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Parody and Satire in Hanns Eisler's Palmström and Zeitungsausschnitte

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**PARODY AND SATIRE IN HANNS EISLER'S *PALMSTRÖM* AND
*ZEITUNGSAUSSCHNITTE***

A Thesis Presented

by

ALYSSA B. WELLS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

September 2015

Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

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ABSTRACT

PARODY AND SATIRE IN HANNS EISLER'S *PALMSTRÖM* AND *ZEITUNGSAUSSCHNITTE*

SEPTEMBER 2015

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Hanns Eisler routinely expressed his discontent with the state of music and society in the late 1920s in *Die Rote Fahne*—an organ of the Marxist revolutionary organization, the *Spartakusbund*, to which he often contributed. His 1928 essay “Man baut um,” among the most notable of these writings, declares that the high expenditures in art—such as the construction of a fourteen-million Mark opera house—to be the result of capitalist greed rather than a reflection of the desire for musical performances, as had been suggested. Although the cost of the new venue is the subject in this satirical passage, this contains a secondary accusation. With a grotesque sense of amusement, he suggests that schoolchildren are certainly content to go without breakfast because they understand the importance of the opera building. In doing so, he sheds light on the human consequences of material desires.

Caustic accusations regarding various aspects of musical culture are a common occurrence in Eisler's writings, particularly in the years surrounding his break with his teacher, Arnold Schoenberg—1924-1927. During this time, not only did Eisler become increasingly vocal in his printed critiques, but his ideologies became apparent in his compositional style as well. This thesis contends that two of his musical parodies between 1924 and 1927, *Palmström* (1924) and *Zeitungsausschnitte* (1925-1927) contain satirical criticisms of contemporary musical consumption and content, which are paralleled in his published prosaic critiques.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Hanns Eisler routinely expressed his discontent with the state of music and society in the late 1920s in *Die Rote Fahne*—an organ of the Marxist revolutionary organization, the *Spartakusbund*, to which he often contributed. Among the most notable of these writings is the 1928 essay “Man baut um,” which declares that the high expenditures in art—such as the construction of a fourteen-million Mark opera house—as the result of capitalist greed rather than a reflection of the desire for musical performances, as had been suggested.

Vergeßt aber schnell, daß der Reichstag die für die Kinderspeisung angeforderten *fünf Millionen* nicht bewilligt hat. 76 000 Kinder ohne Frühstück in die Schule? Dafür soll man aber doch wenigstens die Lehrern empfehlen, den Kindern vor dem Schulgebet einen Vortrag über die technischen Feinessen der neuen Operbühne zu halten, als Ersatz für das nichtbewilligte Frühstück.¹

Although the cost of the new venue is the subject in this satirical passage, there is a secondary accusation. With a grotesque sense of amusement, he sheds light on the human consequences of material desires.

Caustic accusations regarding various aspects of musical culture are a common occurrence in Eisler’s writings, particularly in the years surrounding his break with his

¹ Hanns Eisler, *Hanns Eisler: Musik Und Politik - Schriften I 1924-1948*, ed. Günter Mayer (München: Rogner & Bernhard, 1973), 77.

teacher, Arnold Schoenberg—1924-1927. During this time, not only did Eisler become increasingly vocal in his printed critiques, but his ideologies became apparent in his compositional style as well. This thesis contends that his musical parodies between 1924 and 1927 contain satirical criticisms of contemporary musical performance, consumption, and content, which also exist in his published prosaic critiques. More specifically, I assert that his early compositions focus upon a specific element related to Eisler—Arnold Schoenberg—whereas his later compositions comment on more broad concepts, such as music’s role in society.

Eisler’s discontent for the present state of musical culture appears in at least two of his compositions: *Palmström* (1924) and *Zeitungsausschnitte* (1925-1927). Reinhard Kapp (2000), Albrecht Betz (1982), and Thomas Ahrend (2012) have individually analyzed *Palmström* and *Zeitungsausschnitte*. Their scholarship, however, does not consider the relationships of the compositions, or their larger reflections of societal problems.

Building upon previous scholarship, this thesis contends the parodies *Palmström* and *Zeitungsausschnitte* contain satirical elements through a cultural musicological exploration of musical style and harmonic content, as well as textual sources and meanings, in order to discern why Eisler felt the need to compose satirically. The findings from these analyses are compared to Eisler’s critiques of musical culture present in his contemporaneous published writings. I conclude that Eisler’s musical-satirical output from 1924-1927 is part of his social awakening that would lead to more a culturally

involved compositional style. I contend in this conclusion that in 1924, he was primarily concerned with commenting upon the actions of his teacher, Schoenberg; however, by 1927, Eisler confronted larger issues of music's relationship to society. Although, just as in his writings, there are certainly a large number of compositions with satirical elements, this thesis only seeks to give a cursory exploration before beginning further conversations regarding Eisler's compositional wit as an indicator of greater cultural ills.

This chapter, in particular, gives an overview of the scholarly research on Eisler in the 1920s. I discuss relevant musicological discourse to establish an analytical methodology that is equal parts text analysis, musical analysis, close readings, and cultural context.

Literature Review

The scope of this thesis necessitates close work with only a portion of scholarship on Hanns Eisler and his criticisms of music and culture between 1924 and 1927. This literature review contains a cursory discussion of scholarship on Eisler's criticisms of musical culture during the 1920s, and *Palmström* and *Zeitungsausschnitte*.

Palmström and *Zeitungsausschnitte* have been of interest to Thomas Ahrend, Reinhard Kapp, and Albrecht Betz due to their significance in Eisler's development as a composer. Ahrend and Kapp explore *Palmström* as a signifier of Eisler's forthcoming

break with Schoenberg.² Kapp explores Eisler and Schoenberg's relationship, as well as Eisler's aesthetic criticisms of Schoenberg's compositional method. Ahrend's claim is that *Palmström* is not a direct criticism of Schoenberg himself, but of the twelve-tone compositional style. Albrecht Betz's discussion of *Palmström* is similar to Kapp's because they both draw in relevant content from *Zeitungsausschnitte*.³ Betz's discourse on *Zeitungsausschnitte* and *Palmström* draws from both musical analyses and contextual discussions. Overall, the research of Betz, Kapp, and Ahrend serve as an adequate point of departure for discussions of Eisler's larger criticisms of musical culture.

Cornelius Schwehr and Hartmut Fladt's work is relevant to this thesis and Eisler's ideological and aesthetic developments in the 1920s. Schwehr's article "Hanns Eisler um 1925" explores Eisler's life and work in the year 1925—a time Schwehr finds critical to Eisler's development.⁴ This article contextualizes Eisler's motivations for composing

² Thomas Ahrend, "'Mir Ist Beinah, Ich Wäre Wer...' Zu Hanns Eislers *Palmström*, Op. 5," in *Hanns Eisler - Ein Komponist Ohne Heimat?*, ed. Hartmut Krones (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2012), 35–51. Rheinhard Kapp, "Zu Eislers Ersten Studien Über Zwölftonreihen: *Palmström*, Op. 5," in *Beiträge 2000: Hanns Eisler-Symposion Zum 100. Geburtstag von Hanns Eisler*, ed. Harald Goertz (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2000), 56–65.

³ Albrecht Betz, *Hanns Eisler, Political Musician*, trans. Bill Hopkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

⁴ Cornelius Schwehr, "Hanns Eisler Um 1925," in *Visionen Und Aufbrüche: Zur Krise Der Modernen Musik 1908-1933*, ed. Gunter Metz, vol. 5, *Hochschuldokumentationen Zu Musikwissenschaft Und Musikpädagogik Musikhoschule Freiburg* (Kassel: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1994), 177–200.

satirically. Another of Fladt's useful articles is "Eisler und die Neue Sachlichkeit."⁵ Fladt explores Eisler's political and philosophical opposition to the autonomy of the movement through several writings and compositions. Fladt's work is another point of departure for this thesis, as he is primarily concerned with the aesthetic embodiments of Eisler's criticisms.

Methodology

This thesis explores the elements of satire and parody in Eisler's *Palmström* and *Zeitungsausschnitte*. I build upon the principles of "new musicology" that have been developing since the late 1980s. I use "new musicology" because it allows for the analysis of Eisler's works to consider his perspective on the role of music in society. In relating Eisler's perspective to the goals of connecting music and culture, it becomes possible to consider elements of satire, and their sources, in his compositions.

New musicology insists that social aspects are inherently related to music.⁶ Although Philip V. Bohlman has observed that "It is hardly new to make a case that

⁵ Hartmut Flat, "Eisler und die Neue Sachlichkeit," in *Hanns Eisler*, ed. Wolfgang Fritz Haug, vol. 5, Argument Sonderband (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1975), 86–96.

