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# THE THIRD AGE

THE SPECIAL POSITION OF  
WESTERN MUSIC

Not to exceed the limits planned for the present volume, I shall deal but briefly with this chapter on Western music. Brevity is justified by the fact that by far the largest part of writings on music history concern themselves only with this field, and there are many works available that deal comprehensively with it. Musicology and the public have a much better view of this period than of the other three Ages. I shall therefore restrict myself to an appreciation of the special position of Western musical art among cultures and its importance in the preparation of the Fourth, our present Age. The other three chapters naturally also contain some contributions on the subject.

Western musical art is not an aggregate of all music in Europe from prehistoric times to the present, but a historical complex of trends and traditions that began in Carolingian times and projects into our own age. Developed among Romanic and Germanic peoples, it has spread in modern times over Europe and the whole world. Accordingly it is to be thought of as primarily not a geographic but a historical phenomenon. Nor does it, as Jacques Handschin says, represent a type of music culture, as though there were other representatives of the same type; it is *sui generis*. Its achievements and its fruits are unique in the history of the world; it has no counterpart. For it has not only lent expression to a family

of peoples and out of folk music evolved a high art, but it has also solved unique and objective tasks important in the context of universal history, such as the full development of written composition and script-based instruction in music. For this reason, independent of the decline of "colonialism," its theory has become the basis of music theory and education in all parts of the earth, and a selection from its creations forms the foundation of the world's music literature.



### ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND COURSE OF DEVELOPMENT

7 = *al'agora*

"Western culture" in the historical sense of the word took form when Western Europe, heretofore a part of the Roman Empire and its intercontinental commercial and cultural system, was separated from the other parts and became independent. Through the spread of Islam the Mediterranean area was split into a northern and a southern zone, and in various phases division also took place between the Western and Eastern Roman Empire, Latin and Byzantine culture, the Western and Eastern Church. Thus the northwestern part of the Old World came to depend on itself. In maintaining its independence against Huns and Arabs, in the rise of the Roman Catholic Church, and out of Charlemagne's empire the Western community developed its own culture and style, with its unique musical art. This art did of course have deep roots in ancient Western-European traditions and especially in the high cultures of the Mediterranean area, but little by little it came to be stamped with its own characteristics, which distinguished it from all other music in the world. One of its particular creations is the



score, the readable note-picture in which a polyphonic work of art is graphically presented. Further, to these characteristics and special achievements belong logical harmony, wide-spanned architecture, as in fugue and symphony, intentional presentation of spiritual or emotional content in autonomous compositions.

Western musical art was impregnated as no other by scholarly and, in the broad sense, scientific theory. In mensural rhythm, in the rules governing tonality, in harmony it was rationalized through and through. The seemingly irrational world of tone was laid down *imperio rationis*—under the command of reason, as was said following Boethius—in concepts and written signs. There took shape systems of relationship and forms of presentation, like the coordinating system of the score, metrical schemes using bar-line and time signature, the well-tempered keyboard. More than anywhere else music was objective spirit and *scientia musica*. Musicology has rightly dealt exhaustively with the history of theory, appreciating its masters, such as Guido of Arezzo, Franco of Cologne, Jacob of Liège, Tinctoris, Zarlino, Rameau.

Rationalization, which Max Weber in particular stresses as a basic feature of Western music, did not suppress by compulsory organization what Nature provided, but revealed and emphasized those “natural orders” that rest upon simple numerical relations or pregnant fundamental forms—for example the major mode and periods of  $(2 + 2) + 4$  measures and their multiples. Renewed naturalness and humanism take command, whether directly as in the Viennese classics or more vigorously stylized and superimposed in a polyphonic network as in old Netherlandish chanson-Masses and Bach’s chorale arrangements. This holds for the Middle Ages also; rhythm and tonality in Perotin and other composers differ remarkably little from those of contemporaneous dance tunes. Characteristic, furthermore, is the preference for the voice singing naturally in contrast to the stylization and exotic effects widely favored in early times and in the Orient.

