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## Hanns Eisler's "Das Vorbild" and the Rebuilding of Musical Culture in the German Democratic Republic

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**HANNS EISLER'S *DAS VORBILD* AND THE REBUILDING OF MUSICAL  
CULTURE IN THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

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

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Department of Music & Dance

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## ABSTRACT

### HANNS EISLER'S *DAS VORBILD* AND THE REBUILDING OF A MUSICAL CULTURE

MAY 2015

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In his essay, "Musik und Musikverständnis" (1927), Hanns Eisler (1898-1962) wrote that "the evaluation of a piece of music calls for the understanding of the elements of harmony, polyphony, and form," and that one who is not privy to this understanding will "be in the same situation as one who hears a speech in Chinese, without an understanding of Chinese."<sup>1</sup> Eisler continued to say that the works of J.S. Bach are particularly unintelligible without any preparatory training. However, Eisler maintained that incomprehensible music, such as Bach's, could be rendered intelligible through "a gradual rebuilding of musical culture."<sup>2</sup> This new musical culture, which Eisler believed could only occur after the proletariat seized societal power from the bourgeoisie, would promote musical education and encourage the composition of intelligible music.

Although Eisler had composed music for the proletariat throughout his career, the creation of the German Democratic Republic facilitated his participation in educating the

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<sup>1</sup> Hanns Eisler, "Musik und Musikverständnis," *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1948* (Munich: Rogner & Bernhard 1973), 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

proletariat in aspects of traditionally bourgeois culture. One key example of this was his composition *Das Vorbild* [The Example] (1952).

This thesis presents the first detailed analysis of *Das Vorbild* and demonstrates it as representative of Eisler's musical and societal aspirations—particularly concerning education. Analysis of the working manuscripts for *Das Vorbild* in conjunction with Eisler's writings reveals a piece that embodies the utopist aspirations of this Marxist composer. In light of this analysis, I contend that *Das Vorbild* is representative of Eisler's work toward a new musical culture within a socialist society.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In his essay, “Musik und Musikverständnis” (1927), Hanns Eisler (1898-1962) wrote that “the evaluation of a piece of music calls for the understanding of the elements of harmony, polyphony, and form,” and that one who is not privy to this understanding will “be in the same situation as one who hears a speech in Chinese, without an understanding of Chinese.”<sup>1</sup> Eisler continued to say that the works of J.S. Bach are particularly unintelligible without any preparatory training. However, Eisler maintained that incomprehensible music, such as Bach’s, could be rendered intelligible through “a gradual rebuilding of musical culture.”<sup>2</sup> This new musical culture, which Eisler believed could only occur after the proletariat seized societal power from the bourgeoisie, would not only lower the cost of concert attendance and promote musical education—both theoretical and historical—in workers’ ensembles, but also promote the composition of intelligible music.

Eisler’s commitment to the advancement of the proletariat was the source for several conflicts throughout his life. His interest in Marxist thought came to the forefront in his personal writings and compositions during the 1920s. This preoccupation with social and political matters would ultimately be the cause for the 1926 break with his

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<sup>1</sup> Hanns Eisler, “Musik und Musikverständnis,” *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1948* (Munich: Rogner & Bernhard 1973), 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

composition teacher, Arnold Schoenberg, with whom he had begun studies in 1918.<sup>3</sup> During the Second World War, Eisler took up residency in the United States in an attempt to escape the German fascist state. Again, in 1948, Eisler's political affiliations would be the cause for his flight from the United States, after he was as a communist by the House Committee on Un-American Activities.<sup>4</sup>

Eisler's arrival back in Europe was somewhat advantageous because as a prominent composer, he received the opportunity to participate in the reconstruction of musical culture upon the creation of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1949. Although Eisler had composed music for the proletariat—particularly work songs—throughout his career, the creation of the GDR facilitated his participation in rendering traditionally bourgeois culture accessible to the proletariat. Laura Silverberg identifies the GDR's desire for the creation of their own musical culture to be rooted within the homogenous body of works contained in Germany as a whole; no inherently "East German" culture existed and it needed to be created.<sup>5</sup>

One key example of Eisler's attempt to create intelligible music for the proletariat was his composition *Das Vorbild* [The Example] (1952), which serves a dualistic purpose

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<sup>3</sup> Although these studies began in 1918, they only formally continued through 1923. 1926 marks a more official end of the relationship between Schoenberg and Eisler; the rapport between the two had been deteriorating for some time.

