critiques problematic works. He takes a dim view of most innovations by the earlier generations, especially the contributions of Jewish composers and artists. He cites with particular disdain such symbols of Weimar experimentation as the rise of the *Komische Oper*; the onstage presence of contemporary emblems, such as the telephone; the dangers of Dada, cabaret, and revue; the folly of historical transposition; and the assorted use of marionettes, masks, Japonaiserie, jazz and black culture, noise, and anything ornamental or Oriental.<sup>92</sup> A recurring and complex critique concerns Expressionism; though he gives it a great

---

<sup>89</sup> In *Oper der Gegenwart* see Heifer, "Oper und Gegenwart," 17–18; and Niessen, "Schauplatz der Oper," 30.

<sup>90</sup> Niessen, *ibid.*, 29–31.

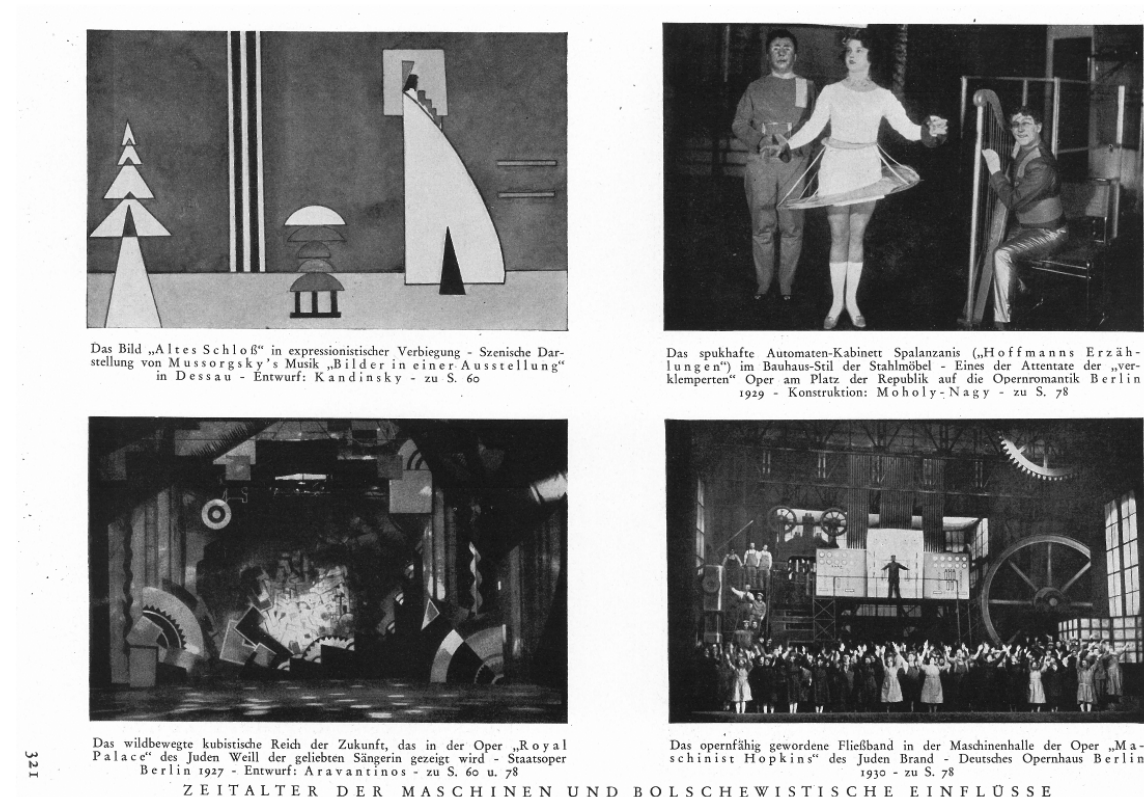
<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 42, 49, 60, 61, 62–63, 64, 67–68, 70, 79.

deal of attention, he characterizes it as neoromantic, irrelevant, and ornamental, a symptom of a sick world.<sup>93</sup> All of this constitutes a kind of “anti-canon,” explicitly anti-Semitic and selectively anti-modern. Niessen works to create discursive distance between these artworks and those canonized in the main body of the volume. Such repertoire is analogous to the “degenerate music” (entartete Musik) in the infamous exhibition of 1938, which presented the aesthetic enemies of German art.<sup>94</sup> Niessen manages both to distance himself from the kinds of opera he disdains and to give an illustrative, bold, and detailed account of them.

Under the heading “the era of machines and Bolshevik influences,” for example, several disreputable artworks from 1927 to 1930 are featured (fig. 5).<sup>95</sup>

FIGURE 5. The era of machines and Bolshevik influences



<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 42, 58–60, 69.

<sup>94</sup> Levi, *Music in the Third Reich*, 82–106; and Albrecht Dümmling and Peter Girth, *Entartete Musik: Dokumentation und Kommentar zur Düsseldorfer Ausstellung von 1938* (Düsseldorf: Der Kleine Verlag, 1993).

<sup>95</sup> Niessen, “Grundlagen der Operninszenierung,” in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 321.