Western music has done for mankind something similar to what Greek sculpture, architecture, logic, and mathematics did: it strongly set forth classic fundamentals of universal character. In no other culture has songlike melody been so developed and

(PRSM)



brought to prominence, and nowhere to the same extent have architectonic forms been built out of pregnant motifs and themes. Pregnance of this sort, as in geometrical figures, no less than rationality in simple numerical relations, is one aspect of universal validity. This above all explains the diffusion of Western music today in all parts of the earth. Its "world empire" rests essentially upon its immanent universality.

But the special position of Western music is also due to the manner in which its characteristics and its basic forms have taken shape. It differs from the music of other cultures not only in its nature but also in its historical dynamic. This is often interpreted simply as springing from the "Faustian creative urge" or as the result of evolutions and revolutions in style, whereas in truth it consists at the same time and primarily in the gradual conquering of inherent and objective problems through prolonged common effort. In accord with this dynamic and with historical logic continuous developments took place, like the thorough rationalization of rhythmic notation or the perfecting and exhaustive working out of modulation among the 24 tonalities of the major-minor system. Such developmental features form the framework of Western music history, while changing styles of different periods, like Baroque and Romantic, and the manifold national styles fill in the picture with characteristic colors. The historical significance of masters like Josquin, Monteverdi, Bach, or Haydn consisted not only in their having given expression to their own character and that of their time and country in great works, but in their having mastered the objective tasks set them by the state of development at which music had arrived in their times. They did not always, indeed, serve a supposed progress towards the ever better; but without any doctrinaire ideas of progress they actually and objectively labored at the shaping of genres like fugue and sonata and at solving problems of form, like imitative counterpoint and thematic development, and in this way they consistently carried further what their predecessors had attained. Like research men concerned with the solution of scientific problems, composers, theoreticians, and practical musicians went after problems that arose from their material itself, consistently

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unfolding whatever possibilities its varied content offered.

To understand the course of Western music, therefore, it is not enough to follow its changes of style; more important is the study of its developmental traits or trends. "Development" is not to be understood in its biological meaning or always in an upward sense; the objective and the result of such a trend or trait do not need to be on a higher level than earlier phases; just as the gradual simplification of a language, say English or Bulgarian, does not signify an upward development to a higher level. And furthermore developmental trends do not always proceed in a straight line; sometimes they result from a tangle of changes of which they indicate the basic direction.

Alongside the new, the old continued to survive, whether pushed aside or incorporated with it. Thus, during the advance of notated polyphony, monophony lived on in folk and liturgical song, acquiring new values in the unison and the solo sonata for a single melodic instrument. Similarly in church music, even after 1600 the cantus-firmus movement was cultivated alongside free composition without prescribed melody. So too in the 19th century diatonicism and triadic sequences were contrasted with progressive chromaticism and the use of dissonance—notably by Richard Wagner. Complete elimination of the hitherto existing never occurred before the radical directions taken by the 20th century.

Developmental trends and other historical processes have led by main roads and bypaths to definitive end forms. It is on-sided to look upon all these as stagnation, as dead-end streets. In this way the multifarious notations debouched in the clearly readable score of today, the numerous rhythms, tonalities, and forms of folksong in such stereotyped schemes as strophic song-form in major mode and even measure. Classical end forms, which indeed admitted of a considerable afterlife, are for example the Palestrina style and the Bach fugue.

The self-unfolding of Western music went on for a very long time without any essential influences from outside. Only internally did it constantly absorb fructifying elements in that it drew certain melodies and general types from its own underlying strata:



cf. Cambridge + Harvard (in 2nd/3rd)



Sf. Charley (HMIM)

from folksong, from the traditions of minstrel and fiddler, and from other areas of musical practice. The history of polyphony in the Middle Ages is not, as Friedrich Ludwig assumes, to be taken as a wholly intrinsic development in which one step followed from another, the new element in the accompanying voice being at first only its range, then its own melodic movement, later its own rhythm, lastly its own text. Rather, various kinds of unwritten polyphony were both simultaneously and successively taken up in written composition and so given artistic form, these processes working together with features that were properly speaking developmental.