⁶ New musicology came to the forefront of academic discourse following Susan McClary's 1991 monograph *Feminine Endings*, which integrates cultural criticism and musicology. Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

music and culture relate to each other, even that one is inseparable from each other,” contentions still exist that claim otherwise.⁷ Lydia Goehr explores some arguments against discussing music and its relation to non-musical entities—specifically issues of the political—in her article “Political Music and the Politics of Music.”⁸ Goehr frames her discussion with the House Committee on Un-American Activities’ (HUAC) investigation of Eisler in 1948. She presents an approach to talking about music and the relationship to political and nonmusical events:

[...] though aesthetics is separable from politics, the ideals regulating each other should be neither reduced to the other, nor formed in isolation from one another. The separation recognizes functional and categorical differences but avoids mutual isolation or exclusion.⁹

Goehr insists that political and musical elements must be considered separately, yet with consideration for one another; this idea first requires separation of the aesthetic from the political, then to focus on the relation the aesthetic to the political. In this thesis, I follow a similar method. I first identify what the aesthetic qualities of the piece itself are, then I compare these to the elements and their relationship to the ideas contained in Eisler’s

⁷ Philip V. Bohlman, “Music and Culture,” in *The Cultural Study of Music*, ed. Marton Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Middleton (New York: Routledge, 2003), 55.

⁸ Lydia Goehr, “Political Music and the Politics of Music,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52, no. 1 (January 1, 1994): 99–112, doi:10.2307/431589.

⁹ Ibid., 105.

writings. The exploration of the musical with the critical then facilitates an understanding *why* he composed in a satirical style.

Kapp, Ahrend, and Betz's works all discuss parody and irony in *Zeitungsausschnitte* and *Palmström*. However, their analyses are not exhaustive and do consider the relationship between parody and satire. To do this, I build upon Esti Sheinberg's explorations of satire and parody and Yayoi Uno Everett's continuation of Sheinberg's research.¹⁰ Sheinberg's monograph, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich*, is one of the first musicological works to approach parodic and satirical structures—though she analyzes each independently of the other. Everett's research explores the how a parody may be interpreted as a satire.¹¹ Though Everett extends beyond Sheinberg's definitions, their theories are largely congruous with one another and facilitate explorations of musical parodies.

This thesis uses Sheinberg's structural studies of parody, irony, satire, and the grotesque. She finds irony is a meta-term that encompasses parody, along with satire and

¹⁰ Esti Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich: A Theory of Musical Incongruities* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000). Yayoi Uno Everett, "Parody with an Ironic Edge: Dramatic Works by Kurt Weill, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Louis Andriessen," *Music Theory Online* 10, no. 4 (December 2004), http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.04.10.4/mto.04.10.4.y_everett_frames.html.

¹¹ Everett, "Parody with an Ironic Edge: Dramatic Works by Kurt Weill, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Louis Andriessen," 4.

the grotesque.¹² The uniting element among parody, satire, and the grotesque, is the layers of incongruities that are contained in irony. Sheinberg defines a parody as:

A parody is an ironic utterance, the layers of which are embedded in two or more incongruent encoded texts. In its reference to pre-existing texts (works of art, styles, etc.) that implicitly present a critical and/or polemical commentary, parody is simultaneously a text and a meta-text. [...] Parody is characteristically based on elements of imitation, which it modifies by the insertion of incongruous critical and/or polemical components.¹³

As the passage states, what differentiates parody from other forms of irony are that the author or composer of a parody bases their work upon another. The modification occurs in the context of a new work that contains the values of the composer. She provides further definition of this approach, stating:

Like all ironic structures, parody is comprised of two incongruent layers. In the specific case of parody both layers are taken from pre-existing cultural contexts, such as specific works of art, personal artistic styles, stylistic genres, topics or stylistic periods.¹⁴

As a result, any discussions of parody must include an exploration of both incongruent layers.

Sheinberg asserts that one must consider the structure above all else. Her research and methodologies are useful in analyzing elements of parody in Eisler's works. She

¹² Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich: A Theory of Musical Incongruities*, 58.

¹³ Ibid., 141.

¹⁴ Ibid., 148.

compartmentalizes each component of parody eliminates to eliminate many complexities that will arise because of its inherently multifaceted qualities. She contends that a parody involves taking an object from its original context and trans-contextualizing it into a new context; through this, the original object becomes the parodied object. It is then possible to discern other components from the trans-contextualization framework.

While ‘trans-contextualization’ provides the scheme with its structural form, ‘relation’ and ‘incongruity’ provide it with parody’s semantic structural components. This scheme presents, thus, a clear-cut ironic structure, based on pre-existing texts, which this study accepts as the starting-point for the examination of parody.¹⁵

I subsequently can apply Sheinberg’s understanding of parody to many embodiments and is useful in exploring the complexities of Eisler’s parody and satire.

Everett builds upon Sheinberg’s framework for analyzing parody by adding a way to discern satire from parody. Where Sheinberg finds parody, grotesque, and satire all to arise from irony, Everett describes parodies as natural, satirical, or ironic.

I define parody in musical discourse as a composer's appropriation of pre-existing music with intent to highlight it in a significant way. The analyst then determines whether the accompanying ethos is deferential (neutral), ridiculing (satirical), or contradictory (ironic) based on how the new context transforms and/or subverts the topical/expressive meaning of the borrowed element.¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibid., 152.

¹⁶ Everett, “Parody with an Ironic Edge: Dramatic Works by Kurt Weill, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Louis Andriessen,” 5.

In her article, Everett explains how a satirical or ironic *ethos* (similar to the affect of a work in this context) comes from trans-contextualization that inverts or negates the subject to which the piece refers—a direct reference to Sheinberg’s methodology. The negation may occur through the text or through conflicting “musical signifiers.”¹⁷ Everett uses major and minor modes in an example of her model, stating that major modes are typically associated with “non-tragic” themes and minor associated with “tragic.” She states that when a composer invokes a relationship associated with a particular theme, composition, or composer, they create a parody, yet when they reverse the correlations between each mode, they are engaging in satire.¹⁸

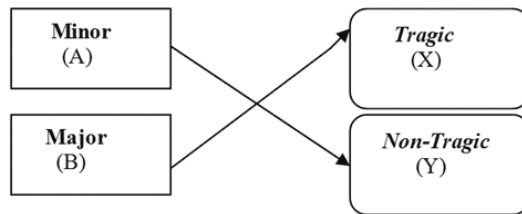


Figure 1.1: Everett’s diagram of paradigmatic substitution via inverted correlation¹⁹

In discussing the aesthetic affect of irony, Everett allows for a more detailed interpretation of parody. This analyses in this thesis identify elements of parody—as

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ For this model, Everett associates Sheinberg’s theories with Robert Hatten’s discussions of paradigmatic substitution.

¹⁹ Ibid., Figure 2b.

Sheinberg establishes—but provide greater definition and explanation through the use of Everett’s model. Using this paradigm in an analysis will reveal the referents in Eisler’s music, as well as the nuances between parody and satire.²⁰

Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 first establishes *Palmström* as a parody. I do this by first exploring the original contexts of the themes that Eisler references—Arnold Schoenberg, the twelve-tone compositional method, and the notion of autonomous art. The meaning of these elements is then considered in the context of Eisler’s life in 1924, and subsequently, in the context of *Palmström*. From this trans-contextualization, I conclude that *Palmström* takes on a negative ethos that Everett would associate with a satirical parody. In Chapter 3, I apply the same process to *Zeitungsausschnitte*. Finally, Chapter 4 explores the differences in ethos, as well as how Eisler achieves the satire in each composition. This analysis discerns that *Palmström* implies satire while he explicitly expresses it in *Zeitungsausschnitte*. I simultaneously explore the dichotomy of implicit versus explicit commentary in his published writings contemporaneous to each composition. I conclude that how satire exists in *Palmström* and *Zeitungsausschnitte* is indicative of trends in his published writings.

²⁰ Everett also explores parody as a tool for alienation, as in the works of Eisler and Kurt Weill, however, discussions of alienation fall outside of the scope of this thesis. Ibid., 7.

CHAPTER 2

PARODY AS SATIRE IN *PALMSTRÖM*

Introduction

In 1953, Hanns Eisler gave his 1924 composition *Palmström* the subtitle: Parodien für eine Sprechstimme, Flöte, Klarinette in A, Violine und Violoncello. Despite this official declaration, the parodic nature of the composition was already obvious. What was not as evident—particularly without his explanation of the fact—was that *Palmström* also functioned as a satire. This analysis contends that the parody in *Palmström* refers to his teacher Arnold Schoenberg and his use of the twelve-tone compositional method and elements of the literary grotesque. The satirical elements critically assess the role of these elements in society and the intentions of his teacher in particular. In this chapter, I use Esti Sheinberg's methods of identifying parody and Yayoi Uno Everett's approach to determining the nature of compositional satire through *ethos*.¹ In doing so, I look at the multiple layers of meaning in *Palmström* to conclude that this composition contains

¹ In this context *ethos* refers to “an inferred intended reaction motivated by the text.” Everett finds that satire is always accompanied by a scornful or disdainful ethos (and therefore marked) while parody is accompanied by reverential, humorous, or contesting ethos (and therefore unmarked). Yayoi Uno Everett, “Parody with an Ironic Edge: Dramatic Works by Kurt Weill, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Louis Andriessen,” *Music Theory Online* 10, no. 4 (December 2004): 4, http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.04.10.4/mto.04.10.4.y_everett_frames.html.

obvious elements of parody and more subtle expressions of a satirical commentary upon Schoenberg and the twelve-tone compositional method.

***Palmström* as a Parody**

Thomas Ahrend's deconstruction of *Palmström* contends that it is not Schoenberg, nor his *Pierrot lunaire*, that was parodied.