The first illustration reproduces a design by Wassily Kandinsky for the 1928 Dessau staging of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, which the caption describes as "expressionist distortion" (the essay adds: "strange" and "expressionistically cunning").<sup>96</sup> Niessen casts Expressionism as an "epidemic" and a "fever," noting, regarding Schoenberg's *Die glückliche Hand*, that "psychoanalysis turned art into a safety valve for suppressed complexes."<sup>97</sup> Niessen's focus on the visual aspects of staging means that the works' artistic relationships—to Dada, Bauhaus, Futurism, Cubism, or Constructivism—often supersede discussions of musical style. Typical for Niessen, then, is the account of Kurt Weill's *Royal Palace* as manifesting "the turbulent, cubist Reich of the future," complete with the "corrosive tendencies of class struggle."<sup>98</sup> He further characterizes the visual aesthetic of *Royal Palace* with this fantastic description: "the Futuristic Reich of the future is a wild color kaleidoscope with rotating transparent wheels and piercing spotlight-suns."<sup>99</sup>

A mechanistic aesthetics is further critiqued with visually striking illustrations from the Berlin productions of *The Tales of Hoffmann* (1929; "Spalanzani's spooky automaton cabinet in the Bauhaus style of steel furniture") and *Maschinist Hopkins* (1930; "the assembly line becomes operatic").<sup>100</sup> As primary sources these images and descriptions are evocative documents of reception history. But the value modern scholars might find in these productions, conditioned by the value that accrues to avant-garde productions today, runs directly counter to Niessen's own rhetoric: "to characterize this failed method: with its glossy settlement walls and chrome-plated steel furniture, Spalanzani's cabinet looks more like the martyrdom site of a state-of-the-art

---

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.; and, in the same volume, Niessen, "Schauplatz der Oper," 60.

<sup>97</sup> Niessen, "Schauplatz der Oper," in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 60.

<sup>98</sup> In *Oper der Gegenwart* see Niessen, "Grundlagen," 321; and idem, "Schauplatz der Oper," 78.

<sup>99</sup> Niessen, "Schauplatz der Oper," 78.

<sup>100</sup> Niessen, "Grundlagen," 321.



dentist.”<sup>101</sup> The Offenbach production is accordingly captioned as an “assassination” of romantic opera indicative of the Krolloper’s “verklempt” style (with this adjective Niessen attributes the crime to the house’s Jewish conductor, Otto Klemperer).<sup>102</sup> Elsewhere Niessen calls the famous Krolloper production of *Der fliegende Holländer* “the worst of all,” strikingly describing the de-Romanticized approach (“Entromantisierung”): “Senta in a jumper and the shaved, degenerate [entbartet-entartete] Dutchman with a made-up face and a modern Loden coat.”<sup>103</sup> These examples demonstrate how the basis of critique seamlessly extends beyond aesthetics into nationalist and racially coded terms.

Another set of images is dedicated to “Jewish opera of the [Weimar] Republic at the threshold of upheaval,” underlining the influence of film and modern imagery (both assumed to have a negative impact) on works by Karol Rathaus and Krenek.<sup>104</sup> The captions designate a racial identity for these artists in addition to (and in some cases as obvious shorthand for) the critiques of their aesthetics, printing, for example, “*Maschinist Hopkins* by the Jew Max Brand.”<sup>105</sup> No composer is savaged more than Weill, who stands accused, in the space of a few lines, of cynicism, nastiness, “salon Bolshevism,” epigonism, and callousness; *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* is described as a “hullabaloo” (Tohuwabohu).<sup>106</sup> Niessen reproduces photographs from Weill’s *Die Bürgschaft* (“the opera of class struggle pounding in crude rhythms”) and the Lehrstück *Der Jasager*, the caption for which piles on the insults, not only

<sup>101</sup> Niessen, “Schauplatz der Oper,” 78.

<sup>102</sup> Niessen, “Grundlagen,” 321. Per Levi, Klemperer was the Nazis’ paradigmatic case of Weimar operatic corruption. Levi, *Music in the Third Reich*, 167.

<sup>103</sup> Niessen, “Schauplatz der Oper,” 78–79.

<sup>104</sup> *Oper der Gegenwart*, 322. There are several inaccuracies in the captions. First, Krenek was not actually Jewish, though he was perennially designated as such during the Third Reich; see John L. Stewart, *Ernst Krenek: The Man and His Music* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 184–86. Second, Rathaus is called “President of the World Centre for Jewish Music in Palestine,” implying a level of authority better accorded to the organization’s founder, Salli Levi. The organization had dissolved well before 1944; Rathaus had been one of four regional “presidents” on the Board. Philip V. Bohlman, *The World Centre for Jewish Music in Palestine, 1936–1940: Jewish Musical Life on the Eve of World War II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 49, 125.

<sup>105</sup> Niessen, “Grundlagen,” 321.