## FULL GRAPHIC NOTATION AND THE MUSICAL WORK OF ART

All high cultures are script cultures, but only the Western fully evolved the written presentation of music and developed it into a general basis of musical practice and education. This development had the following aspects:

1. At first practically only liturgical songs were notated, then others also and finally all genres. Almost without exception instrumentalists played without notes during the whole Middle Ages. During modern times and especially in the 19th century, both folksong and entertainment music were also notated, although favorite tunes had of course already been written down in *contrafacta* and arrangements for several voices.
2. The spread of music was much facilitated by printing, which came into use for Gregorian melodies in 1476 and after 1501 for the publication of polyphonic works. Printing meant an im-



portant step in the diffusion of musical compositions among the people, in other countries and parts of the world, and into the future. Through it the capacity of music to survive was markedly strengthened and the way prepared for the building of a world literature of music.

3. While in ancient Greece theory and notation stood far apart, in the Middle Ages theory had a decisive influence on the development of notation. Even its early treatises, contrary to any of Antiquity, contain examples in notation—for instance, the *Musica enchiriadis*.

4. At first only pitches were notated, rhythm but partially. In the course of the Middle Ages rhythm, and to some extent tempo also, came to be more precisely represented in mensural notation, and in modern times the secondary elements—dynamics, agogics, instrumentation—as well as emotional character and manner of performance have been more and more expressly prescribed. Thus the development was moving towards the goal of objectively specifying all the elements of music (cf. music exx. 20–22).

5. The staffless neumes assisted the memory and complemented oral tradition. Later forms of notation also reckoned with “the loss of things taken for granted.” The purpose of the development, however, was to make notation as far as possible independent of tradition, and accordingly to give the clearest possible indication of what the composer meant.

6. Western notation tends towards a graphic note-picture, a design to strike the eye. It is a “drawing” of the composition with its ups and downs in melody and its higher and lower voices in counterpoint. Thus it is visible and abstract at the same time: “visible abstraction,” like a map. Supplanting the less obvious letter and number notations, this legible note-picture took over completely in modern times.

7. While the primary purpose of letter notation was in the main to indicate the position of the fingers on the instrument—that is to say, the execution—linear notation primarily represents the music to be performed. Thus its development to sole supremacy also indicates the trend towards representing the composition itself, the work of art objectified.



tablets  
parchment



8. Out of the endeavor to demonstrate visually the composition itself, by the late 16th century the score was achieved, the graphic simultaneous presentation of all voices in one field of vision.

9. The development tended towards indication of all the elements involved as well as towards simplicity and general comprehensibility. In the 17th and 18th centuries it led to a final stage beyond which only little has been changed or added.

10. Only when exact transcription of both extra-European music and complex European folk music became necessary did Western notation in our own century add further signs. Such writing down of music already being played and heard is different in character from our traditional notation: it is not prescription but transcription; it shows not so-it-should-be-done but so-it-is.

Western culture produced the completely notated musical work of art and created a formal theory of composition. Before that, music, like the dance, had existed primarily as improvisation along certain guidelines. Now, however, it acquired a mode of existence like works of literature and for the theater. That the composer little by little came to prescribe all the elements of music means also that these became constituent parts of composition. Thus the figured bass, which the cembalist had to fill in according to his taste and capacity, was replaced by the *accompagnamento obbligato*, while the composer also undertook to fix ornamentation and virtuoso cadenzas himself. The practical musician lost his creative share almost wholly to the composer and became an interpreter. With this was established the norm of adhering exactly to the note-picture and rendering unaltered what was there prescribed.

Until the 16th century the share of the composer and of what he had prescribed had been limited to the setting down of pitch, rhythm, and polyphony. But then, and especially after 1600, it expanded to take in the whole sonorous foreground and also the psycho-spiritual background of the music. The composer now determined the sound-volume by dynamic marks, at first contrasting whole sections in *forte* and *piano*, and since the mid-18th century graduating the dynamics more and more, from *ppp* to *fff*, indicating not only abrupt transitions but gradual swelling and