<sup>4</sup> James Wierzbicki, "Hanns Eisler and the FBI," *Musik & Politics* 2 (Summer 2008): 1-31.

<sup>5</sup> Laura Silverberg, "East German Music and the Problem of National Identity," *Nationalities Papers* 37 (July 2009): 501.

in that it reclaims German culture for the proletariat, while educating on the subjects of socialism and music. *Das Vorbild*, a cantata, is comprised of three movements: a reworked version of Bach's Fugue in G Minor BWV 861 from *The Well Tempered Clavier*, vol. I; a setting of Goethe's "Das Göttliche;" and a setting of Goethe's "Symbolum." Eisler's adaptation and setting of each of his sources demonstrates his desire to compose an accessible composition. Eisler's reworking of the Bach fugue, for example, provides a template for the adaptation of a fugue for any audience. His modifications included simplifying the counterpoint, emphasizing the subject, and reducing the original four voices to three. He included this newly scored version of the fugue as the first movement of the compositional triptych *Über den Frieden*, later entitled, *Das Vorbild*. Eisler renamed "Das Göttliche" as "Edel sei der Mensch" and called it an aria. Although no definitive performance style was assigned to "Symbolum," its harmonic and melodic content resemble a folk song. Eisler's adapted texts convey the educational message of qualities a model socialist citizen should possess; he even went so far as to say the *Das Göttliche* "klingt wieder beim Aufbau des Sozialismus!" [it sounds like the building of socialism!].<sup>6</sup> The didactic qualities of *Das Vorbild* are particularly significant, considering that he composed it during a time in which the creation of an East German culture was a prominent goal.

This thesis presents the first detailed analysis of *Das Vorbild* and demonstrates it as representative of Eisler's musical and societal aspirations—particularly concerning

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<sup>6</sup> Letter, Hanns Eisler to Bertolt Brecht, August 13, 1952, HEA 5748, Hanns Eisler Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.

education. An analysis of his choice of texts by Goethe, and their setting, as well as the re-composition of the Bach fugue, reveal his acknowledgement of German cultural heritage and his integration of musical tradition into contemporary contexts. The musical form and harmonic content are indicative of attempts at accessibility for all. The text describes the ideal socialist citizen's actions. Analysis of the working manuscripts for *Das Vorbild* in conjunction with Eisler's writings reveals a piece that embodies the utopist aspirations of this Marxist composer. In light of this analysis, I contend that *Das Vorbild* is representative of Eisler's work toward a new musical culture within a socialist society.

### Summary of Relevant Scholarship

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, there has been an outpouring of Cold War studies publications; topics pertaining to East Germany have experienced the greatest growth. Joy Calico posited in 1998 that Eisler, in particular, was a previously neglected subject due to Cold War prejudices—particularly in English-language scholarship.<sup>7</sup> The dissolution of Cold War prejudices and a more general trend toward

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<sup>7</sup> Joy Calico, ““The Karl Marx of Music” Hanns Eisler Reception in the United States after 1947,” *Hanns Eisler: 's müßt dem Himmel Höllenangst werden* (Hoffheim: Wolke Verlag, 1998), 120-137. Although Klaus Velten does not provide a justification for the overall lack of publications, he certainly notes the disparity as well. Klaus Velten, “Hanns Eisler: Musikkonzept und Kompositionspraxis,” *Stil oder Gedanke?: zur Schönberg-Rezeption in Amerika und Europa* (Saarbrücken: PFAU, 1995), 137-146.

acceptance of Cold War scholarship after the fall of the Berlin Wall has likely influenced the recent growth of research pertaining to Eisler.

There have been more than thirty publications (articles, chapters, and monographs) on the subject of Eisler since the centenary of his birth in 1998.<sup>8</sup> These publications are primarily concerned with two areas of inquiry, both of which are relevant to this thesis: the development of Eisler's political ideologies, and their influence upon his compositions. Even so, there is a distinct lack of research about Eisler's educational efforts and their ties to Marxist thought.

A common subject of interest to Eisler scholars is tracing origins of his musical and political principles, particularly as they relate to his teacher, Arnold Schoenberg. Albrecht Dümmling, for instance, explores Schoenberg's influence upon Eisler in his chapter, "Hanns Eisler und Arnold Schönberg."<sup>9</sup> Relying on Eisler's writings and compositions, Dümmling describes the phases of the Eisler-Schoenberg relationship.<sup>10</sup> Frank Schneider compares the aesthetic ideologies of Eisler and Schoenberg in his monograph *Welt, was frag ich nach dir?: Politische Porträts grosser Komponisten*

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<sup>8</sup> In contrast, there were less than thirty publications from his death in 1962, until the centenary in 1998.