<sup>106</sup> Niessen, “Schauplatz der Oper,” 78

reminding the reader that Weill is Jewish for the third time in two pages but also placing “opera” in scare quotes (“Der jüdische ‘Opern’-Komponist Weill”).<sup>107</sup>

Somewhat surprisingly, Niessen chooses to reproduce a photograph of Krenek’s *Leben des Orest* rather than that emblematic case of so-called degenerate music, *Jonny spielt auf*.<sup>108</sup> Niessen does address *Jonny* in the accompanying essay, however, as the punch line to a long rant about a culture obsessed with cinema and popular “Negro” music. He describes how, in the 1920s, “one ran into the theater to spend money quickly, before it could depreciate: there beckoned the Negro-song [Negersong]. . . . Is it any wonder that soon ‘Jonny’ struck up [aufspielte] in Krenek’s ‘opera?’”<sup>109</sup> *Jonny* is positioned as the end product of multiple streams of regrettable technological progress: “the express train, cars, radio, and film become so expansive in *Jonny* that only a dwindling role is left for music; only rhythmic drive is left.”<sup>110</sup> These rhetorical moves create distance between the post-1933 German “Self” and the pre-1933 “Other,” signaling that the present should be valorized at the expense of (and in opposition to) the problematic, recent past.

Such Othering is in some places even more explicit. As in many texts published during this period, the book exhibits an insistent designation of Jewish identity. Niessen’s staging essay labels twenty-six composers, directors, artists, and administrators as Jews or Jewish (appendix).<sup>111</sup> Three orthographic tactics are employed: first, placing “Jd.” or “Jude” in parentheses; second, referring to the person as “the Jew [X]”; and third, adding some form of the adjective “Jewish” to the person’s occupation or identity. Such designations create visual cues on

---

<sup>107</sup> Niessen, “Grundlagen,” 322.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Niessen, “Schauplatz der Oper,” 63.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>111</sup> For his “Juden-Nachweise,” Niessen cites Theophil Stenger and Herbert Gerigk’s *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik* of 1940 and *Judentum und Musik* by Hans Brückner and Christa Maria Rock of 1936. Niessen, “Werkverzeichnis,” 335.

the page, flagging mistrust of the artists or writers so identified and in the process suggesting a negative canon to be rejected. The simple designation “Schönberg (Jew)” has a clean rhetorical effect that is distinct from more evocative, often disdainful versions such as descriptions of Korngold as “the Jewish wonder boy.”<sup>112</sup> Niessen describes Korngold’s artistic success as having been particularly Jewish in character, and elsewhere intimates the influence of a Jewish cabal or conspiracy in theatrical circles: the “handing over” of the opera in Königsberg to a “Jewish private initiative” is assessed as a step backwards, Jews are described as “speculators” in bad taste, and Otto Brahm and Max Reinhardt are lumped conspiratorially together as “the two leading Jewish theater managers.”<sup>113</sup> When a plagiarism claim involving Gordon Craig and Reinhardt fails to stick, Reinhardt’s success is attributed to the “Jewish press,” which wanted to accord Reinhardt a “monopoly on progress.”<sup>114</sup> Niessen also makes casually anti-Semitic generalizations about groups of Jews, referring, for example, to “busy young men of the Mosaic race,” claiming that the lack of Jews among set designers stems from their reluctance to take on subservient roles, or positing that the strong contingent of Jews among stage directors promoted a sick spiritualism that drove “healthy people” out of the theater.<sup>115</sup>

This is all abhorrent, but Niessen’s descriptions of even the works and figures he abuses can be richly detailed; these are evocative as documents of reception. In many material ways he quarantines certain artworks from the remainder of the book: a separate page includes images of works criticized in the essays but not included in the profiles or works catalog. Niessen’s biases are undeniable, and the book’s politically motivated critiques and anti-Semitic cues are inherent, not incidental, to his project. Forming a canon to represent German opera 1933–44 demanded

---

<sup>112</sup> Niessen, “Schauplatz der Oper,” 40.

<sup>113</sup> *Oper der Gegenwart*, 35, 41, 62, 77.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 63, 74.

that he account for the preceding generation and for those musicians exiled from German culture, now excluded by his reified “opera of the present day.” And so the volume describes, categorizes, and integrates these rejected works into a larger “objective” history, which narrates opera’s progress and disintegration. It is all the more important for Niessen to explain away the history of false starts, bankrupt movements, mothballed conventions, and cultural bastardizations because their very debasement calls even more strongly for the antidote: German opera of the present day, opera in the Third Reich, the canon of the contemporary moment.

*Case Study: Winfried Zillig*

However precarious this canon of the present turned out to be, and however many of the composers Niessen profiled have since been forgotten, many of them did see their careers continue after 1945. For those who survived into the 1950s and beyond, it was not only possible but also relatively common to have the opportunity for further opera premieres.<sup>116</sup> Yet particularly in the immediate postwar moment, it was strategically necessary to create distance from the Third Reich, especially through the idea of the Zero Hour.<sup>117</sup> Many of those composers who wished to bid for musical and political legitimacy after 1945 drew on a measure of self-mythology to erase their successes during the Nazi period—the kind of successes to which Niessen’s volume bears explicit material witness. Thus far I have argued that the multiple historical and present-day canons contained in *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* reveal aesthetic and political motivations germane to the definition of German opera during the Third Reich.

---

<sup>116</sup> For information about how this statistic was compiled, see n. 56 above. Twenty-one of the sixty-two composers premiered at least one additional opera after 1945 (as designated with asterisks in table 2); this number jumps to twenty-eight if one excludes composers who had died by 1949.

