

Judging Performance, Performing Judgments: Race and Performance in Weimar Germany

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The past has become more important than before. We are in search of *authenticity*. The crucial thing is that the productive artist is no longer in control, and hence the growth of importance of the reproductive artist.

—Wilhelm Furtwängler ([1928] 1989: 31; emphasis in the original)

In the summer of 1930, the pianist John Flaffith concertized throughout Europe and astounded audiences with his vivid interpretations of a varied repertoire, ranging from Debussy and Stravinsky to Bach and Mozart. In Poland, the *Kurjer Polski* raved: “Yesterday John Flaffith played before a wild audience. What this great artist understands and brings [to the music] can only be appreciated still more by the expert. The present author, who has heard the great masters of the piano play and can be regarded as the quintessential critic has only this to say: John Flaffith was better than them all.”¹ In Budapest, the *Magyarország* reported, “It brings us great pleasure to report on the enormous success [enjoyed] by John Flaffith, who played the most difficult pieces with great technique and the most intimate feeling for the piano.” But, as the article went on to say, what most astonished concertgoers “is that Mister Flaffith is a Negro! [One] infused with the soul of Beethoven and Liszt. In short: a phenomenon who should serve as a model for the white piano player” (Harrer 1930: 735).²

Alas, Flaffith’s success did not last. Just prior to an engagement before a packed house in Germany, Flaffith was confronted by a crazed fellow artist who shouted “I want us white artists to be free of the black menace!” before pulling out a revolver and shooting Flaffith in the shoulder. As stagehands scurried to get medical attention, Flaffith’s agent was heard to cry out “No water, no water!” It was not long before the sentiment behind this curious aversion was revealed, for no sooner had one stagehand put a wet washcloth on Flaffith’s forehead than loud cries were heard throughout the hall: “Flaffith is no Negro, he is white!” (Harrer: 735).³ Months later, Flaffith found himself fully recovered but unable to secure even a single engagement. Eventually, he revealed to a German reporter the inspiration behind his successful, if short-lived, ruse:

It was not my idea, but rather that of my wife . . . After we had married I played in a bar in New York, which went rather badly. But I lost the position because my playing was too serious. Anny, who always gave me encouragement, said that I should try being a piano virtuoso. It came to nothing. A Negro film, which we saw together during this time, suddenly gave Anny the idea that I could try doing things as a Negro artist. The last of our savings brought us across the ocean. In the beginning I tried to concertize in several cities as a white pianist, but had no success. But if I appeared as a Negro, I found myself enthusiastically welcomed; in short: I was soon a true great known the world over. (Harrer 1930: 737)⁴

The story is likely fictional: no trace of John Flaffith can be found in other contemporary sources. But its underlying claim—that musical performance has never been purely about the music itself but rather has found itself bound up in larger questions surrounding what is performed, when and by whom—is a concern which loomed large in the minds of music critics of the interwar period. And yet, scholars of Weimar Germany have been surprisingly slow in turning their attention toward performance to see what it can tell us about the larger socio-historical context in which it is produced. There is a robust historiography outlining the culture wars fought over the nationalist inclinations and legacies of composers and the extent to which they and their music could be said to reflect or anticipate conservative, liberal, socialist, and nascent national-socialist ideals (on Handel, see Potter 2011. For Beethoven, see Dennis 1996. For a recent account of the Nazis' appropriation of Mozart, see Levi 2011). Yet when it comes to performance, according to Christopher Small,

the part played by the performers in the perception of [musical works] has often not come into consideration; when performance is discussed at all, it is spoken of as if it were nothing more than a presentation . . . of the work that is being performed. It is rare to find the act of musical performance thought of as possessing, much less creating, meanings in its own right. (Small 1998: 4)

If the function of race within the performance of classical instrumental music has until recently largely been ignored, its place within other musical traditions has been better documented by ethnomusicologists. From the centrality of “blackness” in jazz to the importance of “Jewishness” in performing Klezmer music, re-conceptualizing musical performance as central to the construction of ethnic identity, negotiation of power, and assertion of agency has been well-recognized (see, for example, Rudinow 1994 and Waligórska 2005). In this article, I examine the place of the performer in interwar Germany, a figure who came to assume a new importance amidst heightened nationalism, xenophobia, and broad social anxieties surrounding the place of traditional culture in the modern world.

What I am interested in here, in other words, is unpacking the notion, as the pianist Claudio Arrau put it, “that only a German can play Beethoven . . . only a Viennese can feel Schubert” (Horowitz 1982: 120). Critical views toward the performer can indeed tell us much about the dispositions of those who articulate them. How were the connections between national identity and performance understood, articulated, and ultimately deployed by Weimar critics and musicologists? What can an examination of music through the lens of performance tell us about the underlying anxieties of the interwar period? Finally, to what extent can these views on performance be said to have anticipated, mirrored, or otherwise prefigured those under National Socialism? Here, I offer some preliminary answers to these questions. In doing so, I hope to show that questions of rupture loom just as large as those of continuity—the prevalent mode that dominated the “doom and gloom” historiography of the sixties, seventies, and eighties (Gay 1968, Laqueur 1974, and Peukert 1991). Where the vexed question of race and performance was concerned, the views of cultural conservatives,⁵ long viewed as hostile towards Weimar democracy, exhibited an extraordinary diversity.

National Identity and Modern Musical Performance

“Is there any such thing as a typical German form of playing? Every German musician knows it, and still it is difficult to describe and explain in words” (Zilcher 1932: 1061).⁶ Although Weimar critics like Hermann Zilcher devoted considerable time to such questions, it would be a mistake to claim they originated with them. The late imperial Reich gave rise to initial forays into these and other mysteries in the form of Rudolf Louis’s highly influential *Die Deutsche Musik der Gegenwart* (Contemporary German Music), which extolled the artistic acumen of such luminaries as the pianist turned conductor Hans von Bülow: “a model, unsurpassed . . . the pure artistic distinction of this unique personality that impresses us and will impress later generations . . . is *the ethnic qualities of the man*” (Louis 1912: 303; emphasis in the original). Writing in 1935, Ferruccio Busoni, mentor to hundreds of pianists over the course of his distinguished career, similarly recalled an incident involving his Dutch-born student Egon Petri’s border crossing into Germany in 1907:

He was carrying Beethoven’s sonatas in his suitcase, which were pulled out and inspected in the customs office. “What is that?” asks the officer. “They are scores—Beethoven’s sonatas.” “Ah, those are Beethoven’s sonatas,” replies the officer as he leafs through them. “To understand them is the most difficult thing of all,” he says, handing back the volume. “And,” he adds, taking Egon for an Englishman, “a foreigner is incapable of it; for that you have to be German.” (Quoted in Riethmüller 2002: 293)

Birthright was often held responsible for the cultural insights that it conferred onto performers of German music. This view was effectively summed up by one critic who, seeking to explain how the conductor Bruno Walter arrived at such stirring renditions of Beethoven and Wagner, concluded that “the man was born in Berlin . . . and he belongs to us” (Beck 1926: 71). Much has been made of a peculiarly German “organic,” “exclusivist” conception of identity, particularly in comparison to its “inclusivist” and “assimilationist” French counterpart (Brubaker 1992). However, while there is much to recommend this view, essentialist attitudes toward ethnicity and performance were not unique to German critics. For those performers who failed the birthright test, a proper upbringing in the musical culture often sufficed, as it did, for example, with pianist Arrau. Reminiscing on his days playing in 1920s Berlin, Arrau observed, “If someone would say, ‘You know, he is from South America,’ he was told, ‘Oh yes, but his *upbringing* was in Berlin” (Horowitz: 121; emphasis in the original).