Und nicht der *Pierrot lunaire* oder der Stil Schönbergs insgesamt werden parodiert, sondern technische Mittel und groteske Ausdruckscharaktere aus dem *Pierrot lunaire* werden benutzt, um sowohl den grotesken und parodierenden Elementen der Gedichte Morgensterns auf einer musikalischen Ebene zu entsprechen als auch gängige Muster des Verhältnisse zwischen vertontem Text und Musik zu parodieren.²

To prove that the “grotesque expressive character” from *Pierrot lunaire*—particularly the relationship between music and text—was the object of Eisler's parody; Ahrend explores the genesis of *Palmström* and then compares Eisler's twelve-tone compositional style with Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* (an atonal work). Ahrend argues that in addition to the two being similar in instrumentation, Eisler also borrows various sets of notes from *Pierrot lunaire* and uses them as the source of several tone rows. Through these relationships, Ahrend establishes that Eisler is above all, parodying Schoenberg's style of setting texts to music.

² Thomas Ahrend, “‘Mir Ist Beinah, Ich Wäre Wer...’ Zu Hanns Eislers *Palmström*, Op. 5,” in *Hanns Eisler - Ein Komponist Ohne Heimat?*, ed. Hartmut Krones (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2012), 36.

This analysis moves beyond Ahrend's deconstruction in order to establish the existence, and nature of, satire in *Palmström*. Sheinberg's trans-contextualization methodology first establishes the piece as a parody.

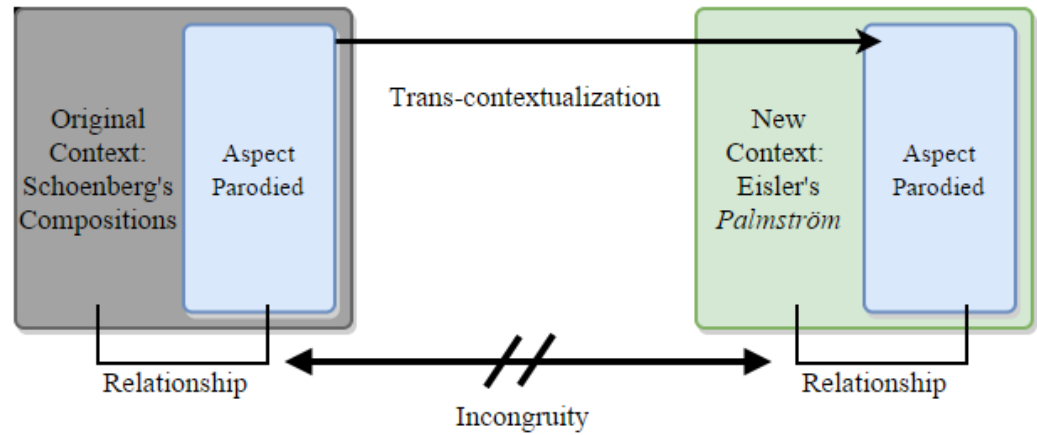


Figure 2.1: Trans-Contextualization in *Palmström*

My analysis acknowledges the relationship of the contexts and the various parodied aspects (the twelve-tone compositional technique, the use of *Sprechstimme*, the use of grotesque literary elements, etc.). Subsequently, I consider each aspect parodied in its original context (Schoenberg's compositions) and in the new context (*Palmström*). The similarities and differences between the relationships highlight incongruities that then reveal satirical aspects in the parody. This approach concludes that Eisler's use of parody makes satirical commentary upon modernism and audience reception.

Palmström as a Satire

Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* (1912) combines the rich tradition of Italian *commedia dell'arte* with innovative compositional methods. Virginia Sublett finds Schoenberg's innovations as existing primarily in his treatment of tonality and his creation of the *Sprechstimme* vocal performance style.³ Schoenberg rejects tonality and instead embraces the notion that each piece of music can create its own harmonic vocabulary and structure. Furthermore, Schoenberg's compositional style in *Pierrot lunaire* represents the musical expressionist movement.⁴ As a result, he appears to revolt against the concepts of Romanticism and governing rules of tonal harmony musicians had been following for nearly three hundred years.

Schoenberg's repudiation strictly tonal compositions led him to develop the twelve-tone method in the early 1920s; Eisler was one of his first students to compose

³ Virginia Sublett, "'Pierrot Lunaire' at 95: Arnold Schoenberg's Musical Hybrid and Twentieth-Century Vocal Chamber Music," *College Music Symposium* 49/50 (January 2009): 451.

⁴ *Pierrot lunaire*, while not governed by tonal harmony, does contain elements of formal structure because of Schoenberg's preoccupation with the numbers seven, three, and twenty-one. The full title for *Pierrot lunaire* is *Dreimal sieben Gedichte aus Albert Girauds "Pierrot lunaire."* It contained twenty-one individual lieder, grouped by sevens into three distinct sections. His obsession with numerology in *Pierrot lunaire* was perhaps a precursor to his twelve-tone style of composition; however, there exists very little discernable systematic organization of tones in this composition. Colin C. Sterne, "Pythagoras and Pierrot: An Approach to Schoenberg's Use of Numerology in the Construction of 'Pierrot Lunaire,'" *Perspectives of New Music* 21, no. 1/2 (October 1, 1982): 506, doi:10.2307/832890.

using the twelve-tone method.⁵ Already by this time, Eisler was growing wary of bourgeois artwork's status as a commodity—particularly that of the “art for art's sake” attitude of composers such as Schoenberg.⁶ However, after encouragement from Schoenberg, Eisler composed *Palmström* with the twelve-tone method in 1924. *Palmström* does not adhere to the twelve-tone method with the same intensity as his teacher, but Eisler does quote and borrow material from Schoenberg's atonal *Pierrot lunaire*—even the instrumental ensemble.⁷ Ahrend note that, Eisler borrows the instrumental ensemble from *Pierrot lunaire* as well.⁸ Eisler's most explicit reference to his teacher is in the first movement:

⁵ Albrecht Betz, *Hanns Eisler, Political Musician*, trans. Bill Hopkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 11.

⁶ Jiyoung Park, “Serialism and Cyclicism in Hanns Eisler's *Palmström*, Op. 5” (Dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 2007), 168.

⁷ Several of Eisler's writings in 1925 praise Schoenberg's innovations and mark Eisler's early opinion on the compositional method. By 1928, Eisler would consider Schoenberg's personal style of composing with the twelve-tone system to be inaccessible. Hanns Eisler, *Hanns Eisler: Musik Und Politik - Schriften I 1924-1948*, ed. Günter Mayer (München: Rogner & Bernhard, 1973), 188.

⁸ The word “phrase” is used loosely here due to the atonal structure of *Pierrot lunaire*.



Figure 2.2: Reference Mark in “1. Venus Palmström,” *Palmström*, m. 1

The first two notes of the piece (A-E♭) are explained with an annotation at the bottom of the page.



Figure 2.3: Reference Annotation in “1. Venus Palmström,” *Palmström*

The annotation explains Eisler’s use of the notes A-E♭ to refer to Arnold Schoenberg. This is important because the P₀ of “1. Venus Palmström” begins in the violin part, as pictured in Figure 2.2—“Arnold Schoenberg” begins the basis by which the entire movement functions. Despite this intriguing correlation, scholars have yet to acknowledge that Eisler’s use of the twelve-tone method in *Palmström* could be satirical. Consideration for the vocal part elucidates Eisler’s sarcastic use of the twelve-tone method.

Eisler also parodies the relationship of elements associated with the text (such as singing style) with the music. As such, it is necessary to consider these in their original contexts (how Schoenberg sets a text to music) as well as in the context of *Palmström*

(how Eisler sets a text to music). Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* was the first composition in which he used the *Sprechstimme* style of singing.⁹

Schoenberg uses his methods of text setting and *Sprechstimme* to aid the music in embodying the affect of the text—a technique Eisler found inadequate.¹⁰ Throughout *Palmström*, he employed the *Sprechstimme* technique, denoting it in the same manner as Schoenberg with the addition of a small “x” to the stem of each note in the vocal part (Figure 2.4: Use of *Sprechstimme* in “1. Venus Palmström,” *Palmström*, mm. 1-2).

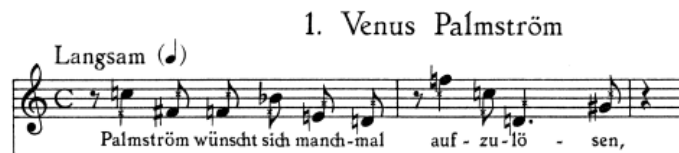


Figure 2.4: Use of *Sprechstimme* in “1. Venus Palmström,” *Palmström*, mm. 1-2

Unlike Schoenberg, Eisler does not provide any detailed instructions for the technique.

The only additional guidance comes in the fifth and last movement:

⁹ Schoenberg defined

¹⁰ Aidan Soder, *Sprechstimme in Arnold Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire: A Study of Vocal Performance Practice* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2008), 15.



Figure 2.5: Reference Mark in “5. Couplet von der Tapetenblume,” *Palmström*, mm.

7-8

As with his reference to Schoenberg in the first movement, the asterisk in this case references an annotation at the bottom of the page.