<sup>117</sup> Stephen Brockmann, “German Culture at the ‘Zero Hour,’” in idem and Frank Trommler, eds., *Revisiting Zero Hour 1945: The Emergence of Postwar German Culture* (American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, 1996), 8–40, at 8.

Building on this understanding of the volume's construction of a nationalistic canon, I will now focus on how that canonization might add nuance to our understanding of individual artists. The profiles in *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* are valuable as primary documents, because for those composers whose careers endured, their activities during the Third Reich came to matter very deeply. To concentrate on one individual is to recognize an opportunity for historiographical revision, enhancing received ideas of that person's biography, aesthetics, and canonical status.

Winfried Zillig was the principal conductor at the opera house in Düsseldorf from 1932 to 1937, where his first opera, *Rosse*, was staged in 1933. This was the first of three operas Zillig premiered during the Third Reich, two of which had texts by Richard Billinger, an influential popular author of tales of "Blut und Boden" (blood and soil).<sup>118</sup> These premieres are the core of Zillig's representation in *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart*. In his musical style he was an outlier: Zillig had studied with Schoenberg, but his approach to twelve-tone technique incorporated triads and lyrical melodies sufficient for the press to refrain from critiquing his use of dodecaphony.<sup>119</sup> His operas were instead celebrated for their "noble" portrayals. As the one twelve-tone composer who was successful during the Third Reich, Zillig has more recently

---

<sup>118</sup> Zillig also set *Die Windsbraut* (Leipzig, 1940), and, in the postwar era, *Bauernpassion* (as a television opera, Munich, 1955) and *Das Verlöbniß* (Kassel, 1963), all from Billinger texts. Gudrun Dittmann, "Winfried Zillig/Richard Billinger: *Die Windsbraut*; Eine umjubelte Leipziger Uraufführung im Mai 1941," in *Musikstadt Leipzig im NS-Staat: Beiträge zu einem verdrängten Thema*, ed. Thomas Schinköth, 280–91 (Altenburg: Kamrad, 1997); Claudia Maurer Zenck, "Aufbruch des deutschen Geistes oder Innere Emigration? Zu einigen Opern der 1930er und 1940er Jahre," in *"Entartete Musik" 1938: Weimar und die Ambivalenz*, vol. 1, ed. Hanns-Werner Heister (Saarbrücken: Pfau-Verlag, 2001), 216–46; and Grotjahn, "Politische Opern in der NS-Zeit."

<sup>119</sup> Levi, "Atonality and the Third Reich," 20. See also Thomas Phleps, "Zwölfhöriges Theater – 'Wiener Schüler' und Anverwandte in NS-Deutschland," in *Geächtet, verboten, vertrieben. Österreichische Musiker 1934 - 1938 - 1945*, ed. Hartmut Krones (Vienna: Böhlau, 2013), 211–49. The Phleps essay, of which I was not aware until after completing a draft of this essay, converges at several points with my discussion of Zillig.

become a favorite example for musicologists who seek to complicate the notion that all “atonal” music was banned.<sup>120</sup>

Scholars such as Rebecca Grotjahn have argued that Zillig’s operas during this period, despite their “advanced” techniques, were related to National Socialism both incidentally (e.g., by institution and chronology) and by reflecting aspects of “Nazi ideology.”<sup>121</sup> Grotjahn cites not only Zillig’s *Das Opfer* (1937) and *Die Windsbraut* (1940), but also the opera *Troilus und Cressida*, a twelve-tone work based on Shakespeare’s play and originally commissioned for the Strasbourg Opera during the German occupation of Alsace.<sup>122</sup> Despite that opera’s wartime inception and the circumstance that much of the music was composed during Zillig’s time as a Nazi-appointed conductor in occupied Poznań, *Troilus und Cressida* premiered only in 1951, in Düsseldorf. *Troilus und Cressida*, then, is a work whose very existence complicates and challenges the idea of 1945 as a cultural caesura. Like the person who composed it and, presumably, most of the people who performed and listened to it, it spanned the discursive breach of the Zero Hour. This piece is therefore an obvious site for autobiographical reinterpretation of the type that was often deemed necessary in postwar historiography.

Like those of his peers, Zillig’s profile in *Die deutsche Oper in der Gegenwart* consists of a portrait, a handwritten statement, and staging pictures from *Rosse* (Düsseldorf) and *Die Windsbraut* (Leipzig). His narrative statement ends with a précis of then-current projects, in particular *Troilus und Cressida* (fig. 6).<sup>123</sup> Zillig positioned his new opera as an extension of a renewal of Greek tragedy he boasted to have achieved in his previous opera, *Das Opfer*, the story of a doomed polar mission and noble self-sacrifice that Grotjahn has called a “fascist

---

<sup>120</sup> Levi, “Atonality and the Third Reich,” 19.