A further way of judging performance credentials was through the imagining of “national schools” of performance. Critics, musicologists, and performers invented and immersed themselves within pedagogical traditions that were understood to connect by direct lineage the modern-day performer with the intentions of a work’s long-dead creator. The most illustrious of these schools in twentieth-century Europe was undoubtedly the Leschetizky School, centered on the famous Viennese pedagogue of the same name and renowned for producing interpreters of Beethoven. Leschetizky could claim authority as a student of Carl Czerny (1771–1857) who, in turn, inherited the stamp of authentic interpretation by virtue of his lessons with Beethoven himself. Through such narratives, performers were often imagined as bringing the true intentions of the composer to light. But not all performers entirely agreed with such an assessment—even those who would clearly benefit from such a genealogy. Thus we find Arthur Schnabel (1882–1951), himself a former student of Leschetizsky and celebrated for his Beethoven in the 1920s, remarking in his memoirs: “There is no Leschetizsky method. It is a mere legend—an absolute fallacy” (Schnabel 1964: 125). Commenting more generally on the notion of national schools, Schnabel was entirely dismissive:

I lived for thirty years in Germany and even so I would not be able to say what the “German technique” is. For in Germany all kinds of piano techniques were taught—flat or round fingers, stretched out or drawn in, elbows fixed or waving, glued to the hips or far out . . . Which one was the “German technique?” (Schnabel 1964: 195)

This fixation on national schools was itself a relatively new phenomenon during Weimar and contrasted with nineteenth-century conceptions of

performance. In the so-called “Romantic Age” piano playing was characterized as much by its preference for extemporization as its fidelity to the printed score: a performer’s improvisatory power was often viewed as a yardstick for measuring their overall artistic capabilities (Hamilton 2008: 22). One wonders if the consolidation of the Western canon beginning around 1800—and the subsequent sacralization of composers which accompanied it—ushered in a shift in performance practice, whereby complete fidelity to the composer’s intentions came to assume an overriding importance (Goehr 2007). Little room was left for ingenuity on the part of the performer—his or her new function as mediator between the deceased composer and his living audience reduced the performer to a new role as the vessel through which the sacred notes of the composer could be transmitted. It is worth remembering the reasons behind Berlioz’s conception of Liszt as “the pianist of the future” in June 1836—namely, for the way in which the latter’s performances ensured “not a note was left out, not one added . . . no inflection was effaced, no change of tempo permitted” (Goehr 2007: 233). In Berlioz’s experience, such an approach clearly deviated from prevailing practice.

Testimonies by twentieth-century performers reveal the extent of this shift from earlier room for maneuver in performance to the musical score’s new position of authority. After World War I, Liszt’s radical fidelity to the score was seen as *de rigueur*. According to German pianist Walter Giesecking, writing in 1942,

A sensible, artistically valid and truthful interpretation is inextricably linked with the concept of the work in its true form (*Werktreue*). Every artwork of any significance is endowed with definite expressive content by its creator which the interpreter must communicate and bring to life. *The interpreter must force himself to generate with intensive feeling not the personal feelings or the ephemeral mood of the player, but rather the expressive content which the composer has rendered in artistic form.* That alone can, as far as is possible, be identified with the composer. This identity, realized in its highest degree in the resultant interpretation, is, as I see it, the ideal. (Giesecking 1963: 97; emphasis mine)⁷

By the interwar period, national “schools” and “traditions” emerged in place of individual teachers and methods. What was formerly the Edwin Fischer method, for example, came to be known as the “German school,” while disciples of Vladimir Sofronitsky were labeled as exponents of a “Russian school” (see Lourenço 2007). It could be argued that this move from what could be considered a more fluid to a more fixed arrangement had the effect of opening up rather than closing off the secrets of the musical score to outsider groups: national identity might have figured more (not less) prominently in the previous age when multiple renditions were competing

for legitimacy. Many critics, however, reached the opposite conclusion, as the case of Otto Schmitt reveals. Schmitt claimed the “German singer” remained “the only one capable of embodying the primordial German (*urgermanischen*) character of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and the other music dramas because they are wholly German in thought and feeling!” (Schmitt 1921: 330).⁸ While the greatness of German music resided in its universal meaning, it was ultimately only through the acumen of German artists that such meaning could be derived.

Schmitt’s comments on Italian tenor Enrico Caruso are instructive. For Schmitt, it was “characteristic that the greatest Italian singer, Caruso, has never sung Lohengrin or Tannhäuser, let alone Sigmund or Siegfried, in his guest performances in Germany—that is because, before all else, they must be sung in the German language!” The importance of Germans performing German music was in some cases even more important abroad, where it lay vulnerable not only to “inauthentic” renditions by foreign artists but also to performance in other vernaculars:

German performers provide the occasion for a cultural mission of the highest rank not only in Germany, where they understand it must be so, but also in the neutral and even in the enemy countries! What tremendous successes German performers have already exhibited in this area since the war! Spain and Italy have readily experienced German art performed by Germans in their greatest cities and France, our most irreconcilable adversary, must again open its doors, after many years of opposition, to the art of Wagner within its capital city of Paris . . . [either way, they will be] forced open by the elemental need for art (*Kunstbedürfnis*) among its own people! (Schmitt 1921: 330)⁹

In the final analysis, Schmitt concluded, “it appears that the German conductor, the German singer, the German musician already faces an enormous, and at the same time encouraging, task abroad—to increase his artistic performances to the highest plane!” (Schmitt 1921: 330).¹⁰

Commentators did not limit their critiques to foreign-derived performances of vocal and chamber music: symphonic music, too, raised its own set of problems. The conservative Alfred Heuss, one of Weimar Germany’s most distinguished critics, launched a vicious campaign as editor of the *Zeitschrift für Musik* against the threat posed to German music by a combination of Jews, atonalists, and foreigners. Heuss summed up the situation in a 1930 review of Beethoven’s Third Symphony, conducted under Italian–American maestro Arturo Toscanini. While conceding that “after reading parts of some of the really excessive critics, one must unabashedly reach the opinion, that the *Eroica* has, for really the first time, been revealed in its true form,” Heuss identified what he called “cracks [that] appeared right in the foundation” (Heuss 1930: 553). He observed how

one notices the Italian in Toscanini insofar as he has no real feeling for polyphony. He does not think to allow the middle voices to really sing, for example in the wonderful measures in the strings of the funeral march immediately before the return of the theme in F minor. (Heuss 1930: 554)¹¹

Heuss perceived this insensitivity as rooted in an inability on the part of Italian performers to realize German music in the appropriate manner, an inability not ascribed to German conductors:

How marvelous are such places under the direction of Furtwängler! . . . It reminds me of the great singer Battistini, the onetime singer of German Lieder. [Both cases] can only lead to the tragic conclusion that the innermost part of the German character is thoroughly lost on the Italians. (Heuss 1930: 554)¹²

Despite this, the German public “still places the Italian conductors above all German ones in the performing of German works,” a fact which Heuss viewed as “connected to the general feeling of inferiority of Germans today” (554). He goes on to situate this feeling historically while registering the fragility of nationalist discourse following the First World War:

This feeling is nothing other than the expression that one feels . . . as part of the devastating effects of the postwar period. We are, in a word, musically becoming, if we have not already become, an international province. One searches in vain for a Germany ready to be musical, at least in our great cities. (Heuss 1930: 554)¹³

Not all critics blamed the erosion of German musical life on the intrusion of foreign performers. Reinhold Zimmermann perceived the gradual “dying out” [*aussterben*] of that most German of instruments—the piano—as responsible for the general decline in cultural taste. Although it had been long understood as a “natural” instrument among the German people, Zimmermann lamented how the piano was “wearing away day by day.” The economic hardships of the previous decade didn’t help matters: “a people that can no longer buy instruments can also no longer acquire instruction on these instruments.” Through this lack of instruction, alongside the increasing reliance on mass-produced renditions broadcast over the radiowaves, Zimmermann claimed that the production of great German music, which had for so long served as a point of reference for the German pianist, was in peril: “It is undoubtedly true that the Beethoven piano sonata played by a competent artist on record, for listeners desirous of a better reading, is botched in person by somebody or another.” Still, Zimmermann asked, “What will happen to the limitless treasures of our piano literature if the piano truly dies out?” (Zimmermann 1931: 223).¹⁴