***) Als Couplet, wie im Kabarett vorzutragen, halb singend.**

Figure 2.6: Annotation in “5. Couplet von der Tapetenblume,” *Palmström*

Despite the continued use of the *Sprechstimme* annotation, the singing style of “wie im Kabarett” invokes a less-serious impression on the part of the listener and performer. This instruction changes the relationship of the aspect parodied to the composition. In Schoenberg’s *Pierrot lunaire*, the use of *Sprechstimme* is serious and adds to the uncomfortable affect of the piece. However, in *Palmström*, *Sprechstimme* undermines the grotesqueness of the piece. As a result, Eisler adds an almost-mocking element to this last movement, as well as *Sprechstimme* overall. Subsequently, this is an element with a negative ethos and this act is subsequently satirical.

Schoenberg finds that the music should convey the meaning of the text and that music could supply all elements necessary to communicating the affect. Schoenberg writes:

Moreover, I stress the following concerning performances:

It is never the task of the performers to recreate the mood and character of the individual pieces on the basis of the meaning of the words, but rather solely basis of the music. The extent to which the tone-painting-like rendering of the events and emotions of the text was important to the author is already found in the music. Where the performer finds it lacking, he should abstain from presenting something that was not intended by the author. He would not be adding, but rather detracting.¹¹

The lack of artistic freedom presented to the singer facilitated an exact interpretation of what Schoenberg had composed. The audience would ideally hear Schoenberg's direct interpretation of the text. Several selections demonstrate Schoenberg's insistence upon the work discerning its meaning "solely on the basis of the music."

¹¹ Arnold Schoenberg, *Pierrot Lunaire, Op. 21* (Los Angeles: Belmont Music Publishers, 1990), preface.



Figure 2.7: Musical Interaction with the Text in “Nacht,” *Pierrot lunaire*, mm. 12-

14¹²

“Erinnrung” and “mordend!” (Figure 2.2) demonstrate Schoenberg’s musical mimicry of the text. In this measure, the instrumental accompaniment mirrors the shock of each word. He further imparts the affect of the phrase with extended technique in the violin.¹³ Vocal and instrumental interactions like this are present throughout the twenty-one movement work

¹² Ibid., mm. 12–14.

¹³ By playing “am Steg,” or at the bridge of the violin, the instrument produces a heavier, airy, tone.

An incongruity exists in the relationship between music and text in *Palmström* and the source of parody. Eisler believes that the composer should give equal consideration to the music and the text—something that is evident in *Palmström*—and often creates two independence between each element.¹⁴ This is a contrast to Schoenberg, who made the music subsidiary to the text—existing only to support it. One way Eisler renders the text independent from the music is in using the twelve-tone method only for the accompaniment; the vocal part is simply atonal.¹⁵ In Schoenberg's serial works, he often subjects all elements to the same compositional technique. In addition to creating a disjunction between the vocal part and instrumental part in terms of compositional methodology, Eisler also differentiates his composition from Schoenberg's by eliminating any interaction between the text and accompaniment. In portions where it seems as if Eisler is composing an integrated vocal part similar to what occurs in Figure 2.7, these interactions are only a coincidental result. For example, in “4. Galgenbruders Frühlingslied,” flute part appears interact with the vocal part.

¹⁴ By 1950, Eisler would fully articulate this view in his essay, “Einiges über das Verhältnis von Musik und Text.” The views reflected in this essay mirror that of his compositional techniques in *Palmström*. Hanns Eisler, *Hanns Eisler: Musik Und Politik - Schriften II 1948-1962*, ed. Günter Mayer (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1982), 82.

¹⁵ Park, “Serialism and Cyclicism in Hanns Eisler's *Palmström*, Op. 5,” 169.



Figure 2.8: Independent Vocal Part in “4. Galgenbruders Frühlingslied,”

Palmström, mm. 3-5

In Figure 2.8, it seems as if the flute pickup to measure four may be anticipating the reentrance of the vocal part. The placement of the flute four-note motif after the end of “Hälmlein” further reinforces this notion. However, because as the motif is repeated, it becomes apparent that it is not interacting with the text, but rather simply acting as a motif. The music supports the text in that invokes the mood of the text, but elements such as the motif in Figure 2.8 thwart any expectation of frequent interaction and dependence. Consequently, another incongruity arises between the text setting and music in Eisler and Schoenberg’s compositions.

The grotesque content of the text provides a distorted reality that parallels Schoenberg’s atonal compositional style and contributes to the overall character of the piece. In his discussion of *Pierrot lunaire*, Reinhold Brinkmann describes the grotesque qualities of the text as arising from the “metaphysical sadness” of the main character, Pierrot. He contends that Pierrot is important “as an allegorical image for the decadent

spirit of the European fin-de-siècle.”¹⁶ The events of the text involve Pierrot becoming “moon drunk” and singing about love and religion in the first section, blasphemy in the second, and a failed search for redemption in the third; however, no overall plot exists.¹⁷ The text exaggerates the emotion associated with each of these events. For example, in “8. Nacht,” Pierrot is descending into insanity:

Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter
Töten der Sonne Glanz.
Ein geschlossnes Zauberbuch,
Ruht der Horizont—verschwiegen.

Aus der Qualm verlornen Tiefen
Steigt ein Duft, Erinnerung mordend!
Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter
Töten der Sonne Glanz.

Und vom Himmel erdenwärts
Sinken sich mit schweren Schwingen
Unsichtbar die Ungetüme
Auf die Menschenherzen nieder ...
Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter.

“8. Nacht” asserts the certainty of the piece’s overall grotesqueness due to its heightened imagery. Whereas other movements contain recognition of Pierrot (or auxiliary characters) as the subject experiencing events throughout a period of time, the immediacy of the experience of the “Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter töten der Sonne Glanz.”

¹⁶ Reinhold Brinkmann, “The Fool as Paradigm: Schönberg’s Pierrot Lunaire and the Modern Artist,” in *Schoenberg and Kandinsky: An Historic Encounter*, ed. Konrad Boehmer (Routledge, 2013), 150.

¹⁷ Jonathan Dunsby, *Schoenberg: Pierrot Lunaire* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 18.

Elements of the grotesque are evident in the first seven movements, but “8. Nacht” confirms the genre.¹⁸

In his composition, Eisler alters the relationship of the text to its meaning to include concrete references to events in reality. In *Pierrot lunaire*, Schoenberg uses the text to express a grotesque representation of the “distorted identity of the individual,” Eisler’s text in *Palmström* reflects Eisler’s relationship with Schoenberg.¹⁹ He parodies the notion of the grotesque immediately in the first movement, “1. Venus Palmström.”

Palmström wünscht sich manchmal aufzulösen
Wie ein Salz in einem Glase Wasser
So nach Sonnenuntergang besonders.
Möchte ruhen so bis Sonnenaufgang
Und dann wieder aus dem Wasser steigen:
Venus Palmström Anadyomene!

However, by the third movement, the text includes more references to events that are concrete, or tangible. “3. L’art pour l’art,” suggests that the sort of compositional style in which Schoenberg was engaging would not be memorable or useful, foreshadowing the break between student and teacher that would come later in 1924. In “4. Galgenbruders Frühlingslied,” The largest diversion from Schoenberg’s abstract text is in Eisler’s

¹⁸ Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers notes that the grotesque in *Pierrot lunaire* is created by the immediacy of each movement and the embodiment of insanity. Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers, “Pierrot L.,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 64, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 627.

¹⁹ Julian Johnson, *Out of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity* (Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2015), 210.

engagement in the use of the first person in the fourth movement.²⁰ This movement concludes with: “Mir ist beinah, / ich wäre wer, der ich doch nicht mehr bin.” As the text states, *Palmström* is heralding in a new era of works by Eisler where he composes more independently of his teacher.

Everett’s asserts that when the incongruities in a parody take on a negative *ethos*, the parody is satirical in nature. As a result, it is possible to infer that Eisler sarcastically references and parodies other elements in *Palmström*. In conjunction with Eisler’s disapproval of the “l’art pour l’art” mindset, Everett’s contention makes it possible to interpret Eisler’s use of the twelve-tone compositional method as satirical, rather than the composition existing only as a non-critical parody. Assessing the context of the source of the parody—Schoenberg’s *Pierrot lunaire*—demonstrates that Schoenberg’s grotesque was to innovate music for music’s sake. In *Palmström*, Eisler’s use of the twelve-tone method undeniably points to Schoenberg and disallows the listener from invoking any other reference. Betz acknowledges this, writing:

In it, Eisler simultaneously interweaves his admiration for and criticism of Schoenberg, who had urged him to undertake these [twelve-tone]

²⁰ Betz goes so far as to suggest that the entire composition invokes a relationship to Eisler: “Eisler’s first musical protest—which likewise remained an internal one—was expressed in the conjunction of the lyrical with the grotesque in his autobiographical *Palmström*. This was probably originally conceived entirely in relation to the ‘I’ [...]” Betz, *Hanns Eisler, Political Musician*, 26.

studies, in a mischievously ambivalent tone, which brings out his own objective detachment and heralds the transition to his own position.²¹

The texts of *Palmström* invoke the understanding of Eisler's "objective detachment" because rather than actively participating in admiration for innovating for art's sake, he is stepping aside in order to criticize it. The knowledge that his use of the twelve-tone method was not out of his own volition because Schoenberg had been the one to ask for a composition in that style, is essential to this interpretation. The text of "3. L'art pour l'art" facilitates perception of Eisler's disdain.

