

### **23. Eine Wiener Musikzeitschrift (1932-1937)**

The Austrian journal 23. *Eine Wiener Musikzeitschrift* [DWM] was published in Vienna from January 1932 to September 1937. It was started by Willi Reich, Ernst Křenek and Rudolf Ploderer as a means of correcting what they perceived to be the decadence that pervaded the work of contemporary music critics, whom they criticized as being uninformed and disinterested, as well as of practicing favoritism. The title refers to paragraph 23 of the Austrian press law, regarding the right to correct publicly the false statements of others.<sup>1</sup>

The journal appeared irregularly. Although the first three issues appeared only a month apart, the flow of publication soon diminished. Over six years, thirty-three consecutively numbered issues were published in twenty installments as single, double, or even triple issues. A single issue usually has sixteen pages; the final triple issue of September 1937, forty-eight pages. The journal is not subdivided into sections, but rather is constituted of a loose succession of articles.

The musical essayist and critic Willi Reich (1898-1980) was the owner, publisher and general editor of DWM and a student of Alban Berg. In a letter to Reich, Hans Heinsheimer, director of the opera division of Universal-Edition, described DWM as the only truly independent Austrian music journal of the time.<sup>2</sup> Here, Heinsheimer also makes mention of the resources at Reich's disposal, possibly implying that Reich was also the financial backbone of the undertaking. Later, Reich emigrated to Switzerland in January 1938, eventually working as a music critic for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and as a faculty member at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule in Zurich.

The composer Ernst Křenek (1900-91) was a student of Franz Schreker and for a brief period the husband of Gustav Mahler's daughter, Anna, who introduced Křenek to Alban Berg. Křenek had worked as assistant to music critic and opera director Paul Bekker at the opera house in Kassel, where Křenek wrote small-scale compositions as well as program notes. Beginning in 1927, Křenek contributed articles to the *Musikblätter des Anbruch*, a journal for new music published by Universal-Edition.<sup>3</sup> Křenek's writings about his own compositions and modern music in the context of society show a succinct

<sup>1</sup> According to Willi Reich, the title also secretly referred to Berg's "Schicksalszahl" [number of fate]. See introduction to the reprint of DWM. Vienna: O. Kerry, 1971: 1.

<sup>2</sup> See a letter from Heinsheimer to Reich in DWM, no. 7 (December 1932): 10-12.

<sup>3</sup> See Ole Hass, *Musikblätter des Anbruch 1919-1937*. 3 vols. Répertoire international de la presse musicale (Baltimore, Maryland: NISC, 2004).

and clear style that he also displayed in his lectures on new music.<sup>4</sup> Křenek was cofounder of the International Society for New Music<sup>5</sup> and regularly commented on its proceedings in DWM, as well as on the activities of its counter-organization, the “Ständiger Rat für die internationale Zusammenarbeit der Komponisten” [Permanent advisory board for the international collaboration of composers], founded by Richard Strauss in Wiesbaden in 1934.<sup>6</sup> The theme of personal freedom recurs throughout Křenek’s compositions and writings. When Goebbels refused Wilhelm Furtwängler’s plea to the German Nazi government to employ more Jewish musicians, Křenek wrote a rebuttal in DWM against the fascist propaganda for “pure German music.”<sup>7</sup> Under the pseudonym “Austriacus,” Křenek took up the case in DWM for Austria’s independence from Germany’s fascist politics, continuously polemicising against writings in the Viennese musical press that sympathized with the German government. In his long article on Monteverdi’s *L’Incoronazione di Poppea*,<sup>8</sup> he discussed his detailed German edition of the work, the premiere of which he conducted with the newly formed Internationale Opern-Gesellschaft [International opera society], which toured in the United States in 1937. Křenek emigrated to the United States shortly thereafter, where he led a very active musical life until his return to Austria in 1982.