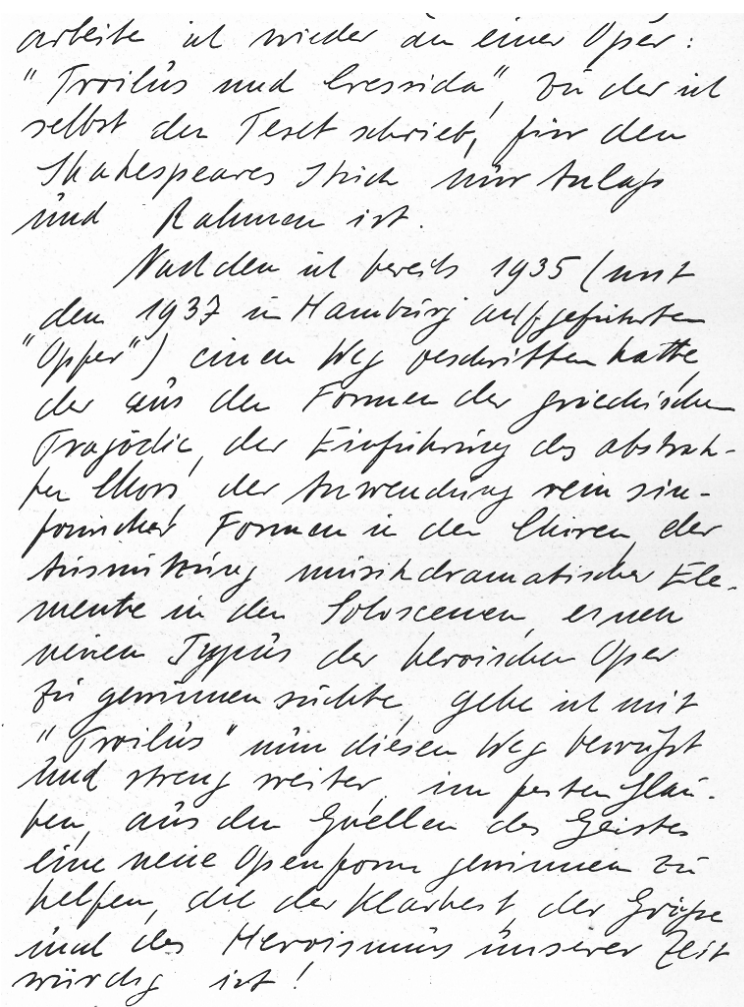
<sup>121</sup> Grotjahn, “Politische Opern in der NS-Zeit,” 121–22.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>123</sup> *Oper der Gegenwart*, 306–8.

Lehrstück.”<sup>124</sup> The composer wrote that he considered *Das Opfer*, which was oratorio-like and featured a “Greek” chorus of penguins, a “new type of heroic opera.”<sup>125</sup> With *Troilus und Cressida*, Zillig explained, “I am going strictly and deliberately further down this path with steadfast faith to help attain a new form of opera out of the sources of the spirit [aus den Quellen des Geistes], one that is worthy of the clarity, the greatness, and the heroism of our times!”<sup>126</sup>

FIGURE 6. Excerpt of Winfried Zillig’s profile from *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart*



arbeite ich wieder an einer Oper:  
 "Troilus und Cressida", zu der ich  
 selbst den Text schrieb, für den  
 Shakespeares Stück mir Anlauf  
 und Rahmen ist.  
 Nach dem ich bereits 1935 (mit  
 dem 1937 in Hamburg aufgeführten  
 "Opfer") einen Weg beschritten hatte  
 der aus der Form der griechischen  
 Tragödie, der Einführung des abstrak-  
 ten Chors, der Anwendung rein sym-  
 phonischer Formen in den Chören, der  
 Anmischung musikdramatischer Ele-  
 mente in den Sotoscenen, er mich  
 neuen Typus der heroischen Oper  
 zu gewinnen suchte, gehe ich mit  
 "Troilus" nun diesen Weg bewusst  
 noch strenger weiter, um festzu-  
 stellen, aus den Quellen des Geistes  
 eine neue Operform gewinnen zu  
 helfen, die der Klarheit, der Größe  
 und des Heroismus unserer Zeit  
 würdig ist!

<sup>124</sup> Winfried Zillig in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 308; Grotjahn, “Politische Opern in der NS-Zeit,” 116.

<sup>125</sup> Zillig in *Oper der Gegenwart*, 308. On the incorporation of oratorio see Siegfried Günther, “Der Opernkomponist Winfried Zillig,” *Das Orchester* 9 (1961): 364–67.

<sup>126</sup> *Oper der Gegenwart*, 308. Zillig’s use of the word “heroism” (Heroismus) is telling. In a study of Nazi-era Shakespeare reception, Rodney Symington explains how Shakespeare’s “heroism” showed his compatibility with the greatness of the Nazi era, assimilating Shakespeare as a “Germanic” writer. Rodney Symington, *The Nazi Appropriation of Shakespeare: Cultural Politics in the Third Reich* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), 124–27.