Das Schwirren eines aufgeschreckten Sperlings
Begeistert Korf zu einem Kunstgebilde,
das nur aus Blicken
Meinen und Gebärden besteht.

Man kommt mit Apparaten
Es aufzunehmen:
Doch von Korf „entsinnt sich seines Werks nicht mehr,“
Entsinnt sich keines Werkes mehr anlässlich
Eines „aufgeregten Sperlings“.

In the context of *Palmström*, this movement can be interpreted as a critique of the twelve-tone method ("Apparaten") that had taken over the artistic works that had previously contained little thoughtful content. The directions to the speaker (not singer) at the end of the work further emphasize the possibility of this interpretation; Eisler writes, "Das Sprecher schüttelt mit nachdenklicher Meine den Kopf." Subsequently, an incongruity exists between Eisler's direct criticism of detached music and his use of the twelve-tone

²¹ Ibid.

method. This resolution of this discrepancy lies in the understanding of Eisler's employment of the twelve-tone technique in a purely satirical manner. The twelve-tone method is subsequently a recipient of this criticism.

The interpretation that *Palmström* is a satirical critique of serialism conflicts with Ahrend's conclusion. Ahrend contends that "das Verfahren der Komposition mit zwölf Tönen wird nicht hinterfragt oder kritisiert, sondern experimentell ausgelotet," and that Eisler is merely parodying the relationship between music and text.²² Eisler's use of the twelve-tone method in a satirical manner falls outside of the scope of Ahrend's paper, as satire is not necessarily always associated with parody. However, because of the text content's juxtaposition with the compositional method, it is more likely that Eisler was composing in a satirical manner rather than simply overlooking a problematic feature of his composition.

In conjunction with the textual content, Eisler's satirical use of the twelve-tone compositional method points to a larger conclusion regarding the state of music in society beyond Schoenberg. After describing the detachment of music from society, he voices his obvious disapproval in the speaker's shaking of their head in "3. L'art pour l'art." In choosing this text, Eisler voiced his disapproval with music that simply follows one trend or another and asserts that the audiences will simply forget such trends.

²² Ahrend, "'Mir Ist Beinah, Ich Wäre Wer...' Zu Hanns Eislers Palmström, Op. 5," 36.

Conclusion

Ahrend is correct in acknowledging the elements of parody in *Palmström*; however, he certainly overlooked the possible satirical elements. Because Eisler directly criticized the fleeting nature of modern art music in “3. L’art pour l’art,” it is likely that his use of the twelve-tone compositional method was also a recipient of criticism. This conclusion is further supported by the fact that *Palmström* resulted from Schoenberg encouraging Eisler to compose in the twelve-tone method, rather than Eisler using the technique out of his own accord. The parody that is *Palmström*, is subsequently not a light-hearted imitation of a teacher, but rather a jab at Schoenberg’s lack of consideration for the audience, and a critique of the state of modern music.

CHAPTER 3

PARODY AS SATIRE IN *ZEITUNGSAUSSCHNITTE*

The central force of the songs is their tone: at the same time highly differentiated [...] and concentrated in a determination to change the world that breaks through the limits of art.⁴³ – T.W. Adorno

Introduction

One of Hanns Eisler's first direct attacks on patterns of musical consumption exists in his 1925-1927 composition, *Zeitungsausschnitte*. In this work, I contend that he expresses his observation that the poeticism and lyricism of *lieder* is incompatible with the hardships that families faced in the post-World War I era.⁴⁴ In *Zeitungsausschnitte*, he expresses his commentary upon contemporary patterns of musical consumption through musical and textual satire. This chapter builds upon Albrecht Betz's initial analysis of *Zeitungsausschnitte* in order to describe its satirical elements. I use Esti Sheinberg's methods of trans-contextual exploration to establish the work as a parody of *lieder*. Yayoi Uno Everett's methods for analysis of parody determine that this piece contains satirical criticism of *lieder*'s role in the twentieth century. Ultimately, this analysis explains how

⁴³ Detlev Claussen, *Theodor W. Adorno: One Last Genius* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 158.

⁴⁴ Albrecht Betz, *Hanns Eisler Political Musician*, trans. Bill Hopkins (Cambridge University Press, 1982), 45.

Eisler communicated his observations of music's role in society, rather than attacks against a specific person, such as his teacher Arnold Schoenberg.

***Zeitungsausschnitte* as a Parody**

It is possible to interpret *Zeitungsausschnitte* as a parody of Lieder when considering two elements essential to the genre: lyricism of music and poeticism of texts.

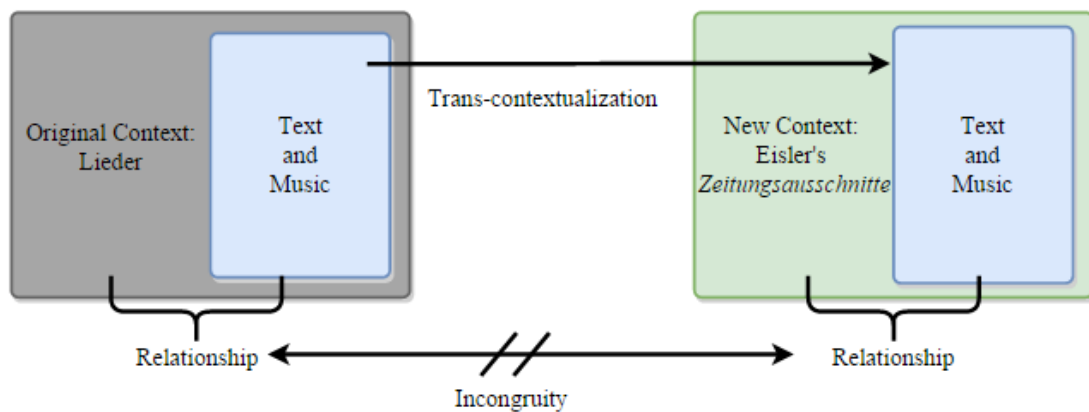


Figure 3.1: Trans-contextualization in *Zeitungsausschnitte*

In traditional lieder—such as those of Robert Schumann—the goal is often to express the beauty and imagery of the texts. In the case of Schumann's *Dichterliebe* op. 48 (1840), he chose texts the subject of love, nature, dreams, and fairy tales. He then expresses these elements with flowing, lyrical, melodic lines. Although Eisler mimics a cycle of Lieder in *Zeitungsausschnitte*, the affect of the music is dramatically different from that of a traditional collection of lieder. The variation in affectation is a result of the context in

which the music and text function. The subsequent investigation of incongruities between each context reveals the parody as satirical in nature.

Placing the text in the context of Eisler's actions and situations during his time of composing *Zeitungsausschnitte* provide a lens through which the piece as a whole may be interpreted. After his official move to Berlin in 1925, he was increasingly politically involved. There, he concerned himself with the actions of the worker's movement and wrote for *Die Rote Fahne*.⁴⁵ His newfound recognition of the proletariat's struggles likely led him to view modern concert music as being problematic and detached from society. By 1928, he would articulate his disdain as such:

Die vielen Konzertanzeigen. In den Untergrundbahnhöfen hängen sie. An den Litfaßsäulen, an Bauzäunen kleben sie. In den Sonntagsnummern der großen bürgerlichen Zeitungen füllen sie zwei bis drei Seiten aus [...] Musikhunger der Bourgeoisie? Kunst hunger breiter, zahlungskräftiger Massen? Hochblüte des Musiklebens? Alles Schwindel.⁴⁶

His outright contempt for musical culture was one of the most prominent reasons for his desire to break with his teacher, Schoenberg. It was his desires to change the state of

⁴⁵ Eisler even went so far as to submit an application to become a member of the communist party; however, he never followed through. This would become a major point of attack during the 1948 investigation of him by the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Lydia Goehr, "Political Music and the Politics of Music," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52, no. 1 (January 1, 1994): 99–112, doi:10.2307/431589.

⁴⁶ Eisler, *Hanns Eisler: Musik Und Politik - Schriften I 1924-1948*, 74.

music led him to officially break with Schoenberg in 1926.⁴⁷ Subsequently, he began to compose in a style that was to protest the situation of modern music and musical culture. He composed *Zeitungsausschnitte* during these changes.

In *Zeitungsausschnitte*, Eisler was not parodying any Lied or collection of Lieder in particular, but rather the genre as a whole. The newspaper clippings from *Zeitungsausschnitte* contain advertisements and announcements pertaining to marriages, and children's songs.⁴⁸ These texts portray common events of life, in the context of their original publication. "Heiratsannonance (Liebeslied eines Grundbesitzers)" and "Heiratsannonance (Liebeslied eines Kleinbürgermädchens)" demonstrate the search for a partner in the post-war period:

Heiratsannonance (Lieblingslied eines Grundbesitzers)

Bin Witwer von vier und dreißig Jahren,
vermögen der Grundbesitzer mit Kind;
das Kind bedarf einer guten Mutter,
ich selber einer guten Frau.

Ich suche Verständnis,
innerliches seelisches Leben,
kein Vermögen, kein Vermögen.

Briefe unter: J.S. an die Expedition.

⁴⁷ Albrecht Betz identifies this as a time of transition, in which Eisler is coming into his own. Betz, *Hanns Eisler Political Musician*, 48.