Little is known about Rudolf Ploderer, the third founder of DWM, who was a lawyer and a friend of Alban Berg.<sup>9</sup> According to his obituary in DWM (November 1933), Ploderer committed suicide on 10 September 1933. An open response by Reich to Ploderer’s farewell letter<sup>10</sup> describes him as being fifteen years older than Reich. He also thanks Ploderer for sharing in the playing of four-hand piano arrangements of the music of Bruckner, Mahler, and Schoenberg, and for Ploderer’s help in understanding the man Alban Berg. Of special interest are Ploderer’s review of Richard Eichenauer’s fascist book on *Musik und Rasse*<sup>11</sup> [Music and race] and his report on and comparison of lectures by Křenek, Schoenberg, and Hanns Eisler on new music.<sup>12</sup>

Starting in December 1934, many contributions to DWM came from Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno (1903-69), who had emigrated from Austria to England in the same year. Adorno, who studied composition with Berg and piano with new music champion Eduard Steuermann, is arguably the most famous defender of twelve-tone music. His articles in DWM appear under the pseudonym “Hektor Rottweiler” and deal with, for

<sup>4</sup> See review by Rudolf Ploderer in DWM, no. 10 (May 1933): 17-23.

<sup>5</sup> In the journal, the society is referred to by its German title, the Internationale Gesellschaft für neue Musik [IGNM].

<sup>6</sup> Because of this society’s fascist “Blut und Boden” [Blood and land] mentality, Křenek refers to the members of Strauss’ organisation as “Bluboisten” and to their music festival as the “Blubo-Internationale.”

<sup>7</sup> Křenek, “Zu einigen Thesen des Herrn Dr. Goebbels,” in DWM, no. 11/12 (June 1933): 1-6.

<sup>8</sup> DWM, no. 31/33 (September 1937): 22-30.

<sup>9</sup> Reich, introduction to reprint, op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> DWM, no. 14 (February 1934): 24.

<sup>11</sup> DWM, no. 8/9 (February 1933): 19-29.

<sup>12</sup> DWM, no. 10 (May 1933): 17-23.

example, the crisis in music criticism,<sup>13</sup> Gustav Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*,<sup>14</sup> and music pedagogy.<sup>15</sup> In 1938, Adorno moved with the Institut für Sozialforschung [Institute for social studies] from Oxford to New York. He returned to Frankfurt am Main in 1949.<sup>16</sup> Fortunately, Reich was able to oversee and to write a valuable introduction for a reprint of DWM in 1971. According to Reich, he had been in contact with his teacher, Alban Berg, about the idea of starting a journal that could be for the musical world, what Karl Kraus's journal *Die Fackel* [The torch] was for Vienna.<sup>17</sup> Kraus was well-known in Vienna for quoting and ridiculing other journalists and public speakers in his journal, and Reich, Berg, and Schoenberg revered him for the clarity of his thinking and for his uncompromising stance. In DWM's second article, "Ein untrüglicher Prüfstein" [An unflinching criterion], Reich refers to the sparseness of Karl Kraus's endeavors in "musical criminology" and promises that DWM will specialize in just that.

The first years of DWM focus on the correction of erroneous statements in other music publications. The main targets are the influential music critic Julius Korngold and his disciples, Josef Reitler and Kurt Roger, of the *Neue freie Presse*.<sup>18</sup> It is shown repeatedly that Julius Korngold used his influence to further the career of his son, the prodigy composer Erich Wolfgang Korngold. Reacting to such comments, the elder Korngold filed a suit against Reich after the publication of the first issue of DWM, which was eventually resolved in Reich's favor.<sup>19</sup> Many articles deal with J. Korngold's demonstrative and disruptive behavior at concerts and his sometimes sparse research on the subjects of his criticisms; other DWM articles point to the influence of J. Korngold on Reitler and Roger. It is claimed, for example, that Reitler—who was both music critic and director of the Neues Wiener Konservatorium—showed favoritism in his reviews of works and performances by those associated with the institution he directed. The journal's writers also accuse Joseph Marx, music critic for the *Neues Wiener Journal* as well as director of the Vienna Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst [Conservatory for music and theater], of a similar conflict of interest. Marx is also charged with the inability to write logically. To make this point, excerpts from his criticism are quoted in DWM without further comment,<sup>20</sup> in the tradition of the journal's model, Karl Kraus's *Die Fackel*.