Of course, no matter how aesthetically interesting Zillig's ideal of German opera may have been, the Germany of the early 1940s, of which he hoped the opera would be worthy, is no longer seen as clear, great, or heroic. Yet our time capsule's prose text concludes with this phrase from Zillig, "to be worthy of the heroism of our times!" (des Heroismus unserer Zeit würdig ist)—a fitting symbolic note on which to conclude its nationalist project.<sup>127</sup>

It is further revealing that Zillig recycled several elements from his previous description of *Troilus und Cressida* when he wrote the foreword for the opera's piano score (1950). Here he persisted in describing *Troilus und Cressida* as a follow-up to the opera that had been so successful in 1937: "The author [Zillig] goes further along the path that he began in *Das Opfer*: the path over Wagner, Gluck, and the Florentines back to the origins of Western opera, the path of Greek tragedy."<sup>128</sup> This is once again a kind of canonical positioning, but changes to his cited "paths" expose the complex historiography that has shaped accounts of opera composition in the Nazi era and after. *Troilus und Cressida* managed to transcend its troubled political origins in part because Zillig's new "debts"—to the Florentines, the ancient Greeks, and Shakespeare—seemed resolutely apolitical. By citing a classicizing, "timeless" quality for the origins of opera; by drawing on the contemporaneous revision of the reception of Shakespeare in Germany as a universally human, apolitical figure; and by referring to the right touchstones *outside* of opera—*oratorio* and the Greeks—Zillig could in fact claim to be continuing down the same artistic "path."

Until recently, Zillig's credentials as an "atonal" composer were frequently pressed into service to affirm his wartime innocence and create a version of history in which the composer himself was a victim, rather than a beneficiary, of the Third Reich. As a conductor and radio

---

<sup>127</sup> This is to a large extent a matter of alphabetical coincidence (i.e., Zillig's last name).

<sup>128</sup> Zillig, "Vorwort," in *Troilus und Cressida* (Wiesbaden: Brucknerverlag, 1950), 4.



director in postwar West Germany, Zillig drew on his Schoenbergian genealogy to play an important role in the dissemination of twelve-tone music; among other things, he produced the score to Schoenberg's *Die Jakobsleiter*.<sup>129</sup> In large part because he saw himself as so authentically dodecaphonic, Zillig felt deeply humiliated by his denazification trial; in a 1946 letter he described himself as “one of the few surviving ‘degenerates’” who, having been oppressed by the Nazis, now faced the possibility of being labeled a Nazi propagandist. This, he implied, would be as terrible as the Nazi persecution itself (a persecution that, again, was fictitious). Zillig continued:

What scorn and what stupidity! And to continue the oppression of the individual, to continue the path “from humanism to nationalism to bestiality” (Grillparzer). But they should have me gladly. . . . My work has its own mysterious life and will find its time.<sup>130</sup>

This autobiographical narrative of Nazi-era oppression was later enshrined in T. W. Adorno's work on the composer, reinforced rhetorically by Zillig's association with the master Schoenberg.<sup>131</sup> Adorno claimed that “the Hitler Reich cut [Zillig] off as a composer,” a statement directly contradicted by the career success Zillig had experienced during the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>132</sup> In 2002 Christian Lemmerich debunked Adorno's received version of events, not only reaffirming that Zillig's Nazi-period operas had been successful in their own time, but also presenting evidence that Zillig's wartime position as a conductor in Poznań had been granted as

---

<sup>129</sup> Hellmut Federhofer, “Winfried Zilligs Einführung in die Zwölftonmusik,” in *Neue Musik als Widerspruch zur Tradition: gesammelte Aufsätze* (Bonn: Orpheus-Verlag, 2002), 37–48.

<sup>130</sup> Winfried Zillig to Maria Zillig, 5 February 1946, quoted in Silke Hilger, “Die vergessenen Weisen des Winfried Zillig,” *Musica* 49 (1995): 78–84, at 82.

<sup>131</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, “Winfried Zillig: Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit,” in *Impromptus: Zweite Folge neu gedruckter musikalischer Aufsätze* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1968), 157–65; and Christian Lemmerich, “Winfried Zillig: Anpassung und Engagement: Aspekte eines widersprüchlichen Lebensweges,” in *Arnold Schönbergs “Berliner Schule,”* ed. Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn (Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, 2002), 152–63, at 159.

<sup>132</sup> Adorno, “Winfried Zillig,” 158. The myth that Zillig had faced artistic persecution was perpetuated by many other writers; an example is Juan Luis Milán, “Winfried Zillig,” in *Komponisten um Schönberg: zehn Musikerportraits* (Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 1995), 107–16. Ulrich Dibelius even attributed the late premiere of *Troilus und Cressida* to the presumption that Zillig's works had been “unerwünscht.” Ulrich Dibelius, “Winfried Zillig,” *Musica* 12 (1958): 651–55, at 654.

a reward for his propagandistic activities.<sup>133</sup> Zillig's statement in Niessen's volume provides additional evidence that not only his institutional affiliations but also his stated aesthetic ideas were politically inflected at the time and largely unchanged after the war.

After Zillig's death in 1963, his close colleague Carl Orff wrote an obituary in which he praised Zillig's prowess as a stage composer. The ironies of Orff's sentimental message are most aptly expressed by the obituary's final lines:<sup>134</sup>

It is good that man was given the gift of forgetfulness [die Gabe des Vergessens]. Many things *must* be forgotten in order to keep on living, but some things one *should* not forget in order to continue to exist, and then there are other things that one *cannot* forget. Dear Winfried! No one who has called you "friend" can forget you.<sup>135</sup>

The case of Zillig's *Troilus und Cressida*, as presented both in *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* and in later publications, potently demonstrates these complex dynamics of forgetfulness and career continuity after 1945. Zillig had to "forget" his material's heroicism and instead "remember" that the story was mythological and universal. The supposed timelessness of the subject matter could then shield the opera from its murky origins: that which was considered timeless could endure, cutting through and cutting out the years of pain and compromise so the music, as Zillig wrote, could "have its own life and find its own time."