Still others ascribed the crisis of performance to the German concert-going public and its susceptibility to the pernicious influence of Americanization (Weitz 2007, Storer 2013). That catchall term—a metonym for the many demons of the interwar period such as capitalism, the advent of modern media, and mass culture—held particular sway over Weimar’s new middle class, and especially over its youth (see Weitz 2007: 251–296). According to critic Roderich Regidür, the developing tastes of the German youth for “foreign, American Negro music or things like that” led to “our [Germany’s] good serious German musicians sit[ting] at home and liv[ing] in poverty” (Regidür 1927: 357). In Regidür’s opinion, the influx of foreign musicians was directly tied to the lifting of oppressive censorship laws that were a legacy of Imperial Germany, an opinion which betrayed Regidür’s usual authoritarian leanings:

Before the war, many German musicians engaged the entire world with their art. [Now] they are hindered or completely barred from practicing their art in most hostile states. Only Germany would permit these foreign national musicians to perform Jazz and other noise unimpeded. (Regidür 1927: 357)

Regidür was merely one of many culturally conservative critics who derided jazz for its foreignness and decadence during the Weimar Republic. But not all castigated it to the same extent, though they often seized upon perceived connections between ethnic-racial identity and authentic performance. Cultural leftists like Frank Warschauer hailed jazz as “the most entertaining and vital phenomenon in contemporary music . . . not only in America but everywhere.” Not only did blacks possess “an extraordinarily original sense of rhythm anchored deep in their nature,” but they also had—extraordinarily in Warschauer’s view—a profound sense of melody that they brought to bear on musical performance. While Warschauer certainly deplored social segregation, which prevented blacks and white from playing together, this separation, it seems, also had its benefits: with racial purity came authenticity. For the European interested in experiencing authentic (American) jazz, it was not enough to seek out the nearest ensemble at hand; rather, Warschauer argued that “to appreciate [jazz] one must listen to a Negro orchestra” (Kaes et. al 1994: 571).¹⁵

Nationalism, Universalism, and the Conservative Press

The historian does not have to look far to find evidence of nationalism and xenophobia in the conservative musical press. It is worth remembering, however, that not all cultural conservatives held similar attitudes to Alfred

Heuss or Otto Schmitt. A close examination of contemporary sources reveals that while some critics held German music to be uniquely universal, those who possessed the cultural insights necessary to perform it were not found in Germany alone.

In his coverage of the same 1921 German tour by Caruso so derided by his fellow conservative critics, Georges Armin wrote in the conservative *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* that, “although a foreigner, [Caruso] knew that he had won over the hearts of the Germans through his rare synthesis [*Vereinigung*] of finished tone and genuine feeling, of unparalleled technique and dramatic power to shape [*Gestaltungskraft*].” With his profound, universal musicality, Caruso was living proof for Armin of the inadequacy of the concept of national schools of performance style, which he labeled as “preposterous” and added that “there is no German, American or Italian school . . . rather the art of singing is, like all art, purely absolute.” Invoking one of the central maxims of nineteenth-century aesthetic theory, it was in the beauty of Caruso’s performances that Armin glimpsed the eternal:

So long as the eternal human heart remains as it is now, so will artistic revelations of the voice continue to remain on the basis of the same great and deep secret, namely that of beauty. This is a quality that every receptive disposition immediately feels and celebrates, and which every genuine singer seeks to come closer to through his tone. (Armin 1921: 584)¹⁶

The great trick of this rhetoric of “absolutes” and “eternals” was to somehow retain—and even endorse—German national identity. Hermann Zilcher, for example, claimed that Germans were best suited not only for Bach, Schumann, and Brahms but also for performances of works by composers from other nations. In the *Zeitschrift für Musik*, he wrote that “Many souls reside in the breast of the German; this is at once both his greatest strength and weakness. He yearns after the rarely heard . . . and exotic.” While acknowledging some performing traits as characteristic of all musicians irrespective of nationality—including “fidelity to the notes, and a general awareness (*lebendiges Empfinden*) for the character of the music or stylistic structure”—the success of German renditions of foreigners’ music was for Zilcher bound up with native performance habits such as “a certain cleanness in rhythm and melody; [a] strong need for clarity in architectural construction and (in spite of his temperament) a certain restrained silence” (Zilcher 1932: 1061).¹⁷ These were German traits, but they were also universal.

One of the keys to the unmatched profundity of German interpretations of German music, Zilcher claimed, was found in performers’ deep cultural immersion into and familiarity with their own musical tradition. It was

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especially important for performers to focus not simply on works within the narrow confines of the repertory of their particular instrument or of a certain period, but on *all* German music:

It is not enough that the pianist of Bach only knows the piano works or that the German singer only knows the songs of Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms. Rather, [they must] learn to not only play the two part inventions of Bach, but also love [his] Passions and many rich Cantatas. In the case of the German singer, she finds that she sings Brahms lieder with adequate expression if she also has studied the orchestral works and chamber music of Brahms. (Zilcher 1932: 1062)¹⁸

Others echoed Zilcher in their assessment of Germans' ability to excel in the performance of music from other nations. Sigmund Pilsung, for example, documented the case of Walter Giesecking, describing how the pianist's successful renditions of French impressionistic music owed both to his German identity as well as his immersion in French music culture:

Up through the present day, it is the nature of impressionistic sound [as opposed to] *substance* that causes it to remain foreign to Germans. The German esteems thematically sound music as the true spice . . . Walter Giesecking, a German through and through (*Kerndeutscher*), breathed the French air in his youth. One must have experienced living under the French sky, to grasp the appropriate mood with such tender feeling. How easily corrupted is Impressionism's own style that it [could only] exist at all through cross-breeding with German "feeling!" (Pilsung 1922: 48)¹⁹

In France, critics could display similar ethnocentric attitudes. Pianist Arthur Rubinstein, reflecting on musical life in 1920s Paris, recalled that

A German pianist, Walter Giesecking, made a sensation in Paris with his very personal approach to Debussy . . . critics unanimously proclaimed him the ideal interpreter of the French master. The bitter pill that a German should deserve this honor was swallowed more easily thanks to the fact that his mother was French. (Rubinstein 1980: 195)²⁰

For those less concerned with cementing Giesecking's relationship to French music by dint of his maternal lineage, the fact that he had "breathed the French air" in his youth went furthest to explain his aptitude for performing the music of the French masters. Herbert Gigler, for example, saw the relationship between music and environment as self-evident. Drawing parallels with architectural differences of concert halls and opera houses in the capitals of Europe, he wrote that

a piano will sound better, a violin address itself more lightly, an oboe or a clarinet sound in other tone colorations from one territory to the other . . . [and while] a good portion of these variations in style and architecture, harmony and melody come down to racial differences . . . even in the racial question, we find that climate accounts for an important part of the difference. (Gigler 1923: 518)

Chopin and Liszt, who immigrated to Paris from “eastern cultural backwaters” provided the strongest evidence for this fact. Prior to finding success in the French capital, the Polish Chopin had languished in Warsaw while the Hungarian Liszt toiled in Sopron and Bratislava (Gigler 1923: 518).²¹ Paris, however, remained for Gigler an oasis in a desert of unmusicality compared with Berlin, Vienna, and other great music capitals of central Europe. While central Europe had produced nearly all of Europe’s greatest composers through the years, the situation to the West was far less promising. Even a cursory glance at the musical cultures of England, Holland, Switzerland, and western Austria proved that “these unmusical places have neither produced first rate musicians nor bequeathed their stamp [in the form of] any composers” (518).²² Confronted with the cases of the Germans Handel and Haydn, who produced some of their best compositions in England, Gigler demurred that London had left these composers “entirely unaffected” and that their masterworks were produced not because but in spite of their unmusical surroundings (520). In this line of argument, while national origin was an important factor in shaping the profundity of artists’ musical creations, climate was an important factor in stimulating and enhancing the muse.