<sup>9</sup> Albrecht Dümmling, "Hanns Eisler und Arnold Schönberg," *Hanns Eisler der Zeitgenosse* (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1997), 30-40.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*.

[World, what do I ask of you?: Political Portraits of Major Composers].<sup>11</sup> In this monograph, Schneider acknowledges possible influence Schoenberg may have had on Eisler. Schneider also attributes the aesthetic content of Eisler's chamber compositions to his [Eisler's] film music.

Claudia Albert finds Theodor Adorno's relationship with Eisler to a source of philosophical, political, and aesthetic influence in her 1991 monograph, *Das schwierige Handwerk des Hoffens: Hanns Eislers "Hollywooder Liederbuch"* [The Difficult Craft of Hope: Hanns Eisler's "Hollywooder Liederbuch"].<sup>12</sup> Albert uses both Eisler's relationship with Adorno and Adorno's sociological and musicological theories to assess Eisler's aesthetic values as they relate to his societal position during the composition of his *Hollywooder Liederbuch* (1942-1943). Albert establishes that Eisler's compositional style is inseparable from his political opinions.

Eckhard John agrees with Albert's conclusion that Eisler intertwined music and politics. In John's article, "Verfehlte Liebe?: Hanns Eisler und die politische Musik" [Failed Love?: Hanns Eisler and the Political Music], he discusses the political aspects of several Eisler compositions.<sup>13</sup> For John, "Eisler's work [*Verfehlte Liebe*] marks the

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<sup>11</sup> Frank Schneider, *Welt, was frag ich nach dir?: Politische Porträts großer Komponisten* (Leipzig: P. Reclam, 1998).

<sup>12</sup> Claudia Albert, "Der gesellschaftliche Gehalt von Musik: Materialbegriff bei Eisler und Adorno," *Das schwierige Handwerk des Hoffens: Hanns Eislers "Hollywooder Liederbuch"* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler Verlag, 1991), 5-26.

<sup>13</sup> Eckhard John, "Verfehlte Liebe? Hanns Eisler und die politische Musik," *Hanns Eisler: 's müßt dem Himmel Höllenangst werden*, 154-170.

beginning of a fundamentally new conception of compositional work: music as a politically engaged, activist, interventional, conception.”<sup>14</sup> John’s investigation of several compositions confirms this conclusion. Rather than focus on a single event or interaction—such as Eisler’s relationship with Schoenberg—John assesses the political elements and motivations behind several compositions. His chapter is significant because of this expanded perspective.

Klaus Velten discusses Eisler’s application of his political ideologies within in *angewandte Musik* [applied Music].<sup>15</sup> Velten contends that *angewandte Musik* is a significant, yet overlooked musical style that Eisler created following his break from Schoenberg. In his analysis, Velten assesses the content and function of *angewandte Musik*, as well as the relationship of material and compositional methods. He concludes that not only do Eisler’s political and philosophical understandings inform his compositions, but also his desire to create a more accessible style of music.

Despite the scholarly agreement that Eisler led the way for politically engaged compositions, the event of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) and their investigations of Eisler for his communist ties has prompted the question of whether or not politically engaged music is, in fact, possible. Lydia Goehr and Günter Mayer explore the topic of Eisler’s obvious involvement in politics, with regard to the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>15</sup> Klaus Velten, “Hanns Eisler: Musikkonzept und Kompositionspraxis,” *Stil oder Gedanke?: zur Schönberg-Rezeption in Amerika und Europa*, Stefan Litwin and Klaus Velten, eds. (Saarbrücken: Pfau Verlag, 1995), 137-146.

ironic way he evaded official persecution for some time.<sup>16</sup> Eisler founded his personal defense in the trial in his argument that the composition of music cannot be a political action—a statement designed to exploit the prejudice that music is merely a source for entertainment. Goehr notes the irony of the situation, writing, “What is peculiar is that he almost got away with this unlikely defense, unlikely because he had spent much of his life developing a political music consistent with the ideas of Communism.”<sup>17</sup> Although Eisler’s trial is central to Goehr’s article, Goehr merely uses the trial to facilitate the question of whether or not composing politically is possible. Mayer’s argument develops around the lingering question of whether or not Eisler was ever truly a member of the communist party at all. Mayer uses Eisler’s autobiographies and activities within the GDR to establish that he simply believed in a “Marxist-oriented philosophy,” and was not a member of the communist party.<sup>18</sup> Because Mayer’s primary focus is Eisler, rather than Goehr’s philosophical question of what it means to “compose politically,” Mayer explores the HUAC investigation and Eisler’s politically charged compositions in a more in-depth manner.