⁴⁸ The children's songs come from Walter Benjamin's collection *Sammlung von Frankfurter Kinderreimen* that were published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* on 16 August 1925. Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Tillman Rexroth, vol. IV (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), 1086.

The wedding-related newspaper clippings all follow a similar format; most of those that Eisler chose took the form of a personal add. *Zeitungsausschnitte* also contains several editorial Enquete; “Die Sünde (Aus einer Enquete an die Kinder der unteren Volksschulklassen)” represents this category well.

Die Sünde (Aus einer Enquete an die Kinder der unteren Volksschulklassen)

Die Sünde ist eine Sünde, ich bitte, das weiß ich nicht!

Sünden zu machen ist leicht, aber auszubessern sind sie schwer, schwer, schwer!

Wenn man gegen Arme hart ist oder Schlechtes tut,
dann begehen wir eine Sünde;
Ich bitte, das weiß ich nicht!

The children’s songs paint a darker picture when compared to their counterpart of the slightly more optimistic wedding-related clippings and Enquetes.

Kriegslied eines Kindes (1916)

Meine Mutter wird Soldat,
da zieht sie Hosen an mit roten Quasten dran.
Trara tschindra,
meine Mutter wird Soldat.

Da bekommt sie eine Rock an mit blanken Knöpfen dran,
da bekommt sie Stiefel an mit langen Schaften dran,
da bekommt sie einen Helm auf mit Kaiser Wilhelm drauf.
Trara tschindra
meine Mutter wird Soldat.

Dann kriegt sie gleich ein Schießgewehr,
da schießt sie hin und her,
dann kommt sie in den Schützengrab’n,
da fressen sie die schwarzen Rab’n,
meine Mutter wird Soldat.

The more negative tone of the children's songs causes the reader to interpret the wedding announcements and Enquetes in a more negative light. However, when collected together, the clippings, or *Zeitungsausschnitte*, paint a picture of everyday life of German citizens during the inter-war period.

***Zeitungsausschnitte* as a Satire**

The incongruities in the text and music in Eisler's *Zeitungsausschnitte* and a typical collection of Lieder are negative in nature. It is possible to insert his obvious disapproval of Lieder into Everett's diagram of paradigmatic substitution via inverted correlation, which emphasizes the divergence of what the listener traditionally expects of a Lied and Eisler's composition.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Yayoi Uno Everett, "Parody with an Ironic Edge: Dramatic Works by Kurt Weill, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Louis Andriessen," *Music Theory Online* 10, no. 4 (December 2004): Figure 1b, http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.04.10.4/mto.04.10.4.y_everett_frames.html.

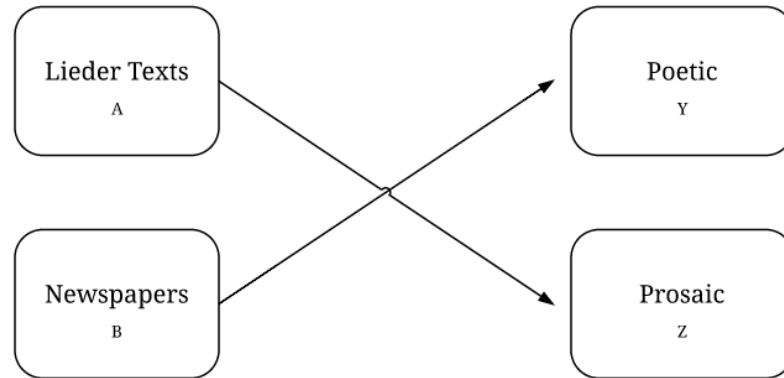


Figure 3.2: Diagram of inverted correlations in the texts of *Zeitungsausschnitte*

The inverted correlations in the text of *Zeitungsausschnitte* lie in Eisler's use of newspaper clippings in a context where the listener expects a more poetic text. The wedding advertisements' straightforward content removes the possibility of poetic interpretation associated with lieder, leaving the listener with a more factual account of life between the wars. The accompaniment accentuates the gritty realities that the text portrays; there are no flowing or lyrical melodic lines.

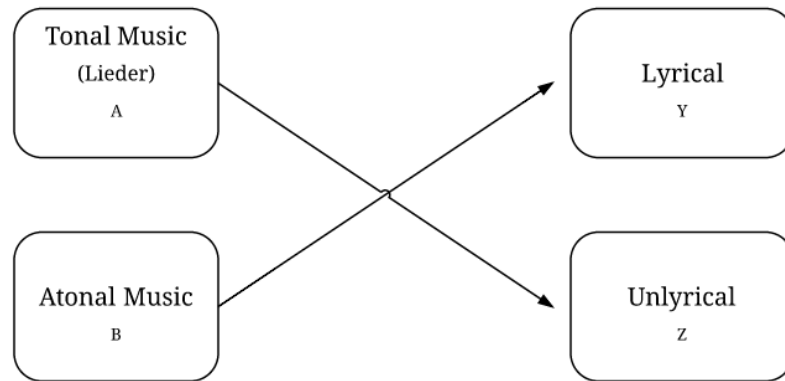


Figure 3.3: Diagram of inverted correlations in the music of *Zeitungsausschnitte*

Here, Everett’s methodology shows the relationship between Eisler’s composition and the musical content of a more typical lied. Eisler uses atonal music—the unlyrical—in a context where lyrical music is expected. I interpret this as a satirization of the listener’s expectation of lied by inverting the typical expectations of atonal music and lied, both in musical and lyrical content. In *Zeitungsausschnitte*, Eisler paints an unromanticized picture of reality and the effects of war upon everyday people.

The texts take on a different purpose than their original newspaper function in the context of a musical composition. Eisler’s use of prosaic texts directly contrasts the poeticism of texts in typical lied. As a result, *Zeitungsausschnitte* satirically comments upon the verbose texts that accompany lied that are most often performed in a concert hall setting. In using newspaper clippings, Eisler eliminates the possibility for detached artist-centered compositions that ignore the realities of the German people.

The content of the music brings out satirical meanings that are not apparent from the text alone. In this composition, Eisler uses music to interpret the human qualities

behind the words printed in newspapers. It seems as if he highlights the morbidity in the perceivably innocent children's songs and the frantic and longing nature of the marriage advertisements. I contend that he does this by eliminating the lyricism. This analysis discerns the product of *Zeitungsausschnitte*—a social and political satire—through the juxtaposition of musical content with the text.

Through the music, Eisler sheds a negative light upon the children's songs and exposes the sullen reality behind the lyrics; this is perhaps the most obvious indicator of satire in the *Zeitungsausschnitte*. His disdain is particularly evident in “Kriegslied eines Kindes (1916),” with his use of more rigid rhythms and variations in tempo. The semiotic implications of the rhythmic qualities are present from the first line.



Figure 3.4: Mechanical rhythmic qualities in “Kriegslied eines Kindes (1916),”

Zeitungsausschnitte, mm. 1-2

This first phrase contains mechanical, march-like rhythms that impart the notion of a soldier mother. The strict eighth note rhythms continue throughout the movement, punctuated by the heralding “Trara tschindra.”



Figure 3.5: Hearlding “Trara tchindra,” in “Kriegslied eines Kindes (1916),”

Zeitungsausschnitte, mm. 5-6

The more triumphant parts of “Kriegslied eines Kindes (1916),” such as what is contained in measure five of Figure 3.5, the tempo is upbeat. Downtempo phrases

contrast these sections, such as what is seen in Figure 3.4 and the measure six in Figure 3.5. The tempo in these *zurückhaltend* phrases adds an air of melancholy to the observation that “meine Mutter wird Soldat.” The largest tempo contrast comes at the end, when the singer speaks of the mother’s death and slows significantly.

The musical score for "Kriegslied eines Kindes (1916)" is presented in two systems. The first system shows a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked as *rit.* (ritardando) and the dynamics are *ppp* (pianissimo). The lyrics are: "Dann kommt sie ins La - za - rett,". The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked as *Tempo I* (return to original tempo) and the dynamics are *senza espr.* (without expression), *sempre ppp* (always pianissimo), and *fp* (fortissimo). The lyrics are: "da kommt sie ins Him - mel - bett, tra - ra." The score is in 3/4 time and features a vocal line and piano accompaniment.

Figure 3.6: Significant tempo changes in “Kriegslied eines Kindes (1916),”

Zeitungsausschnitte, mm. 27-34

In this section, the *ritardano* begins with the observation that the mother has arrived in a hospital. As the dynamic quiets significantly, the tempo continues to slow. However, the melancholy air is broken by the heralding “trara tschindra,” as if the singer is overcome with happiness in the concept of a heroic soldier. The changes in mood highlight the

morbidity associated with war and the willful ignorance of children as such sullen topics became part of everyday life in 1916.

The melodic content of the children's songs also imparts a feeling of despair that is not immediately apparent in the lyrics. Eisler creates this atmosphere by eliminating the concert hall lyricism that an audience would typically expect with lieder. Leaps of over an octave punctuate the extreme chromaticism present throughout.