Despite such pronouncements, performers from outside of Europe were still able to impress. In the 1920s, Arrau (mentioned in the introduction) made a splash on the European concert scene, achieving success with audiences and critics alike. The pianist’s South American origins, however, were not lost on German critics: familiar devices were deployed to explain how a foreigner could arrive at such incisive interpretations of German music. According to a 1926 review from the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*,

There is here absolutely no trace of hothouse cultivation. Healthily and naturally, musically practical and straightforward, as one expects from a child, but at the same time with all the infallible signs of an extraordinary talent, this good-looking boy played his Mozart, Weber, Schubert, and Mendelssohn . . . It appears to me that this fresh, Germanically impregnated boy must become a distinguished artist. (Quoted in Horowitz 1982: 44)²³

Despite reviews like this, most references to race in the Weimar musical press remained subtle; Pamela Potter has shown how race found itself on precarious footing in musical discourse and was dismissed by most in the

early 1920s as a “scientifically unsound” means by which to measure musical profundity, at least among serious-minded musicologists and scholars (Potter 2007). Studies seeking to uncover mysterious connections between race and music tended to be the work of amateur writers and charlatans. For example, Robert Lach, a contemporary musicologist, ridiculed efforts to link race with performance, scale systems, formal constructions, and other aspects of musical thought as little more than the work of untrained dilettantes and admitted “that currently comparative musicology is not yet equipped to demonstrate racial elements and criteria in human musical creation” (Potter 2007: 57–58).

Race and Performance

Not all were so dismissive. In Weimar music circles, Rudolf Maria Breithaupt (1873–1945), a *Klavierpädagoge* at the *Stern'schen Konservatorium*, was widely recognized as one of Germany's foremost authorities on piano technique. His 1907 *Die Natürliche Klaviertechnik* (The Natural Piano Technique) made a quick sensation and remains today one of the definitive reference works on modern piano arm-weight technique. In 1922, his writings on performing artists took a turn away from the role played by proper technical training and education towards matters concerning race. In Breithaupt's words, “Talent as it applies to instrumental music is in the first place a racial question; that is, of things having more to do with the blood, heredity and aptitude than with teaching organization, education and the atmosphere and culture.” Skill in performance, Breithaupt went on, was not derived from technique, but “from the blood and wellsprings of energy of race and from [other] inherited instincts.” In contrast to the “nurture” arguments of critics like Zilcher, Breithaupt claimed that while certain “qualities of character” such as “energy, steadfastness, stamina, affection, and warmth of feeling . . . [could probably be] refined and deepened, they must first be present from birth” (Breithaupt 1922: 37).²⁴

Oddly, Breithaupt did not agree with Heuss's and others' assessments on the superiority of Germans performing German works or the works of other national traditions. Rather, he asserted that “two races exhibit a peculiar aptitude and adaptation to the instrumental arts, especially piano and violin music: the *Semitic* and the *Slavic*” (37; emphasis in the original). Breithaupt's ideal racialized performer was a combination of both: “The best breeding ground for playing talent, both amongst ourselves as well as other *völkisch* tribes, consists in the cross-breeding and mixing of both races, like the ancient Germans, Hungarians, Romanians, etc.” (38). Summarily dismissive of “pure cultures” (*Reinkulturen*) as “more suspicious,” Breithaupt

viewed the racial hybrid as predisposed to fresher, more authentic renditions (39). For this reason, it was not the ethnically homogeneous Germany but the multi-national territories of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire that figured as the ideal geographical setting for producing talented performers: “the greatest percentage of Austrian talent is mixed blood, combining Hungarian, Bohemian, Polish, Croat-Slovene, and Roman-Italian elements with or without Jewish ingredients” (38). In particular, Austria proved well-disposed towards producing Breithaupt’s idealized hybrids:

Russian father with Polish-Jewish mother, pure Polish father with Russian-Jewish mother, or Russian Jew with pure Polish or German mother. To these we might add the many mixtures of Jewish blood with Hungarian, Croatian, Slovenian, Czech, etc., as well as the mixture of Jewish and Slavic hybrids with German blood. (Breithaupt 1922: 37-38)²⁵

If Austria was the breeding ground *par excellence* for producing talented artists, racially homogenous England was a place bereft of any musical talent whatsoever: “English stock appears, since the fall of a period of blossoming under Elizabeth, to be completely without [any sign of] the muse and grace” (41). For Breithaupt, the more general absence of a sufficiently highbrow culture in England was due “to an irresistible fondness for soccer and boxing as well as water sports which, from the outset, stamped out artistic activity in the area of the musically-inspired arts” (41).²⁶

In his analysis of performance, Breithaupt proved the consummate *bricoleur* in the sheer range of arguments he marshaled to support his overarching claim. In one striking passage, he dabbled in phrenology: “The frontal lobe is more developed than the sensitive area of the brain. A desire for imitation and sense of reality lead to a more complete technique” (37). Elsewhere, Breithaupt drew upon older climatological arguments dating from the early modern period:

The cheerfulness, the love of singing and playing as well as the greater personal freedom and autonomy of the Austrian tribes does not allow for imitation. That is a tribal merit, like climatic influences. One thinks of the sun in Italy and its influence on the human voice, which comes more naturally to the hotter southern climes than the colder and stricter northern ones. (Breithaupt 1922: 39)²⁷

However, no matter how important Slavic and Semitic racial lineage was for Breithaupt, a proper musical interpretation still required the performer to possess certain German cultural attributes:

whether mixed or unmixed, race itself, like the Bohemian or Slavic strains, together delivers more and more of the really first rate material for talented

pianists and [performers of] violin and cello music, especially if it [race] is wedded to German discipline and thoroughness, German views and cultural taste. (Breithaupt 1922: 39)²⁸

Rather than back up his claims with abstractions such as the “nature” and “character” of “German music-making” or “Jewish methods of performance,” Breithaupt instead attempted a more “empirical” line of argument: “Which [race] contains a higher percentage [of performers], especially among virtuosi, than the Semitic race?” (43). Pure Jews or hybrids, according to Breithaupt, dominated the ranks of some of the illustrious musicians of the nineteenth century and beyond.

Breithaupt was not alone in his views. In a 1926 essay published in the leftist journal *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, critic Karl Westermeyer lamented the rise of anti-Semitic rhetoric both in the street and in music journalism. Unlike Heuss, in whose eyes Jewish influence remained foreign and unhealthy, Westermeyer held that Jews were a wholly positive influence on German musical culture. Mendelssohn, for example, was as much a part of the German canon as Mozart and Haydn, while Mahler continued to be performed in front of sold-out audiences (Westermeyer 1926: 20). And Westermeyer also celebrated Jewish performers: “we have to thank the Jews, who [have bestowed upon us] a long succession of competent, even eminent musicians . . . [a fact which] only malice can deny!!” (Westermeyer 1926: 1406). Similarly, in his 1926 *Jewishness in Music* musicologist Heinrich Berl described musical virtuosity as quintessentially Jewish. Adopting the same title as Richard Wagner’s notorious 1869 tract, Berl stood Wagner’s argument about Jews as mere cultural imitators and imposters on its head and aimed to defend the virtues of the Jewish virtuoso. In response to the longstanding stereotype which claimed that Jewish success in the musical reproduction of German and other musical traditions masked their own inability for true cultural creativity, Berl claimed that “the virtuoso brings music to life again and again; he releases it from its abstraction into life . . . He is not simply the dazzler, but rather *the creator of music*” (Berl 1926: 185; emphasis in the original).