The focus of DWM shifts in 1934 and moves closer to that of a mainstream music journal, containing full-length articles on various musical topics as well as music reviews. Reich explains the new focus as being necessary because he had begun contributing, in

<sup>13</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> Adorno, "Marginalien zu Mahler," in DWM, no. 26/27 (June 1936): 13-19.

<sup>15</sup> DWM, no. 28/30 (November 1936): 29-37.

<sup>16</sup> *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 1st ed., s.v. "Adorno, Theodor Wiesengrund."

<sup>17</sup> See introduction to reprint, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> In DWM sometimes abbreviated as N. fr. Pr.

<sup>19</sup> Reich, "Der Korngoldprozess," in DWM, no. 13 (November 1933): 19-23.

<sup>20</sup> DWM, no. 3 (March 1932): 8-10.

January 1934,<sup>21</sup> to other Viennese journals, which made it difficult for him to claim editorial freedom and independence for DWM. Within the context of the new editorial policy, Ernst Křenek presents his concept of a studio for the rehearsal and performance of new music;<sup>22</sup> Alfred Orel discusses Arnold Schering's book *Beethoven in neuer Deutung* [Beethoven newly interpreted],<sup>23</sup> and Adorno writes "Zur Krise der Musikkritik" [On the crisis of music criticism].<sup>24</sup> While most of the articles of the beginning years of 23 are unsigned, signatures become more common after this shift in focus in 1934.<sup>25</sup>

Reich published two special issues of DWM. The first, issue number fourteen, was published on the occasion of Anton Webern's fiftieth birthday.<sup>26</sup> In addition to various dedications it contains two articles by Reich on the works<sup>27</sup> and the lectures<sup>28</sup> of Webern, as well as a photograph of a bronze head of Webern by Josef Humplik and a portrait sketch of Webern by Franz Rederer. The second special issue was double issue number 24/25, which appeared in February 1936 *in memoriam* Alban Berg. With Berg's death in December 1935 still fresh in his friends' memories, the articles are a moving document of the authors' sympathies with the composer. Included are the funeral speeches of Hugo Winter of Universal-Edition, Ernst Křenek and Willi Reich, and further expressions of grief by Reich and Soma Morgenstern. Adorno contributed a review of Berg's symphonic pieces from the opera *Lulu*<sup>29</sup> and his reminiscences of Berg.<sup>30</sup>

In the double issue no. 15/16 (October 1934), special mention is made of the sixtieth birthdays of Schoenberg and Karl Kraus (both in the same year). Here, Křenek compares the striving of these two "outsiders" for integrity and truth. In the same issue, Reich also printed an article by Hans Ferdinand Redlich on Schoenberg as the moral apostle of the time declaring that his music relates more to the nineteenth than to the twentieth century and that Schoenberg pays no heed to the needs and abilities of his audience. Reich comments that Redlich's view seems to be characteristic of a large number of educated musicians.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>21</sup> DWM, no. 24/25 (February 1936): 29-31. Reich had already contributed regularly to the Berlin music journal *Melos* since 1929.

<sup>22</sup> DWM, no. 15/16 (October 1934): 9-14.

<sup>23</sup> DWM, no. 17/19 (December 1934): 1-13.

<sup>24</sup> DWM, no. 20/21 (March 1935): 5-15.

<sup>25</sup> Reich gives the authors' names (mostly Křenek and Ploderer) in his introduction to the reprint. He also reveals the identity of Křenek behind the pseudonym of "Austriacus" and that of Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno behind "Hektor Rottweiler."

<sup>26</sup> DWM, no. 14 (February 1934).

<sup>27</sup> DWM, no. 14 (February 1934): 5-8.

<sup>28</sup> DWM, no. 14 (February 1934): 17-22.

<sup>29</sup> DWM, no. 24/25 (February 1936): 5-11.

<sup>30</sup> DWM, no. 24/25 (February 1936): 19-29.

<sup>31</sup> Adorno replied to Redlich in a letter, which is published with the introduction to the reprint of DWM, op. cit.

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This RIPM publication is based on a microfilm copy of the journal in the New York Public Library. The first four pages of issue no. 24/25 (February 1936) are missing from the microfilm; Smith College in Massachusetts kindly provided copies of these from the reprint edition.