Is *Troilus und Cressida* a "Nazi opera"? Perhaps yes, at least if we trust Zillig's claim in *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* that it was well-suited to that dubious honor. But such labels shift strategically with changes in context, showing themselves to be more attributed than inherent. Focusing on the content and form of Zillig's autobiographical statement—a statement of nationalist aesthetics that places *Troilus und Cressida* explicitly within a contemporary "heroic" canon, reproduced in Zillig's own handwriting in a way that positively fetishizes its

---

<sup>133</sup> Lemmerich, "Winfried Zillig," 152–63.

<sup>134</sup> Carl Orff, "Nachruf für Winfried Zillig," *Musica* 18 (1964): 66–67, at 67.

<sup>135</sup> Orff, "Nachruf für Winfried Zillig," 67.

authenticity—allows us access to a moment where such definitional meaning pivoted, counteracting the blurred effect of convenient postwar stories. Zillig's statement and its postwar reincarnation show how composers instrumentalized definitions of the past, present, and future of opera—in Zillig's case, a question of national heroicism versus universality—to turn them into tools of self-fashioning both during the Nazi era and after.

### *Conclusion*

We know that opera during the Third Reich was characterized not, as some used to imagine, by the debased musical homogeneity of top-down totalitarian bureaucrats, but rather emerged from a range of creators in a range of styles. In *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart*, Niessen curated a canon of works that exemplified this range in order to boast about German opera's power and assert emphatically (through accumulation, not through distillation) its artistic dominance. Niessen's pride, it must be emphasized, did not necessitate that German opera from 1933 onward expressed one dominant ideology or one unified style, and though his project is obviously nationalistic, its relationship to National Socialism is uneven. Niessen's views are subjective—the views of a historian-critic with strong aesthetic and nationalist opinions. Some of the figures profiled in the volume (like Winfried Zillig) tied their works explicitly to the political milieu and to nationalist goals, a move that must be seen as strategic, if also possibly sincere. Others were perhaps less explicit about the relationship between their artworks and the regime, but still benefitted from the Third Reich's arts spending and prizes—that is, an explicitly nationalist cultivation and promotion of home-grown contemporary art, whether on the stages of opera houses throughout the Reich or in purportedly scholarly accounts.

There is no question that *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* is unreliable as an historical account, but even a flawed secondary source can be a valuable primary one. Niessen's focus on drama and staging rather than musical style brings to light important artistic aspects of opera in this period that are not often discussed.<sup>136</sup> The visual materials are a treasure trove of staging and design in different modern styles, integrated into a historical narrative that uniquely integrates new music and new staging practices. As a source characterizing the previous generation as a series of "dead ends," the book also provides scholars interested in the negative reception of figures such as Berg, Krenek, and Weill with new critiques based in a specifically theatrical discourse. Indeed the book's focus on dramatic aesthetics shows, in some dimensions that are today unfamiliar, how German artists contributed to a kind of "right-thinking" operatic creation. All of these aspects—both that material presented as artistically sound and that presented as artistically bankrupt—helped Niessen stake a claim to the definition of German opera at a time when defining "German" *anything* was desperately important. More broadly, *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* invites us to reflect on how scholarship itself is a part of reception history and the politicization of aesthetics. That which came to be defined as possible for opera after the war's end was determined partly by—and partly against—the culture so "objectively" enshrined in Niessen's grand volume. From standards in stage design to predictions about opera's future, the ideas exhibited by Niessen's canon of the "present day" would transform and find new continuities in the postwar period.

As historians consider anew what might be important and interesting among the operatic works composed during the Third Reich, we should work to understand the contingencies and discourses that enabled this repertoire to be composed and then canonized from 1933 to 1944, a

---

<sup>136</sup> The Nazi era has often been overlooked in the history of staging. One recent history, for example, skips directly from Klemperer's 1929 *Dutchman* production to the postwar era. Evan Baker, *From the Score to the Stage: An Illustrated History of Continental Opera Production and Staging* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013).

time when nationalist ideology yielded a landscape of rubble and bombed opera houses. This is the fundamental instability that comes with any claims of certainty about the value of new artworks. Niessen's "opera of the present day," as great and as German as it may have seemed at the time, was especially fleeting; to see it now lying in historiographical shambles may be equal parts ironic and satisfying. But it would be a vast overstatement to conclude that so many of the volume's operas, as well as the volume itself, faded into the past because of some inherent worthlessness. Musicologists deliberately left them behind to satisfy the myth of the Zero Hour—and yet many of these composers, and the material object of the book itself, persisted even so.

In *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* Niessen freezes the frame, divulging a need to determine the state of the art in the very moment that gives rise to it, and advancing a warning, for such a canon is as immediately obsolete as it may be influential. Niessen's work speaks to a larger scholarly impulse to attempt a historiography of the present by capturing the contemporary moment with encyclopedic grandeur. "Nazi opera" is decidedly not a single thing, but with *Die deutsche Oper der Gegenwart* we can see how one thing—one *book*—discursively and materially constructed a definition of German opera during the Nazi era. We have inherited it, and its contradictions.