lessening, crescendo and diminuendo, and in the "vermanirierten Mannheimer goût" (the mannered taste of the Mannheim school, with which Leopold Mozart reproached his son) letting various dynamic degrees succeed each other at closest range. Likewise he now specified tempo and agogics and also the instruments to be used. The nature of the composition changed. Instead of a neutral setting, not conceived for particular instruments and often even leaving open a choice between instrumental and vocal performance, it now became the fully specified opus in which timbre was just as much composed as the tonal structure. Accordingly instrumental and vocal style, ensemble and orchestral style, ways of composing for piano, organ, violin, flute, all became much more differentiated than before. So also there arose for every instrumental setting a repertory of its own, whereas previously instrumental music had consisted largely of "intabulations," transcriptions of vocal works and one and the same piece was intended to be sung or played, for organ or for other keyboard instruments.

A fully notated work can be better built than music scriptlessly transmitted. Western culture was the first to give architectonic form to long spans of time by purely musical means. Highly artistic forms, like fugue and sonata, are among the most characteristic contributions it brought forth in comparison with all other cultures. Only in modern times did this feature fully develop. The older contrapuntal forms—the canon, for example—are for the most part to be regarded as types of setting rather than as determining, like sonata form, the relation of the successive sections and so the course of the whole. Even the polyphonic Mass, which arose in the 14th century as a cyclical work and in the middle of the 15th became unified through having the same cantus firmus in all movements, was at that time not yet so fully organized by specifically musical means as the symphony. In forms of the modern era, principally those of absolute music, all purely musical elements were exploited for the building of purely musical structures: sequence of tonalities and modulations, especially in fugue and sonata; differences of tempo (e.g. fast-slow-fast), volume and instrumentation, as for example, alternation of tutti and solo or minuet and trio; types of composition like overture



and rondo-finale; symmetry, return and contrast, as in the three- or four-movement cycle of the sonata.

Like the sonorous foreground, the inherent and transmusal content of a composition was shaped comparatively late by the composer himself. In this the history of music differs from those of literature and the plastic arts. The leading ideas of Gothic, Mystic, Scholastic times found no such rich expression in musical monuments as did those of Goethe's time and the Romantics. The influence of Josquin des Prez was epoch-making: he differed from earlier masters not nearly so much in his more subjective and individual style as in that he expressed in the musical fabric of written composition important general ideas, notably the essence of Christian faith and prayer. Everywhere in the world music was concerned with primal phenomena like love, ethos, the sacred; but what once had been left to effects upon the hearer, to participation in supramusical contexts, to empathy and imaginative interpretation of symbols, composers since Josquin have impressed objectively into their works. They so shaped the musical substance of composition that such content became transparent. All cultures linked music and religion, but it was Western culture that first fully unfolded musical works of religious content. By pictorial effects and tonal language it expressly set forth such content, as Bach did, for example, in his Passions.

Adrian Petit Coclico praised Josquin and other composers who knew how to express "all affects" in their works. The word "affect" has today become stale and empty and does not adequately express the concepts or emotions here represented in tone and timbre. They are not only affects but whole idea-areas, like the union of majesty and fascination, the august and the miraculous that we call the sacred, or the idea of eternal life and blessedness, or the complex of sweetness-and-light, purity and grace concentrated in the figure of the Virgin Mary. Later, idea-areas in which the sensible is interwoven with the visible and intellectual were often characterized by a word—for example, "Eroica" or "Pastorale." These idea-areas have flourished and faded in the course of history, so that an outsider may think he is hearing only "sounding forms," whereas to those who are familiar



with the style and language or as historians feel their way into the contemporaneous situation, sound and form reveal content and open vistas.