It would be wrong to regard these critics’ views as thoroughly philo-Semitic: underneath the superficial praise often lurked a certain anti-Semitic logic. As Annkatrin Dahm has shown, aside from praise for Jews as performers, the rest of Berl’s book is full of vulgar anti-Semitism, from denouncing the “oriental-Asian” character of Jewish composers’ music to describing Jews’ cultural foreignness as stemming from a “false-morphosis” [*Pseudomorphose*] into German society (Dahm 2007: 277–278). Vehement anti-Semites such as publisher Theodor Fritsch attributed the widespread European acclaim of Jewish performers in musical and mainstream print

as little more than proof of Jewish control of the press (Gilman 2009). And for Breithaupt, who had extolled the “Semitic race” as exceptionally talented when it came to performance, Jews had to attain excellence in performance through “other kinds of ambition and vanity achieved through a thousand years of a business mercantile instinct [which] yielded money and fame” (Breithaupt 1922: 37). In his view, success gained through centuries of achievement in finance and money-making ventures somehow translated, over time, into even greater success within the European concert hall. Breithaupt also asserted that however great Jews might appear in their capacities as performers, there could be little question as to which was the most innovative race:

When one casts a glance at the history of *creative* music, the exact opposite is true. Here, in any case, the Jews are in the minority, even though they have forever dominated the lighter kinds of art like operetta and the market for so-called popular music (*Gebrauchsmusik*). Talents, the likes of Halévy, Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, in any case, remain exceptions to the rule. (Breithaupt 1922: 37, 43; emphasis in the original)²⁹

Breithaupt’s essay sparked vigorous debates in the Weimar musical press. Scarcely two months following his essay, Richard Sternfeld published a review of “Spieltalent und Rasse” in the pages of the *Allgemeine Musik Zeitung* acknowledging that no matter how “nice and lucid” the essay was, “things still do not mesh as easily as Breithaupt thinks.” Along with Breithaupt’s habit of ascribing Jewishness based solely on Jewish sounding last names, Sternfeld called into question both the alleged Jewishness of those performers cited as well as the “pure” Slavishness of the composers Liszt and Chopin. Sternfeld pointed out that Liszt’s parents were of central European (Austrian and German) extraction, while Liszt himself, “blond haired and blue eyed,” was born in the German-speaking frontier town of Raiding and received his formal schooling in German schools. As for Chopin, his father was French and spoke no other language. Sternfeld pointed towards factors outside of race as the best means for understanding those gifted not only in music, but also in the arts in general:

I believe that such an investigation [into race and playing talent] must employ other means . . . Should [we] only consider the descent of artists, poets and musicians and take scarcely any account of [the role of] the environment, the fatherland one is born into, language in particular, education and other mysteriously congenial strengths which are never allowed to be brought into certain explanations? (Sternfeld 1922: 920)³⁰

Even for critics who found themselves in agreement with Breithaupt’s central argument, a closer examination of their claims reveals important

ruptures in race thinking between Weimar and the Third Reich within musical discourse. Writing in a late 1923 edition of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, Gustav Ernest claimed that although many of the performers cited by Breithaupt may have been born Jewish or assimilated through conversion, many had shed their Jewishness to fully become part of the German *Volk* (Ernest 1923: 4). With delicious irony, Ernest cited Houston Stewart Chamberlain, whose *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* became a standard text of the anti-Semitic right during Weimar and well into the Third Reich (Chamberlain 1910). According to Ernest, Chamberlain was “a consummate artist” (*Tausendkünstler*) who, “although classified as such, was certainly no Englishman” (Ernest 1923: 4). Through his immersion into and affinity with German culture, Chamberlain had “in no time at all produced irrevocable proof” of his German nature. Chamberlain was not the only convert to the German *Volk*. Quite a few of the so-called Jewish artists cited by Breithaupt could, in Ernest’s view, also be considered wholly German, even those whose parents admittedly derived from Semitic stock. Anton Rubinstein, for example, though born to Jewish parents was “certainly no Jew” (Ernest 1923: 4).

Such a designation, according to Ernest, was never claimed by Rubinstein himself; rather, it stemmed from both Rubinstein’s early biographer Alexander McArthur as well as the *Grove History of Music* (Ernest 1923: 4). Rubinstein’s adoption of German spiritual and cultural values allowed the composer to successfully cast off his Jewishness despite his racial ancestry, a notion which bears a striking resemblance to Chamberlain’s own views on “spiritual anti-Judaism.” Whispers of “spiritual Jewishness” increased markedly during Weimar and, as Steven Ashheim has shown, loomed large in the anti-Semitic imaginary of a German society threatened by “Judaization” (see Ashheim 1996: 45–68). Yet its rootedness in behavioral rather than racial difference clearly distinguishes it from Nazi anti-Semitism. It was above all Jewish “attitudes” and “materialist values”—both of which, in Ernest’s view, Rubinstein had managed to shake off—that threatened German society; the proper solution resided not in purging Germany of its Jewish elements in Nazi-like fashion, but in actively combatting the cultivation of these values among Jews and non-Jews. The successful removal of the behavioral transcended the racial: “a wholly humanized Jew,” as Chamberlain himself once explained it, “is no longer a Jew” (Chamberlain 1910: 491).

Attitudes surrounding the virtues of racial mixing were not confined merely to the performance of art music but also to its composition. Influential critic and editor of the *Börsen Zeitung*, Adolph Weissman, noted that “It is race which colors modernity. But racial mixtures now appear to open up new possibilities [in composition].” Weissman separated contemporary music into

“Western” and “Eastern” domains characterized by “sonority” and “instinct for folk–psyche,” respectively. Stravinsky, exemplar of the “Western” domain, represented the fulfillment of a long–standing collaboration “between the French and Russian mind,” each of which languished for different reasons: “the French folk–spirit was not potent enough of itself to create a new music,” while Russian music expressed nothing more than “barbaric folk–feeling” (Weissmann 1923a: 305). Yet in combining them, “Stravinsky paved the way for that music which we recognize as a synthesis of . . . the highest refinement, which finds its supreme expression in *Le Sacre du Printemps*” (Weissmann 1923b: 3–6). Similarly, Schönberg, whom Weissman associated with the “Eastern” domain, revolutionized compositional technique through a groundbreaking approach that “rests on Jewish racial feeling fused with the characteristic impulse of German music to form a new sonorous tissue” (Weissmann 1923a: 306).³¹ To be sure, modern music, according to Weissman, had to resist the temptation of sustaining difference for its own sake. Still, he concluded, “in music, blood and not the mind is the ultimate determinant” (Weissmann 1923b: 6).

Conclusion

How are we to make sense of this striking picture, in which we find laudatory views of Jewish performance coexisting alongside stock–and–trade anti–Semitic prejudices, often in the same text? In an influential study, Detlev Peukert has argued that scholars must view Weimar on its own terms, as a period in German history whose fourteen–year existence “constitutes an era in its own right” (Peukert 1991: xii). This means that, for the case of Weimar Jewry, the historian must perform a careful balancing act that neither normalizes German–Jewish relations to the point of depicting them as wholly harmonious, nor views Weimar anti–Semitism solely through the lens of Auschwitz.³² Taking the latter point to the extreme, historian Enzo Traverso has famously claimed that Auschwitz “invented” anti–Semitism because of the way in which it imposed a uniform and murderous strain of anti–Semitic prejudice onto a set of attitudes which, prior to Nazism, are better described as “discordant, heterogeneous, and in many cases decidedly archaic” (Traverso 2003: 6). In many ways, German critics’ judgements on racialized performance embody this discord, alternating as they do from the behavioral to the racial, from philo– to anti–Semiticism, and from inclusivity to exclusivity. They are, in Traverso’s sense, quintessentially Weimar.