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<sup>16</sup> Lydia Goehr, “Political Musik and the Politics of Music,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52 (Winter 1994): 99-112.

<sup>17</sup> Goehr, “Political Music and the Politics of Music,” 99.

<sup>18</sup> Günter Mayer, “War der ‘Karl Marx der Musik’ Parteimitglied oder nicht?” *Hanns Eisler der Zeitgenosse: Positionen – Perspektiven: Material zu den Eisler-Festen 1994/1995* (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik 1997), 76.

The large amount of literature surrounding a second controversy within Eisler's life (like the "*Faustus* debate") demonstrates scholars' tendency to focus upon polemical political issues within Eisler's repertoire. In 1951, Eisler began to write an opera libretto after Thomas Mann's 1947 novel *Doktor Faustus*. Eisler's *Johann Faustus* was to be the model of GDR opera.<sup>19</sup> However, the Academy of the Arts, in Berlin, opposed the libretto because they believed it painted the GDR in a negative light.<sup>20</sup> The controversy subsequently took on the name of the "*Faustus* debate," due to a series of debates that were held at the Academy of the Arts.<sup>21</sup> This spectacle surrounding the *Faustus* libretto has understandably become a popular topic within the field of Eisler scholarship. The collection of articles within *Hanns Eislers "Johann Faustus": 50 Jahre nach Erscheinen des Operntexts 1952* is a testament to the popularity of the subject.<sup>22</sup> Eisler scholars such

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<sup>19</sup> Peter Davis, "Hanns Eisler's 'Faustus' Libretto and the Problem of East German National Identity," *Musik & Letters* 81 (November 2000): 585.

<sup>20</sup> Eisler's libretto portrayed the central character, Faustus, as turning against the peasants for the sake receiving support from the nobility. Eisler's intention was to demonstrate that Faustus was wrong in doing so, and that the artist is wrong to sacrifice their commitment to the working class. His central message was that it is wrong to turn away from the working class and peasants. However, the Academy of the Arts considered Faustus to be a national figure and because Eisler was marring the name of a national figure, he was betraying German history. The Academy had little regard for Eisler's overall intention and subsequently banned the production. Albrecht Betz, *Hanns Eisler: Political Musician*, Bill Hopkins, trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 224-224.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Scheinhardt, ed., *Hanns Eislers "Johann Faustus": 50 Jahre nach Erscheinen des Operntexts 1952* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2005).

as Friederike Wißmann and Maren Köster discussed various aspects of the debate within this edited volume. Wißmann chose a more empirical approach with her discussion of Eisler's process in writing the libretto.<sup>23</sup> Köster, on the other hand, explored the implications of the debate as a representation of artistic control within the GDR.<sup>24</sup> Regardless of the argument or approach taken, the body of literature surrounding the *Faustus* debate, as well as the HUAC investigation, represents the interest scholars have interest taken in controversies surrounding Eisler's career.

Dümling, Schneider, Albert, John, Mayer, Goehr, and Velten's discussions of political and philosophical influences upon Eisler's compositions do not represent an exhaustive list of all scholarship within the field. However, their research demonstrates typical approaches to scholarship about Eisler's political and philosophical opinions. As their research exhibits, the existing body of Eisler scholarship evaluates his interactions with others and the conflicts he experienced. However, in spite of the scholarly acceptance of Eisler's integration of music and politics, the practical applications of his ideologies remain under evaluated, particularly his efforts to construct a new musical culture through education. Robert Adlington and Doris Lanz are the only two to consider Eisler's educational impact; their scholarship investigates his influence upon other

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<sup>23</sup> Friederike Wißmann, "Johann Faustus. Eislers Materialien und die Komposition des Textes," *Hanns Eislers "Johann Faustus": 50 Jahre nach Erscheinen des Operntexts 1952*, 11-26.