The same applies to those types of absolute instrumental music that go back to types of vocal or use-music, taking over as an aura something of the atmosphere and content these pieces stood for—ballades of Chopin and Brahms, for example, the berceuse, barcarole, serenade, and so forth. The transformation of dance-pieces into the art-form of the suite, and similar processes, show the modern development of music into a self-reliant art. Leaving behind its manifold connections with life and its position as a scholarly discipline among the liberal arts, music entered the circle of the fine arts and was now considered an esthetically autonomous world in itself. This transformation took place in all types of composition. Thus the oratorios of Handel or Beethoven's *Missa sollemnis* stand on their own feet as works of art even though they remain linked with the traditions of church music. Despite these bonds and despite all continuance and all revival of life-linked types, the ever-growing self-reliance of the art of music was a basic feature of its evolution. In the measure that it ceased to be part and function of extraneous activities—worship, or court, or festival—an independent musical life sprang up, with its own institutions and concert halls, its audiences, its music literature, its own esthetic, and so on. The forms of an autonomous culture area took shape, familiar to us but alien to all earlier cultures. Music became a “splendid, autocratic art,” as Herder called it, who, on the other hand also paid tribute to its significance as *Hausmusik* and as the voice of humanity and of the nations.

self-dependent



## THE WEALTH OF STYLES AND WORKS

That the main and basic store of the world's musical literature is constituted by a selection of Western works acquires still greater weight because of the variety of styles it includes. So far as style consists in the coining of characteristic individuality, not every group and person has a style of their own, their own note; instead, out of a quantity of colorless music there arise, as strong personalities arise out of the mass, composers and communities distinguished by certain stylistic elements or by a style of their own.

In music history the West has, if not always, at least particularly often, offered good conditions for the unfolding of distinctive personalities and personal styles. Haydn throws light on the circumstances that favored such individuality when he says: "As leader of an orchestra I was able to experiment, to observe what brings out an impression, and what weakens it, and so to improve, add, cut out, dare; I was separated from the world. Nobody around me could confuse and bother me about myself, and so I had to become original." The statement holds for the other outstanding ardent spirits and personalities, original geniuses among the masters. They experimented, but in the sense of actually experiencing how new ideas might be concretely realized; through their experience as conductors, concertizing pianists, or men of the theater, they arrived at new ideas. They were nonconformist enough to take their task hard and not to rest self-satisfied in the beaten track, but not so nonconformist as those eccentrics who avoid encounters with reality. They dedicated themselves to their special world without becoming isolated and faced their environment with its concrete realities without falling victim to it.

\*  
cf. Herzog: "aus einem mal zu  
aus einem mal / man jenseits  
de fagen jenseits"



Haydn combined practical demands of his art with friendliness to others in a humanistic manner and could join in with the contemporary concept of the original genius, though his whole nature ran counter to the storm-and-stress current of his time. Yet the same fundamental ideas he thus stands for have been lived and voiced in every century of the West's modern era, albeit with variations and with various motives. Luther himself pointed out the nature of genius in the works of Josquin des Prez, explaining it by the opposition between law and grace. Where only law commands, work and its results are sour and joyless; where mercy, *gratia*, *charisma*, are active however, work goes along very well. So God preaches the good news through music also: in Josquin the superiority of grace and mercy becomes evident; his compositions flow forth gaily and gently, not driven or constrained by rules.

\* Since the 15th century the leading composers tower so high out of the whole musical life of their time that the history of Western music might be presented simply through its creative masters. But this would be a onesided view; quite as important as individual personalities are also the peoples, the classes of society, and the currents of the time. Since the Middle Ages the Western nations had been combining international with national features in their characteristic modifications of forms common to all. If, for example, one compares the tune of the later Hildebrand song<sup>1</sup> with a French version of the same type, a melody to the historical song *Reveillez-vous, Piccars!*, characteristic differences appear between the two national styles. French singing combines a pungent clarity with charm and élan, likes precise accents and sharply punctuated rhythms. The German version is more restless and impulsive; the melodic movement here has more drive and flow, it lingers and darts ahead, and is more mimetically expressive. Similar characteristic differences in style exist among different versions of the same melodic formulas as used by northern French trouvères, Provençal troubadours, German minnesingers,

<sup>1</sup> A melody handed down since the 16th century but probably originating in the 13th at the latest. Cf. the author's *Sammlung europäischer Volksgesang* (Cologne 1952), p. 64 ff.



and in Italian laude and Spanish cantigas.