There was no contradiction for Weimar critics between, on the one hand, lauding Jews as consummate musicians who contributed in profound ways to the performance of the German classics and, on the other, lament-

ing them as compositionally uncreative (Breithaupt 1922: 43–44). And although some dismissed race altogether as an unsuitable lens through which to establish a basis for determining musical talent, Breithaupt singled out racial mixing—particularly between Jews and Slavs—as the means for achieving the best possible results. Such arresting juxtapositions can also be found beyond music criticism. In his study of consumer culture during the 1920s, Gideon Reuveni has shown that German crusaders against literary *Schmutz und Schund* (pulp and trash) typically exempted German Jewry from blame on account of their role as “producers” of works with high cultural worth rather than “consumers” vulnerable to the lure of base pulp literature. At the same time, this “producer” role furnished the greatest evidence of a “Jewish-controlled press” that so captivated the minds of Weimar’s anti-Semitic right (Reuveni 2006: 251–252).

Another way to explain positive judgments of Jewish musical performance lies in recognizing the repertoire at which Jewish musicians excelled in the minds of most critics: the German canon from Bach to Brahms (see Breithaupt 1922 and Berl 1926). While the “Jewishness” of many modernist composers and the backlash that it occasioned during the Weimar years has tended to attract the bulk of historians’ attention (Gay 1968, Laqueur 1974, Brenner 1996), the no-less-pronounced traditionalism of Jews in the arts as musicologists, performers, and pedagogues should not be forgotten (Führer 2009). Musical observers could marginalize Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Mahler, and countless other Jewish-German composers—whether on aesthetic or anti-Semitic grounds—and in so doing marginalize Jews’ creative legacies more generally. But Jews’ contributions to tradition as performers, educators, and teachers were unmistakable.³³ As Breithaupt himself was well aware, even a partial listing of the great nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Jewish musicians—many of whose interpretations and approaches to music making deeply shaped the German repertoire—is nothing short of astonishing.³⁴

Importantly, views about the virtues of racial mixing did not end with Hitler’s rise to the chancellorship. Nazi ideologues were dogged throughout the 1930s by the suggestion that Beethoven was of mixed German and Flemish ancestry and that this had somehow contributed to his status as a “universal” composer (Dennis 1996: 73–74). In 1934, Fridolin Solleder, one of Hitler’s World War I comrades, wrote an article claiming that the Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer was of mixed racial stock, and that racial mixing rather than purity produced creators of genius (quoted in Weber 2010: 316). At the same time, many voices were emerging that challenged such views. None were more forceful than Richard Eichenauer’s, who published his *Musik und Rasse* (Music and Race) in 1932. Although Eichenauer

chose targets similar to earlier Weimar critics, he goes further, attacking those musicians and performers hailed by his predecessors. After 1933, politics intruded into cultural debates in unprecedented ways as Nazi propagandists sought to refashion the nation's cultural patrimony after its own image. Music was no exception. Thus many of the voices that contributed to the diverse views toward race and performance that characterized Weimar fell silent. By 1943, Germany's three leading conservative journals were consolidated into one appropriately called *Musik im Krieg* (Music in War) (Lovisa 1993).

Since 1945, discussions about race, ethnicity, and performance have assumed a cosmopolitan disposition, at least on the surface. Giesecking (discussed above) offered a representative view in a piece entitled "Why I play Debussy" from 1948:

It has often been asked—often with astonishment—why exactly it is that an interpreter [meaning Giesecking himself] of German descent should have become so greatly associated with [Debussy's quintessentially] French music. The most simple and obvious answer to this question must be: music knows no boundaries. It is supra-national; a language understood by all peoples. (Giesecking 1975: 118)³⁵

Behind closed doors, however, Giesecking possibly remained conflicted on this question, as the recollection of one of his students, Marian Filar, reveals. Filar remembered seeking out Giesecking as a mentor shortly after the end of the Second World War: "Mr. Giesecking opened one of his pianos for me, so I sat down and played Bach, then Mozart. Mr. Giesecking didn't comment. Then he said to me, 'Since you're Polish, why don't you play some Chopin?'" (Filar 2002: 142). It is perhaps unsurprising that Giesecking's newfound cosmopolitanism did not cohere with his behavior and pronouncements during, and immediately following, the Third Reich. In interviews with an allied intelligence officer in September 1945, he claimed to have been a "believer in Hitler's New Order," and that Hitler "was a very gifted person, a clever politician and [had] achieved many things for his country" (Monod 2005: 156). Although he never joined the Party, Giesecking enjoyed a privileged status among officially approved classical musicians and performed throughout Nazi-occupied Europe during the war.

While a cosmopolitan view of performance has loomed largest in most musical circles in the wake of the Holocaust, the ethno-racialist view, I would like to suggest, has not entirely disappeared today. Rather, we have inherited older attitudes from Weimar musical discourse. A recent Deutsche Grammophon periodical review of Georges Cziffra's recording of Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* S.244, for example, hailed the pianist as the "ideal exponent of this music," not only because of his "superb technique" but also

because of his “Hungarian birthright” (Cziffra 2001). A different example can be found in a recent *60 Minutes* interview with virtuoso pianist Lang Lang, where correspondent Bob Simon commented, “Rachmaninoff was this tortured Russian. And here you are . . . this very young Chinese man, who seems to be full of life and full of optimism, and full of happiness. How can you relate to this music?” (Simon 2008). Given all that has and continues to be made of music as a “universal language,” we would do well to remember, as Ronald Radano and Philip Bohlman have suggested, “that a specter lurks in the house of music and it goes by the name of race” (Radano and Bohlman 2000: 1). Such essentialist attitudes may not be as overt as they once were and the characters may have changed, but they serve as a reminder of the myriad ways in which musical performance has so often had little to do with music itself.

Notes

1. “Der Neger John Flaffith hat gestern vor einem Publikum, das vor Begeisterung tobte, Debussy und Strawinsky gespielt. Was dieser grosse Künstler aus dem Klavier überhaupt herauszuholen versteht, kann nur der Fachmann so recht würdigen. Der Schreiber dieser Zeilen, der die grössten Meister des Klavierspieles hören konnte, kann als Quintessenz der Kritik nur sagen: John Flaffith war besser als sie alle . . .” Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.
2. “Und dabei ist Mister Flaffith ein—Neger! Dieser Neger ist in die Seele Beethovens und Liszts eingedrungen. Kurz: Ein Phänomen, an dem sich die Klavierspieler mit weißer Haut ein Vorbild nehmen sollten . . .”
3. “Der Neger John Flaffith hat gestern vor einem Publikum gespielt. Was dieser grosse Künstler aus dem Klavier überhaupt herauszuholen versteht, kann nur der Fachmann so recht würdigen. Der Schreiber dieser Zeilen, der die grössten Meister des Klavierspieles hören konnte, dann als Quintessenz der Kritik nur sagen: John Flaffith war besser als sie alle... und so freut e uns, heute von dem ungeheuren Erfolg Mister John Flaffiths zu berichten, der die schwersten Stücke mit ungeheuer Tecknik und innerstem Gefühl auf dem Klavier zu Gehör brachte.”
4. “Es ist nicht meine Idee, sondern die meiner Frau . . . Als wir geheiratet hatten, spielte ich in einer Bar New Yorks; es ging so schlecht und recht. Abe rich verlor die Stelle, weil mein Spiel zu ernst war. Anny, die mir immer Mut zusprach, sagte, ich sole es als Klaviervirtuose versuchen. Es war ohne Erfolg. Ein Negerfilm, den wir in dieser Zeit sahen, brachte plötzlich Anny auf den Gedanken, dass ich es in Europa als Negerkünstler wagen könne. Unsere letzten Ersparnisse brachten uns über den Ozean. Anfangs versuchte ich in den einzelnen Städten noch asl Weißer aufzutreten; so in Budapest als Iwan Mold, in Bukarest als Giuseppe Sperante; ich hatte kein Erfolg. Wenn ich aber dann als Neger kam, wurde ich begeistert empfangen; kurz: ich war bald eine weltbekkante Grösse.”
5. The flagship music organs of the conservative press during Weimar included *Zeitschrift für Musik*, *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, and certain contributions within the journal *Die Musik*. For a longer discussion of the musical press during Weimar, see Lovisa 1993 and Roberge 1994.
6. “Gibt es überhaupt eine typisch deutsche Art des Musizierens? Jeder deutsche Musiker kennt sie, und doch ist sie schwer mit Worten zu beschreiben und zu erklären.”