Figure 3.7: Chromaticism punctuated by leaps, “Kriegslied eines Kindes (1916),”

Zeitungsausschnitte, mm. 12-14

A portion of the chromatic vocal part writing exists in measure twelve of Figure 3.7; however, the phrase “Kaiser Wilhelm drauf” contains the extreme leap in the whole movement. In this passage, the heavy-handed accents are also present in the piano accompaniment. The frequent use of accents for emphasis creates a heavy and cumbersome accompaniment that is very different from the flowing background that is paired with the lieder of Schumann and Schubert.

Eisler expresses the melancholy of life in the post-World War I period equally in the marriage advertisements of *Zeitungsausschnitte*. Alone, these newspaper excerpts regarding marriage contain hope for the future and the prospect of attaining a spouse. Eisler, however, destroys the optimism with the negative aesthetic that results from the harmonic content. His unfavorable interpretation in movements such as is often present from the first chords. “Heiratsannonce (Lieblingslied eines Grundbesitzers)” is no exception with an overall lack of traditional harmonic direction.



Figure 3.8: Atonality in “Heiratsannonce (Lieblingslied eines Grundbesitzers),”
Zeitungsausschnitte, mm. 1-4

The accompaniment seems to underscore the hopeful content of the text. Additionally, the accompaniment does not allow the listener to expect which note they will hear next—as in a work with traditional harmonic structures. In doing so, the audience may discern the hidden uncertainty of placing such an advertisement. Betz observes this occurrence as well:

While the text retreats into the background, the meaning of the text is simultaneously brought out. Here Eisler achieves a process of musical

alienation which permits him to undermine the conventional view of circumstances and to bring problems clearly into view.⁵⁰

In composing in the atonal style, Eisler points out the reality that exists behind each advertisement. This eliminates any the false hope that the reader may have attained from the original context of the text.

If Eisler's commentary is not immediately present in the first nine movements of *Zeitungsausschnitte*, it becomes particularly obvious in the last movement, "Frühlingsrede an einen Baum in Hintershaushof." Eisler did not take the text of this movement from a printed source, but rather wrote the text himself. As such, it cannot be explored from any context outside of how it exists in *Zeitungsausschnitte*. The text is as follows:

Frühlingsrede an einen Baum in Hinterhaushof

Ich bitte Sie sehr, zu blühen, Herr Baum; vergessen Sie nicht: es ist Frühling! Streiken Sie wegen dem fruchtbaren Lichthof? Streiken Sie wegen der schrecklichen Zinskaserne? Sie werden doch nicht so unmöglich sein, vom grünen Walde zu träumen. Anpassung an das Milieu, wenn ich bitten darf! Vielleicht meinen Sie, daß es überflüssig ist in unser Zeit zu blühen? Was sollen junge, zarte Blätter, auf den Barrikaden? Damit hätten Sie gar nicht Unrecht, Herr Baum! Vergessen Sie: es ist Frühling.

The narrator scolds the subject of the movement, a tree, for not being able to blossom in negative conditions. Adorno commented upon this movement, saying:

⁵⁰ Ibid., 47.

Under these conditions, it is impossible to blossom, even though that would be ‘natural’ – just as one has no business to evince lyricism in the face of social need, at the time of strikes and barricades.⁵¹

While it is possible to interpret the text as someone satirical, the music solidifies the understanding of satire in the movement. The phrases that contain “Frühling” and “träumen” end with an upward gesture and a delicate piano response.



Figure 3.9: Upward gesture and response in ““Frühlingsrede an einen Baum in Hintershaushof,” *Zeitungsausschnitte*, mm. 39-43.

Eisler often contrasts the gentle ending to each phrase with a more aggressive continuation. At the end of the movement (Figure 3.9), and composition, this breaks the illusion of delicacy more violently than at any other point. In particular, the sforzando jabs in the last two measures highlight the movement’s hostile satirical content.

The juxtaposition of music with the text makes it apparent to the listener that the satirical *ethos* is negative. Eisler’s compositional style and elimination of lyricism in

⁵¹ Betz, *Hanns Eisler Political Musician*, 47.

Zeitungsausschnitte loudly proclaims the uncertainty of the post-World War I period and the isolation of the arts. This composition is an attempt to create a definitive break with the existing concert hall structures and the lyricism that was growing increasingly distanced from the harsh realities of the listeners' lives. Adorno understood and recognized Eisler's criticism, writing:

We may well ask whether the right to lyrical utterance really has been so completely extinguished, and has become so hopelessly private as is commonly claimed by the voice that inhabits the songs, and whether a consummate work of art would rather not open the gates dialectically to that region of social commitment which Eisler undertakes to enter without detour.⁵²

Adorno recognizes the possible issues that are present in *Zeitungsausschnitte*, particularly the question of whether or not the need exists for such a composition. However, as he states, Eisler clearly embarked upon an attempt to bring these issues to the attention of others; I contend that he was clearly attempting to part with the bourgeois musical culture with *Zeitungsausschnitte*.

The satire of *Zeitungsausschnitte* lies in the incongruities between what an audience would expect of a concert hall work and what occurs in Eisler's work. His use of chromaticism and atonal structures emphasizes his disapproval for the expressive music that was popular in the concert hall. The texts used further accentuate the

⁵² Claussen, *Theodor W. Adorno: One Last Genius*, 158.

incongruences between his composition and typical contemporary work. In portraying the difficulties of interwar life, Eisler expresses what he found that many ignored.

Conclusion

Eisler's use of satire in *Zeitungsausschnitte* emphasizes his disapproval of contemporary musical structures and programming. His choice to set newspaper clippings as the text for the composition is greatly different from the poeticism of lieder that were prominent in contemporary concert hall performances. My interpretation asserts that he further accentuates *Zeitungsausschnitte*'s break with the lieder tradition through the elimination of an additional possibility for beauty in music: lyricism. Intense chromaticism and large leaps permeate the melodic lines in *Zeitungsausschnitte*. His obvious rejection of the established concert hall practices attempts to herald in a new age in which composers and musicians recognize the sufferings of the people following the most deadly war in history. *Zeitungsausschnitte* is also a comment and indicator of the changes in his relationship with his teacher Arnold Schoenberg and his progress toward composing music with social commentary—a development that Chapter 4 discusses more in-depth.

CHAPTER 4

SATIRE AS AN INDICATOR

Introduction

Incongruities in the relationship between the object parodied and its context in Hanns Eisler's *Palmström* (1924) and *Zeitungsausschnitte* (1925-1927) impart a negative *ethos* (an “inferred intended reaction motivated by text”) that is consistent with works of satire.⁵³ Upon dissection of satirical compositions, it becomes apparent that the satire is negative in nature and holds criticism of his teacher Arnold Schoenberg, musical culture, and compositional methods. Despite containing similar messages, the expression of satire in *Palmström* is implicit while such critiques are more obvious in *Zeitungsausschnitte*. This chapter contends that the differences in how satire is manifest in each composition represents Eisler's progression toward being more outspoken in the content of his works. Furthermore, my analysis argues that Eisler's contemporary published writings mirror the evolution in his expression of satire in *Palmström* and *Zeitungsausschnitte*. In 1924, his writings focused primarily upon his relationship with Schoenberg and were mildly disdainful of musical culture. By 1927, his criticisms society and music mirrored his

⁵³ Yayoi Uno Everett, “Parody with an Ironic Edge: Dramatic Works by Kurt Weill, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Louis Andriessen,” *Music Theory Online* 10, no. 4 (December 2004): 4, http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.04.10.4/mto.04.10.4.y_everett_frames.html.

compositions and was much more broadly. I use the published political writings that are available in print to support the observations of his musical and compositional progression. This chapter concludes that when observed more broadly, the trend toward outright criticism in Eisler's compositions and writings reflect his personal growth.

Implicit to Explicit Satire

Eisler communicates criticism in *Zeitungsausschnitte* and *Palmström* via their parodic content, though he expresses these critiques in different manners. Each work parodies an element of contemporary bourgeois musical culture, such as lieder or the complex systematic developments such as the twelve-tone compositional method. Because the parodical content in both compositions refers to a specific composer or compositional style, he is able to negate the validity of each referent. Because both *Palmström* and *Zeitungsausschnitte* attain their satirical content through a negative context, it is possible to view this as a general characteristic of many of his compositions. As a result, it is how he expresses the negative content that is relevant to his personal growth.

Comparison of the referent with its satirical counterpart expands the understanding of Eisler's progression as a composer and social commentator. In *Palmström*, Eisler is intent on criticizing Schoenberg and any satirical references to musical content and culture is secondary. In *Zeitungsausschnitte*, however, it appears that he presents his disdain for musical culture is more prominent. This change from a

focused to more broad criticism reflects his growing awareness to the social problems associate with musical culture in the inter-war period.

Palmström's criticism is implicit, while *Zeitungsausschnitte*'s is explicit. The satirical and critical content of *Palmström* arises out of his use of the twelve-tone system and reference to *Pierrot lunaire*. Neither element would necessarily be perceived as satirical without "L'art pour l'art." "L'art pour l'art" brings the listener's attention to the contradiction between its textual content and the music and text in the rest of the composition. This analysis shows that through this action, he declares his discontent, yet without the direction from the text, the listener would be unable to make such a judgment. Conversely, *Zeitungsausschnitte* displays more explicit satire and criticism. The listener discerns the satire through the incongruities that lay in Eisler's use of atonal compositional methods and the expectation of lyricism in the concert hall; although he touts it as a series of Lieder, it does not fulfill any expectations of the genre. *Zeitungsausschnitte*'s detachment with traditional lieder also is heard in the use of non-poetic text being used in a setting where poetic texts are standard. The combination of music and text exposes the social problems that plagued German citizens during the inter-war period.