National styles became still richer and more pronounced from the 15th century on and more mutually fructifying, as witness the contrasts between madrigal, chanson, and German lied or between opera buffa, opéra comique and singspiel. Characteristic for this variety of national styles in the West are compositions contrasting several such styles with each other; there is, for instance, a set of variations by Alessandro Poglietti (d. 1683) in which a theme is treated in the styles of diverse races in Austria and the Empire. To be considered also are the works of great masters who took up and exploited various national styles, like Bach, Mozart, Wagner. Discussion of such differences, which was especially popular in the 18th century, tells us something about national psychologies. Mattheson says (1713) that in music the Italians are best at execution and surprise, the French at diverting and charming, the Germans at composing and studying, the English at judging and recompensing. Yet the nations' awareness of their own and their neighbors' special qualities was in general too rough and generalized to reflect the various nuances in these actual differences. Furthermore national styles were not fixed from the beginning and for all time. They developed, changed, weakened in the course of history. The history of European music is certainly not to be understood as a juxtaposition of several almost unalterable psychic national predispositions, each of which moved into the foreground at a different time, nor as the struggle for hegemony between a race that from the outset heard horizontally and one that *a priori* heard vertically.

Peoples, social classes, cities that played a part in determining the course of Western music history and brought to maturity in their time its wealth of notable characters and colorings, arose in favorable constellations to their full historic significance and with the setting of these constellations withdrew into the background. Similarly, Christianity did not at once and everywhere infuse the music of the church and of the rest of the Christian world with its spirit, but was obliged to prevail over other historical forces and, after setbacks, to attempt renewal. The spiritual and the temporal, the sacred and the profane were never set upon

"pashiches" 117

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the same level, as some think who misunderstand the *contrafacta* that turned secular into spiritual melodies and vice versa; they were antitheses that again and again set new problems. A lasting tension existed between them, as between Church and State, that "inner dynamic in which Western culture had the advantage over every sort of pure theocracy or purely secular state," as Eduard Spranger expresses it. Only because they were a fruitful solution of such tensions, above the extremes of purism and secularization, could the great works of Christian musical art—of Dufay and Josquin, Lassus and Schütz, Bach and Bruckner—come into being. They form a peak in the history of the West and over and above this in the history of the human spirit. In Hegel's words, "this fundamental religious music belongs to the most profound and the most influential that any art can produce."



#### PREPARATION OF THE FOURTH AGE

The early phase of the modern period began about 1500. It began with humanism, the Reformation, the printing of music, Josquin des Prez and other composers, the frottola and the madrigal, and so forth. The term "Renaissance," in music particularly, does not help us much in characterizing and epitomizing the historically important events of this epoch. The modern period proper, however, as in philosophy and science (Descartes, Bacon, Kepler, Galileo, Huygens, et al.) did not start till around 1600: when opera and oratorio originated and countless other types of vocal and instrumental music; when the secondary elements of music were taken into composition and the church modes were replaced by the major-minor system with its scales transposable into 24

keys, rich chromaticism and the use, soon to unfold, of dissonant chords.

In the modern period in the West almost all the evolutionary traits began that run through our own period, the first stage of the Fourth Age of music. The 19th century, especially, is at once a mighty finale to the Third Age and a prelude to the Fourth. "This century," says Hans Freyer, "is much more powerful than we even today, at the distance of more than one generation, are able to estimate. Whoever looks at it merely as a period in European history does not do it justice. The immense productivity it unchained within the limited area of the West is like a mere echo of its world-historic significance."

Soon after its beginnings Western culture started to spread to Eastern Europe, and with the start of the modern era began its expansion over the whole globe. Whatever the individual differences, in every country similar forms of adaptation and assimilation resulted. Missionaries, settlers, traveling musicians brought folk music and Gregorian chant: courts attracted virtuosos and opera troupes; islands of Western music arose in an Eastern environment. Over and above this, indigenous creative talents adopted Western forms and styles. Thus in the 17th century Western polyphony permeated Russian chant, and Russia took over the "world-dominating note-and-staff system" which with its "imposing simplicity," as Otto Riesemann points out, had no difficulty whatever in replacing the old notation of Russian chant. In the days of Catherine II composers like Dmitri Bortniansky (1751-1825) followed Western patterns in accord with the aims of Peter the Great.