## APPENDIX. The orthographic focus on the “racial” status of composers and artists in Niessen’s essay “Der Schauplatz der Oper.”

Person	Proximate context in Niessen’s essay (English)	Proximate context in Niessen’s essay (original)	P.
Giacomo Meyerbeer	“Grand Opera” in the style of Meyerbeer (J.)	“große Oper” im Stile Meyerbeers (Jd.)	26
Jacques Offenbach	compare Offenbach (J.) to the pack of composers in the Weimar period	vgl. Offenbach (Jd.) und das Komponistenrudel der Systemzeit	26
Felix Mendelssohn	designs for Mendelssohn’s (J.) Oratorio <i>St. Paul</i>	Entwürfen für Mendelssohns (Jd.) Oratorium “Paulus”	29
Emil Orlik	even stronger in the case of Orlik (Jew)	Stärker noch bei Orlik (Jude)	32
Angelo Neumann	the “Travelling Wagner Theater” of the Jew Neumann . . .	die an des Juden Neumann “Fliegendes Wagner-Theater” . . .	32
Max Reinhardt	Craig later complained bitterly that Reinhardt (J.) . . .	Craig hat sich später bitter beklagt, daß Reinhardt (Jd.) . . .	35
Emil Orlik	In Orlik’s (Jew) version of <i>The Winter’s Tale</i> . . .	In Orliks (Jude) “Wintermärchen”-Lösung . . .	37
Gustav Mahler	Mahler (Jew), who came to Vienna in 1897 . . .	Der 1897 nach Wien gekommene Mahler (Jude)	38
Erich Korngold	The ballet of the Jewish boy wonder Korngold	Das Ballett des jüdischen Wunderknaben Korngold	40
Max Reinhardt	it succeeded, in Reinhardt’s Jewish sense of success . . .	gelang es dem jüdischen Erfolgssinne Reinhardts . . .	41
Angelo Neumann	the Jewish theater giant Neumann	der jüdische Theatergewaltige Neumann	48
Paul Marsop	the admittedly somewhat garrulous Marsop (J.)	der freilich etwas geschwätzig Marsop (Jd.)	50
Otto Erhardt	In order to secure “Werktreue” for their own works, they undertook printed staging books from the masters themselves, [Eugen] Mehler and Erhardt (Jew) . . .	Die “Werktreue” für sein eigenes Werk zu sichern, unternahmen die gedruckten Regie-Bücher vom Meister selbst, Mehler und Erhardt (Jude) . . .	52
Thomas Theodor Heine	T. Th. Heine (Jew) [in list of names of painters]	T. Th. Heine (Jude)	53
Hugo Steiner-Prag	From graphic design came Hugo Steiner-Prag (Jew?)	Von der Graphik her kam Hugo Steiner-Prag (Jude?)	53
Ernst Stern	Reinhardt’s Jewish house artist Ernst Stern	Reinhardts jüdischer Hauskünstler Ernst Stern	53
Rainer Simons	The Jewish head of the [Vienna] Volksoper Simon[s]	Der jüdische Leiter der Volksoper Simon [sic]	57
Arnold Schoenberg	Schoenberg (Jew), whose distorted face . . .	Schönberg (Jude), der seine verzerrten Gesichte . . .	60
Leopold Jeßner	Jeßner’s (Jew) production of [William] <i>Tell</i>	Jeßners (Jude) “Tell”-Inszenierung	61
Walter Braunfels	<i>Die Vögel</i> by Braunfels (Jew)	“Die Vögel” von Braunfels (Jude)	67
Kurt Weill	<i>Der Zar läßt sich photographieren</i> (by Weill: Jew)	“Der Zar läßt sich photographieren” (von Weill: Jude)	68
Franz Schreker	in [Emil] Pirchan’s designs for Schreker (Jew)	in Pirchans Entwürfen für Schreker (Jude)	69
Egon Wellesz	<i>Die Nächtlichen</i> by Wellesz (Jew)	“Die Nächtlichen” von Wellesz (Jude)	70
Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack	Bauhaus: Ludw. Hirschfeld (Jew?)	Bauhaus: Ludw. Hirschfeld (Jude?)	71
Erich Korngold	. . . dream opera <i>Die tote Stadt</i> , by the young Jew Korngold	. . . Traumoper “Die tote Stadt” des jungen Juden Korngold	72
Oskar Strnad	In Cologne, Strnad (Jew) had . . .	Strnad (Jude) ließ in Köln . . .	73
Hans Löwenfeld	The Jew Löwenfeld	Der Jude Löwenfeld	74
Kurt Weill	the Jew Kurt Weill	der Jude Kurt Weill	78
Otto Klemperer	Kroll Opera (under the Jew Klemperer)	Krolloper (unter dem Juden Klemperer)	78
Max Brand	In the half-impressionistic, half-atonal <i>Maschinist Hopkins</i> of the Jew Max Brand	In des Juden Max Brand halb impressionistischem, halb atonalen “Maschinisten Hopkins”	78
Manfred Gurlitt	In the opera <i>Die Soldaten</i> (by Gurlitt: Jew)	In der Oper “Die Soldaten” (von Gurlitt: Jude)	80