Progression in his Writings

In Eisler's early parody, *Palmström*, the satirical elements are less obvious than in *Zeitungsausschnitte*; his writings from this era mirror this distinction as well. In his

published writings from 1924, his discontents with his teacher and musical society are difficult to pinpoint. By 1927, however, the musical conduct that he disapproves of is much more apparent. His progression from implicit to explicit satire in his compositions is a musical indicator of his progression from written judgments that are simultaneously positive and negative to the expression of outright disdain.

When he first broke with Schoenberg in 1924, Eisler published an essay entitled, “Arnold Schönberg, der musikalische Reaktionär” (1924). In this essay, Eisler both criticizes Schoenberg’s reactionary nature but he also declares this disposition necessary to Schoenberg’s musical innovations. Throughout the writing, the reader is uncertain if Eisler is praising or decrying his teacher:

Die Werke op. 11 und op. 15 bis op. 20 haben bei aller Knappheit eine freiere und lockerere musikalische Darstellung. Man könnte sie als radikale Periode bezeichnen. Es ist aber ganz falsch zu glauben, daß nur eines von diesen Werken „futuristische Seelenkunst“ sei. Jedes dieser Werke besitzt eine gesunde musikalische Struktur, die mit unserem heutigen theoretischen Wissen sehr wohl erklärt und verstanden werden kann.⁵⁴

In passages such as this, it is apparent that Eisler acknowledges the innovations that Schoenberg has presented. However, with his observation that these compositions may still be explained by existing analytical methods, this analysis assumes that he is partially undermining the genius surrounding Schoenberg. Eisler’s intentions in this article may be

⁵⁴ Hanns Eisler, *Hanns Eisler: Musik Und Politik - Schriften I 1924-1948*, ed. Günter Mayer (München: Rogner & Bernhard, 1973), 13.

understood as more negative due to his contemporary relationship with Schoenberg. Although he found Schoenberg's music progressive, he believed the composer was significantly out of touch with society. His opinions on his teacher allow for the reading of this passage in a more negative light; Schoenberg's isolation from social issues is reflected in the analyst's inability to assess his music. Eisler's negative assessment of Schoenberg facilitates a more negative, rather than natural, reading of his essay.

Eisler's true position on subjects such as Schoenberg or modern music in 1924, in his published writings, is difficult to assess without in-depth investigation in his music as well. This is particularly apparent in his composition *Palmström*, in which the true nature of the parody is only revealed after a discussion of the multiple contexts and levels on which the piece functions. The trans-contextualization of *Palmström* in Chapter 2 highlights the satirical nature of the parody and its aim at Schoenberg's compositional methods. In both his essay from 1924 and his composition, the tone and reception is difficult to define upon cursory investigation. It follows that there exists a vague border between Eisler's commendation and condemnation of Schoenberg's works—something also paralleled in both Eisler's writings and compositions of this year.

In the same year that Eisler began to compose *Zeitungsausschnitte* (1925) his progression toward more forthright criticism is first noted in his publication, "Von alter und neuer Musik." He again references Schoenberg, stating "Kommt dan ein Künstler wie Schönberg und komponiert den „Pierrot“, so schlägt man die Hände über dem Kopf

zusammen und sagt: Wie kann einer nur so etwas komponieren.”⁵⁵ Like in the 1924 article, Eisler is recognizing new music’s disconnection to the audiences; however, he declares that the audience’s inability to understand new music should be expected because they have not been conditioned and previously familiarized with new compositions. By 1927 (the year *Zeitungsausschnitte* was completed), Eisler acknowledges the disjunction between listener and modern music because of music that ignores the social situation of the listener.⁵⁶ In “Über moderne Musik,” he begins:

Das Agonieröcheln eines Sterbenden langweilt die pflichtgemäß um das Sterbebett Versammelten, so daß sie einschlafen. Aber ihr Schnarchen klingt ebenfalls wie Agonieröcheln, und so kann man nur schwer unterscheiden, wer eigentlich im Sterben liegt. Das ist das Verhältnis der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft zur modernen Musik. Wenn man aber fragt, wer eigentlich im Sterben liegt, so gibt es nur eine Antwort: alle beide.⁵⁷

The acerbic tone he takes in this passage suggests that he now holds a clearly defined point of view. He further clarifies his opinion when he blames music’s disengagement with the audience upon the artists of the early twentieth-century:

Das Bezeichnendste der modernen Musik ist das: In den Nachkriegsjahren sind in fast allen Künsten eine Anzahl wirklich revolutionärer Künstler aufgetreten, die in ihren Werken wirkliche

⁵⁵ Ibid., 31.

⁵⁶ It is also interesting to note that in 1926, Eisler applied for membership to the Communist Party—although he never followed through with the paperwork. James Wierzbicki, “Hanns Eisler and the FBI,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 18, no. 4 (1998): 535–40.

⁵⁷ Eisler, *Hanns Eisler: Musik Und Politik - Schriften I 1924-1948*, 31.

Konsequenzen aus der gesellschaftlichen Situation gezogen haben. In der Musik gab es und gibt es das nicht.⁵⁸

He found that the shortcomings of music in the post-World War I era were largely tied to the composer's disregard for the needs of the broad masses.

[...] Das Proletariat wird sich mit der Erfahrung und den Kunstmitteln der Bourgeoisie eine neue Musik erst schaffen müssen.⁵⁹

In clearly identifying what he views is the problem, his opinions on the situation of music are noticeably more formed than in the 1924 article.

The outright criticisms that are present in “Über moderne Musik” are similar to the explicit satire that stems from the parody in *Zeitungsausschnitte*. In *Zeitungsausschnitte*, the listener is able to easily discern the incongruity between the actual textual content and what is typically associated with the genre of lieder. As such, that *Zeitungsausschnitte* is a satirical parody is more apparent than the tinges of satire in *Palmström*. This progression from latent satirical content to the conspicuous negative criticism directly mirrors the denunciations in his writings. The opacity of these works

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 32.

represents the early stages of Eisler's formation of political and social ideologies that would follow his works for the rest of his career.⁶⁰

Eisler's Future

The progression toward socially conscious and culturally critical compositions from 1924-1927 is among the most critical changes in Eisler's compositional career. *Palmström* and *Zeitungsausschnitte* are early indicators of Eisler's characteristic compositional style. While *Palmström* is void of lyricism, *Zeitungsausschnitte* contains the explanation for such a compositional style because the disjunction between expectations and content. His subsequent works are equally unlyrical, but do not require a satirical explanation. Furthermore, the ideologies that would be present in many of his later compositions are founded in explorations set forth in these early works. His growing displeasure with modern music and its inability to be relevant to modern society is evident in the satire that this thesis has discerned as present in *Palmström* or the hints of acidulous commentary present in "Arnold Schönberg, der musikalische Reaktionär." In *Palmström*, he passes judgment upon the notion of autonomous art in the movement "L'art pour l'art," but does not articulate his dissatisfaction until his 1927 article "Über

⁶⁰ It should be noted that Albrecht Betz identifies the catalyst in the development of Eisler's political and aesthetic opinions as being a July 1925 performance of Erwin Piscator's *Trotz allem*, in conjunction with Eisler's move to Berlin. The correlation between these events and the turn toward outright criticism in his works is certainly worthy of further investigation.

moderne Musik.” Following *Zeitungsausschnitte*, he entered a period when he no longer needed satire in order to convey his opinions. Collections of lieder published from 1928-1932 expressly state his political opinions and desire to compose music that connects to society.⁶¹

Looking Forward

Eisler’s use of satire in his early compositions is undoubtedly an indicator of his aesthetic and compositional values that would come later in his career. However, that this method of communicating his opinions has not been greatly explored is disadvantageous to the field of Eisler scholarship. This thesis creates possibilities for further exploration into the various ways his ideologies are manifested in his works, particularly when they are not immediately apparent. Research into the appearances of his acerbic wit throughout his compositional career will expose larger trends in his political and music preferences that are not directly exposed in written works, such as the article “Über moderne Musik.” Furthermore, this thesis demonstrates the potential for further explorations of the multifaceted components to Eisler’s compositions.

Eisler’s communication of satire through compositional parodies has not received great attention and this is indicative of the more broad understanding of satire in music,

⁶¹ Jürgen Elsner, “Zur Melodischen Gestaltung Der Kampflieder Hanns Eislers,” Sonderheft Hanns Eisler, *Sinn Und Form: Beiträge Zur Literatur* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1964), 173–92.

particularly in the interwar era. Explorations of satire in this time is largely confined to the genre of cabaret, wherein the objects of critique are more apparent. The more subtle uses of musical satire, such as in *Zeitungsausschnitte* or *Palmström*, are currently underinvestigated; this is likely due to the methodology required of such analyses. The most prominent research on the subject demonstrate that any inquiries are founded upon literary theory. Interdisciplinary approaches to the study of music have been coming to the forefront over the past twenty years and research that builds upon the groundbreaking works of scholars such as Sheinberg and Everett is increasingly important, particularly to our understanding of musical responses to social conditions in the interwar era.

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