With the "awakening" of the nations began the collecting of indigenous folk material, with which native composers, like Mussorgsky, were busying themselves by the 19th century. Western composers—Mendelssohn and Schumann, for example—wrote works using national color characteristics of various countries. In so doing they came to fabricate some imaginary national atmosphere, as in the make-believe Hungarian and Spanish music of Liszt, Brahms, Bizet. But above all, new national styles of their own developed in the various countries of East as well as West

Dissonance  
in the 19th  
century





Europe. This "process of nationalization" is not just to be equated with "the replacement of the universal Graeco-Roman gods by provincial divinities," as Alfred Einstein would have us believe, but also means that those European peoples who did not take part, or a central part, in the development of Western music, from now on cultivated styles of their own amalgamating Western structures with indigenous traditions. Already with Chopin and most definitely with Mussorgsky, Smetana, Dvořák, and others the forming of such styles was connected with nationalist political aspirations.

*J. Dvorak!*

The historical importance of these movements lies not merely in their contribution to the history of nationalism in the world. Rather they indicate also a re-animation of old and archaic forms of music that were not limited to a single nation but spread over all Europe and far beyond. When for example Chopin or Grieg used both the augmented fourth and double-bourdon, in tonality and elementary polyphony they were renewing not specifically Polish or Norwegian traits but a common possession from archaic times. The so-called national schools of the 19th century began to revive extra- and pre-Western layers of music, not only expanding the Western art of composition through their use but leading it out beyond its boundaries: Debussy, Bartók, Janáček, Falla, and others continued this process, which has long since reached into other parts of the world. More will be said about this in the next chapter.

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With the expansion of Western science, technique, and music throughout Europe and the globe, the modern era has cleared the way for the planetary civilization of the Fourth Age. At the same time it has prepared the present-day position of music in relation to the public and in the various levels of a post-bourgeois, democratic or socialist society. It developed the public concert and other forms of musical life of society at large without class barriers. Following the philanthropic Enlightenment many songs were composed for the people, and since Herder the characteristic traditions of urban and rural populations have been collected and brought to a second life. Herein research, popular education, and renovation have cooperated. From the viewpoint of general



history the most varied events contributing to this process are elements in a historical complex: for example, the rise of the Prussian public school system with the introduction of singing as an obligatory branch of public-school instruction and teachers' seminars (1809); the upsurge in Germany of male choruses; the collecting of folksongs by Ludwig Erk, Zuccalmaglio, Erben, Kolberg, and others; the folksong settings since Silcher and Brahms; the youth movement in Germany at the turn of the 19th century, the simultaneous folksong movement in Austria around Josef Pommer, and similar movements in other countries.

In a series of renaissances the modern era developed the Western world's consciousness of history and set in motion the collecting of all mankind's musical heritage. First came the turning back to Antiquity in humanism and to old church music, to Gregorian chant and polyphony from Palestrina to Bach. Here too research, revival of old works, and renewing of old styles lent each other wings. The awareness and study of music history expanded and took command in research and education. On the model of the humanistic revival of antique culture each of these renaissances unfolded a historical pattern in which an earlier period was transfigured, the intervening time appeared as a decline, and to the present fell the task of bending the curve of history's course upward again to prepare for a new flowering.

In such views of the world and of music, thinking revolved around history and the future and this links these renaissance movements with progressive tendencies like those surrounding Wagner and Liszt. 1830 was the year that saw the revival of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* but also the first performance of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*. In 1850 the Bachgesellschaft was formed and Wagner's *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (*The Art-work of the Future*) appeared. The coincidence of such dates indicates not only contrast, for the progressive parties of the 19th century strove, unlike the avant-gardism of today, both for the new and for renewal, widely re-incorporating old style-elements. Innately characteristic for Wagner is not only his advancing the development of chromaticism, dissonant chord construction, declamatory rhythm, and so forth, but also his



drawing upon the revived heritage from Bach and Palestrina, Gregorian chant and archaic monophony, and playing up the contrast between old and new conceptions in works like Parsifal with its distinction between the realm of the Knights of the Grail and Klingsor's enchanted garden.