7. "Eine sinnvolle, künstlerisch gültige und wahrhaftige Interpretation ist mit dem Begriff Wektreue untrennbar verbunden. Jedes Kunstwerk von Bedeutung hat von seinem Schöpfer einen bestimmten Ausdrucksinhalt erhalten, den der Interpret verlebendigen und vermitteln muß. Nicht die persönlichen Gefühle oder die momentane Stimmung des Spielers dürfen für die Wiedergabe entscheidend sein, sondern der Ausdrucksgehalt, dem der Komponist in künstlerischer Form Gestalt gegeben hat, muß den Interpreten so zu intensivem Mitempfinden anregen, daß sich sein Ausdruckswille weitestgehend mit dem des Komponisten identifiziert. Diese Identität, in höchstem Grade verwirklicht, ergibt die Interpretation, die ich als Ideal ansehe."

8. "Denn nur der deutsche Sänger ist imstande, diese urgermanischen Gestalten des Rings der 'Nibelungen' und der anderen Dramen zu verkörpern, weil sie alle in ihrem ganzen Denken und Fühlen so urdeutsch sind!"

9. "Und so bietet sich den gerade auf diesem Gebiet dem deutschen ausübenden Künstler die Gelegenheit zu einer Kulturmission allerersten Ranges, nicht nur in Deutschland—da versteht sie sich ja von selbst—sondern auch in den 'neutralen', ja sogar in den 'feindlichen' Ländern! Und welche gewaltigen Erfolge hat der deutsche Künstler auf diesem Gebiete schon seit dem Kriege aufzuweisen! Spanien und Italien haben bereits der deutschen Kunst, von Deutschen dargeboten, in ihren größten Städten zugejauchzt—und Frankreich, unser unversöhnlichster Gegner, mußte wohl oder übel nach langen Jahren der Unversöhnlichkeit in seiner Hauptstadt Paris der Kunst Wagners die Pforten wieder öffnen, gezwungen von dem elementaren Kunstbedürfnis des eigenen Volkes!"

10. "Sehr bezeichnend ist es daher, daß auch der größte italienische Sänger Caruso bei seinen Gastspielen in Deutschland niemals den Lohengrin oder Tannhäuser, geschweige denn den Siegmund oder Siegfried sang, die ja vor allem doch auch in deutscher Sprache gesungen sein muß."

11. "Liest jemand die teilweise sich geradezu übersteigernden Kritiken, so muss er unweigerlich zu der Ansicht gelangen, dass die Eroica überhaupt zum ersten Male in ihrer wahren Gestalt sich zu erkennen gegeben habe... Für mich war, kurz gesagt, der Eindruck zwiespältig, und zwar aus genau anzugebenden Gründen... Den Italiener merkt man bei Toscanini auch insofern als er kein eigentliches Gefühl für Polyphonie besitzt. Er denkt nicht daran, Mittelstimmen wirklich singen zu lassen, z. B. in den wunderbaren Streichertakten im Trauermarsch unmittelbar vor dem Themainsatz in f-moll."

12. "Der ganze Vortrag dieses Werkes erinnerte mich an den großen Sänger Battistini, als er einmal deutsche Lieder sang... das geradezu tragische Ergebnis: Das innerste deutschen Wesens ist auch dem Italiener durchaus verschlossen. Daß wir aber den großen italienischen Dirigenten auch in deutschen Werken über alles Deutsche stellen, hängt mit dem Minderwertigkeitsgefühl des heutigen Deutschen zusammen..."

13. Dieses Gefühl ist wiederum nichts anderes als der Ausdruck dafür, daß man sich seines eigenen Wesens nicht im geringsten mehr sicher fühlt, die verheerende Wirkung der Nachkriegszeit. Wir sind, kurz gesagt, daran, auch musikalisch eine internationale Provinz zu werden, so wir es nicht bereits sind. Ja, ja, die Saat ist aufgegangen! Ein musikalisches Deutschland sucht man bereits vergebens, wenigstens in unseren Großstädten."

14. "Es sind natürlich noch eine Menge Instrumente in den Händen und Häusern des deutschen Volkes; aber im Vergleich zu früher werden für den täglichen Verschleiß an nicht mehr annähernd so viele neue Instrumente angefordert und beschafft, daß der Klavierbau damit ausreichend beschäftigt wäre... ein Volk, das keine Instrumente mehr kaufen kann, kann leisten, da das Unterrichten bekanntlich auf die Dauer teurer zu stehen kommt, als die einmalige Anschaffung eines Instrumentes... Zwar ist es wahr, daß eine Beethovensonate,

von einem tüchtigen Künstler für die Schallplatte gespielt, deren Hörer einen größeren Genuß bereitet als dieselbe Sonate, von irgen jemand leibhaftig vorgestümpert. Viel mehr handelt es sich um die Frage: was geschieht mit den unendlich reichen Schätzen unserer Klavierliteratur, wenn das Klavier wirklich ausstirbt?”

15. I have used the translation in Kaes 1994: 571–572.

16. “Obwohl ein Ausländer wußte er durch die seltene Vereinigung von vollendetem Ton und echter Empfindung von beispielloser Technik und dramatischer Gestaltungskraft das Herz der Deutschen zu gewinnen . . . es gibt keine deutsche, amerikanische oder italienische Gesangskunst . . . die Gesangskunst ist wie jede Kunst rein absolut . . . Wie das menschliche Herz ewig das bleiche bleibt, so liegt der künstlerischen Offenbarung der Stimme stets das gleiche große und tiefe Geheimnis zugrunde, das Geheimnis der Schönheit, die jedes empfängliche Gemüt sofort empfindet, der alle zujubeln, und der jeder echte Sänger durch seinen Ton nahezukommen sucht.”

17. “Man wird sich klar darüber sein müssen, daß in der Brust des Deutschen viele Seelen wohnen; es ist dies seine Stärke und seine Schwäche. Die Sehnsucht nach dem Seltengehörten, nach Unerhörtem lockt ihn oft zu Fremdländlichen . . . so kann etwa sprechen von einer gewissen Sauberkeit im Rhythmischen und Melodischen, von dem starken Bedürfnis nach Klarheit im architektonischen Aufbau und (trotz allem Temperament) von einer etwas gezügelten Ruhe.”

18. “Es genügt nicht, daß der Klavierspieler von Bach nur dessen Klavierwerke, daß die deutsche Sängerin nur die Lieder von Schubert, Schumann und Brahms kennt, sondern (über-treibend!) kann gesagt werden, der wird eine zweistimmige Invention von Bach am besten spielen, der auch die Passionen und recht viele Kantaten von Bach liebt—Die Sängerin findet für das Brahms'sche Lied den geeigneten Ausdruck, wenn sie außer den Orchesterwerken auch Kammermusik von Brahms studiert hat . . . Somit ergibt sich für den idealen deutschen Interpreten die Forderung, eine möglichst umfassende Literaturkenntnis und vollständige Beherrschung des Instrumentes, des Orchesters, des Klangmittels, das er zu betreuen hat.”