The rapid evolution of chromaticism, dissonance, modulation, etc. was made possible through broadening or else discarding the old conception of the harmonic significance of music. Heretofore music counted primarily as the paradigm of beautiful, blissful "harmonious" agreement. It was held to reflect the eternal harmony of the macrocosm and to be a means of expressing and bringing to effect the inner harmony of the microcosm, the health and happiness of mankind, *musica humana*. This view continued well into the modern era; it was upheld as an example by Ronsard, for instance, and likewise by Shakespeare in *The Merchant of Venice*, newly substantiated by Kepler, Werckmeister, Bach, and, following this tradition, glorified in poetry by Goethe. Visible models for the nature and effect of music were the figures of Orpheus taming the wild element in animal and man with harmony, or of David healing the sick and melancholy king with his harp playing. Not until the 19th century did it become customary to represent rather than combat wildness and sickness through music. It had lain in neither the intent nor the capacity of music in the Middle Ages to depict the Inferno as Dante did. Now, however, Weber, Meyerbeer, Berlioz, Wagner, and others found in such materials and figures—the wolf's den, the witches' Sabbath, Ortrud, Kundry—the richest possibilities for further development of dissonance, enhanced chromaticism, harsh and uncanny sounds. The question was discussed whether the scene in the wolf's den over-stepped musical limits and whether the devil was not too unmusical to be represented in music. But the development went further; it led to representation of the perverse and the horrible, as in Strauss's *Salome* and *Elektra*, and further to the opposition on principle against music as the symbol of harmony. It is indicative of the disharmonization of music that the sharpest dissonances now became elements in "harmonic theory."

Tragic music



If one looks upon the 19th century not from the standpoint of those movements that were striving away from it, it seems like a splendid flowering or at least a luminously multicolored autumn of music's Third Age. Works of Chopin, Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner, Verdi, Richard Strauss far surpass the music of earlier times in color, differentiation of hues, expressive nuance. Over-rich in tone-colors and chord-formations, chromatics and modulations, dynamic shading and variety of expression, works like Strauss's *Don Juan* or *Salome* appear to be peaks and endpoints of a development.

At the same time, however, signs of stagnation and atrophy gave indication of a process that, often interpreted as decadence, was just as much transition to the Fourth Age as decline of the Third. The possibility of finding new chords and modulations within the framework of the major-minor system came to an end. Rapid passage into remote tonalities had become easy and smooth, losing its value as it lost the character of genuine modulation. Similarly, the exploitation of always further dynamic possibilities, begun around 1600, was practically closed off with Max Reger and his contemporaries. In addition came the decline of old folk-traditions, a decline consisting not only in their "dying out" but also in their loss of fecundity and the simplification into stereotyped major (cf. music ex. 42). Even in the church congregational singing lived almost entirely off its heritage from earlier times, and after the 19th century occidental culture in Europe no longer wrote its own dance music but subsisted on importations from North and South America. And together with all this, art music lost those sources from which it had drawn since the beginning of Western culture; this material too had been used up.

Yet this does not signify a "decline of the West." For in the first place the heritage of Western music is bound to remain of enduring significance. Jacob Burckhardt, it is true, said in his *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* (*Observations on World History*) that "its imperishableness" depends on "the continuation of our tonal system and rhythm, which is not eternal. Mozart and Beethoven can become as incomprehensible to a future man-



kind as Greek music, so highly prized by its contemporaries, is to us now. They will then remain great on credit, through the enthusiastic statements of our time, somewhat like the ancient painters whose works are no longer extant." But merely in view of the fact that in every continent Western works form the basis of musical repertory and Western theory the foundation of musical education, this assumption can probably not be sustained. In addition, comparative and methodical proofs have shown that its spread throughout the world rests upon the immanent universality of Western music and its systems.

In the second place, the fate of the West as a part of the earth is to be distinguished from the fate of Western culture as a temporally limited cultural movement. In recent years the new Europe, in music as in other fields, has shown through its achievement and vitality that it is not in the grip of a decline. There are many indications that, despite the loss of political power, even in the age of technical civilization now begun, it can and will remain musically significant.