19. “Impressionistisches Klangwesen als Substanz ist den Deutschen bis auf den heutigen Tag fremd geblieben. Der Deutsche schätz den Impressionismus als Würze thematisch fundierter Musik . . . Ein Kerndeutscher, atmete Walter Gieseking in seiner Jugend französische Luft. Man muß den französischen Himmel erlebt haben, um verhauchte Stimmungen mit so zartem Empfinden zu erhaschen. Wie leicht läßt sich der impressionistische Eigenstil verderben! So etwa durch Kreuzung mit deutschem, Gefühl.”

20. That Gieseking's mother was French appears to have had more to do with wishful thinking than reality. Both Gieseking's father and mother were German, the latter of whom hailed from Hannover. Gieseking set the record straight in his autobiography: “That I was born in 1895 in Lyon, France, I suppose is well known although all of my ancestors were German” (Gieseking 1963, 119).

21. “Ein Klavier wird in einer Gegend die Stimmung besser halten, eine Geige leichter ansprechen, ein Fagott oder eine Klarinette in anderer Tonfärbung klingen als in einer anderen . . . Freilich fällt ein gut Teil dieser Abweichungen von Stilart und Aufbau, von Harmonik und Melos den Rassenunterschieden zu, die dabei allerdings die entscheidendste Rolle spielen. Aber gerade in der Rassenfrage ist es wieder das Klima, das zur Unterscheidung einen wesentlichen Faktor beiträgt.”

22. “Diese haben weder Musiker von Rang hervorgebracht noch haben sie irgendeinem Komponisten ihren Stempel aufzudrücken vermocht.”

23. As with Giesecking, there is no evidence to support the claim that Arrau was, in fact, “Germanically impregnated.” Rather, he belonged to an old, prominent family of Southern Chile. His distant European forbears were, moreover, Scottish and Spanish, not German.

24. “Die instrumentale Spielbegabung ist in erster Linie eine Rassenfrage, d.h. Sache mehr des Blutes, der Vererbung un Anlage als der Organisation, der Erziehung und Durchbildung, der Atmosphäre und Kultur. Eine alte Erfahrung lehrt daß gerade die nachschaffenden Künste ihr Bestes und Ureigenstes aus den Blut- und Energiequellen der Rasse und der ererbten Triebkräfte schöpfen, nicht aus der Technik allein.”

25. “Eine außerordentliche Eignung und Anpassung an die Instrumentalkünste, insonderheit an die Klavier- und Geigenkunst, weisen zwei Rassen auf: die *semitische* und *slawische*, sowie deren Mischungen . . . Den besten Nährboden für das Spieltalent geben die Kreuzungen und Mischungen beider Rassen, sowohl untereinander wie mit anderen völkischen Stämmen, wie den Germanen, Ungarn, Romanen usw., ab . . . Der größte Prozentsatz österreichischer Talente ist Mischblut, Zusammensetzungen aus ungarischen, böhmischen, polnischen, kroatisch-slowenischen und romanischen-italienischen Elementen mit oder ohne jüdische Zutaten.”

26. “Der Stockengländer scheint seit dem Niedergange seiner Elisabethanischen Blüteperiode von allen Musen und Grazien verlassen zu sein. Seine unwiderstehliche Neigung zur Fußball und Boxerkunst sowie zum Wassersport schließen ja auch eine künstlerische Betätigung auf dem Gebiete der musikalisch-nachschaffenden Künste von vornherein aus.”

27. “Die frontalen Stirnlapen warder mehr entwickelt als die sensiblen Gehirnflächen . . . Nachahmungstrieb und Wirklichkeitssinn führen mehr zur Vollendung des Technischen . . . Die Frohnatur, die Sanges- und Spielfreudigkeit, auch die größere persönliche Freiheit und Ungebundenheit des österreichischen Stammes läßt sich nicht nachmachen, das sind Stammesvorzüge, die wie die klimatischen Einflüsse—man denke an die Sonne Italiens und ihren Einfluß auf die menschliche Singstimme—ganz naturgemäß mehr dem heiteren Süden als dem kälteren und strengeren Norden zukommen.”

28. “Aber, ob gemischt oder ungemischt, die Rasse selbst liefert mit den böhmischen und slawischen Absenkern zusammen noch immer ein vorzügliches Material für die Geigen- und Cellokunst, und reichbeanlagte Klavierspieler, zumal wenn sie mit deutscher Zucht und Gründlichkeit, deutscher Auffassung und Geschmackskultur sich vermählt haben.”

29. While such attitudes towards Jewishness and performance took on a new significance amid the rising anti-Semitism of the interwar period, they cannot be said to have originated there. According to one of his pupils, nineteenth-century pedagogue Theodor Leschetizsky put three questions to his prospective students: “Were you a child prodigy? Are you of Slavic descent? Are you a Jew?” When students answered to all three in the affirmative, the teacher would grow excited and “rub his hands with glee” (Schonberg 1963, 280).

30. “Ich glaube, eine solche Untersuchung muß doch etwas anders angestellt werden . . . Sollte nur die Abstammung im Künstler, im Dichter und Musiker wirksam sein und gar nicht die Umwelt, das Vaterland, in das er hineingeboren, die Sprache vor allem, die Erziehung, und andere geheimnisvolle sympathische Kräfte, die sich nie auf bestimmte Formeln bringen lassen werden?”

31. This sentiment had found earlier expression in Weissman’s review of a Berlin performance of Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du Printemps* in the journal *Die Musik*. See Weissmann 1923a.

32. On the promise of German Jewry during the interwar period, see Brenner 1996 and Gillerman 2009.

33. An even more concrete illustration of this can be seen in the history of the musical cadenza, which underwent substantial revision over the course of the nineteenth century.

The early cadenza was by definition one which called for the performer to draw on his or her powers of improvisation. By the end of the nineteenth century, cadenzas increasingly became standardized, whether derived from the composer or the performer. In the latter examples, Jewish musicians set the standard for many works (e.g., Fritz Kreisler and Beethoven's Violin Concerto, Joseph Joachim and Mendelssohn's E Minor Violin Concerto, and Vladimir Horowitz and Mozart's Piano Concertos).

34. Breithaupt's 1922 listing of notable Jewish musicians included Henri und Jacques Herz, Henir Rosellen, Josef Ascher, Wilhelm Goldner, Sigismund Thalberg, Ignaz Moscheles, Felix Mendelssohn, Jakob Blumenthal, Felix Blumenthal, Karl Tausig, Anton and Nikolaus Rubinstein, Alexander Dreyschock, Julius Epstein, Theodor Leschetizky, Arthur Friedheim, Mortiz Moszkowski, Xaver Scharwenka, Raphael Joseffy, Emil Sauer, Moritz Rosenthal, Alfred Grünfeld, Alfred Reisenauer, Ferruccio Busoni, Frederic Lamond, Leopold Godowsky, Vianna da Motta, Mark Hambourg, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, Karl Friedberg, Ignaz Friedman, Gottfried Galston, Arthur Schnabel, Paul Goldschmidt, Leonid Kreutzer, Joseph Lhevinne, Severin Eisenberger, Bruno Eisner, Ignaz Tiegermann, and Alexander Borowski.

35. "Schon oft wurde—vielleicht nicht ohne Verwunderung—nach den Gründen geforscht, warum es gerade ein Interpret deutsche Abstammung ist, der so weitgehend mit einer so sehr französischen Musik assoziiert wird. Die einfachste und nächstliegende, aber wohl allzu summarische Antwort auf diese Frage dürfte lauten: Die Musik kennt eben keine Grenzen, sie ist eine übernationale, allen Völkern verständliche Sprache."

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