<sup>24</sup> Maren Köster, "Negative und positive Helden? Probleme der Rezeption der Faustus-Debatte," *Hanns Eislers "Johann Faustus": 50 Jahre nach Erscheinen des Operntexts 1952*, 96.

composers. Lanz focused on Eisler's impact on Wladimir Vogel, and Adlington discussed Eisler's influence on Louis Andriessen.<sup>25</sup> Beyond their research, however the subject is relatively unexplored.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, Eisler scholarship has often focused on controversial works, such as the libretto for *Faustus*. There tends to be little exploration of non-polemical works, like *Das Vorbild*. Currently, only two scholars have explored *Das Vorbild*—Arnold Pistiak and Gerd Reinäcker—and neither has conducted a musical analysis. Pistiak's discussion of *Das Vorbild* is part of a larger exploration of Eisler's settings of poems by Goethe.<sup>27</sup> Reinäcker mentioned *Das Vorbild* in the introduction, transition, and conclusion, of a chapter that is centered on Eisler's *Rhapsodie für großes Orchester* (1949).<sup>28</sup> Although

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<sup>25</sup> Doris Lanz, "Hanns Eisler als Vorbild für Wladimir Vogels erste Zwölftonkomposition? Überlegungen zu Vogels Violinkonzert von 1936/1937," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 62 (2005): 137-150. Robert Adlington, "Louis Andriessen, Hanns Eisler, and the *Lehrstück*." *The Journal of Musicology* 21 (Summer 2004): 381-417.

<sup>26</sup> David Blake and Peter Gradenwitz discussed Eisler as an educator from their perspective. As their publications are not scholarly investigations, but rather personal reflections, they are not immediately relevant to the discussion. Peter Gradenwitz, "Hanns Eisler als Schüler und als Lehrer," *Querstand 5/6: Hanns Eisler*, Albrecht Dümling, ed. (Frankfurt: Stroemfeld Verlag, 2010), 37-41. David Blake, "Mein Lehrer Hanns Eisler," *Sinn und Form: Sonderheft Hanns Eisler*, Armin Ziessler, ed. (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1964): 54-69.

<sup>27</sup> Arnold Pistiak, *Darf ich auch Verse von Goethe verwenden?: Hanns Eislers Goethe-Kompositionen* (Berlin: Edition Bodoni, 2013).

<sup>28</sup> Gerd Reinäcker, "Vorbilder—Landkarten—Maximen? Über Schwierigkeiten, aufs Neue zu beginnen," *Hanns Eisler: 's müßt dem Himmel Höllenangst werden*, Maren Köster, ed. (Hofheim, Wolke Verlag, 1998), 11-26.

both Pistiak and Reinäcker have created compelling scholarship, their works leave much room for further discussion of *Das Vorbild*.

### **Thesis Overview and Chapter Summaries**

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the underdeveloped subjects within Eisler scholarship—particularly to that of Eisler’s pedagogical efforts and his non-polemical works. Chapter Two establishes how Eisler’s interpretation of Marxism informed his discontent with music in capitalist society. I interpret his disapproval of what he deemed the “bourgeois music business” as the source and inspiration for his desires to change musical culture and rectify issues of musical illiteracy via concert halls. I build upon existing scholarship with close readings of his personal and published writings immediately preceding the composition of *Das Vorbild*. I rely on a published collection of Eisler’s writings (*Musik und Politik*) to evaluate his interpretation of Marxist principles.<sup>29</sup> This primary source analysis allows me to draw conclusions pertinent to the later analysis of *Das Vorbild*.

Chapter Three analyzes *Das Vorbild* with a focus on the manifestations of his educational and political ideologies. This analysis of *Das Vorbild* uses the current published edition of the work, in addition to early sketches available at the Hanns Eisler

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<sup>29</sup> The *Musik und Politik* series is currently the most complete collection of Eisler’s written works. Additionally, the lack of scholarly literature examining the majority of these writings has necessitated a close reading in order to discern explicit and implicit philosophical, musical, and political meanings.

Archive at the Academy of the Arts in Berlin.<sup>30</sup> The variety of materials allows for an understanding of how the work evolved. In this analysis, I principally explore his educational intent for the work and reveal his use of basic musical concepts and major figures of German culture (Goethe and Bach) to educate the musically illiterate audience members. Additionally, the musical analysis demonstrates how *Das Vorbild* served as a model of accessibility for composition students.

Chapter Four uses performance reviews and advertisements from 1952 to 1982 to establish the success and importance of *Das Vorbild* within the GDR.<sup>31</sup> The reviews affirm my interpretations of Eisler's efforts to construct a new, socialist, musical culture, and to rectify issues of musical illiteracy. My conclusions regarding *Das Vorbild* create the possibility for greater inquiry into the lasting social effects of not only this composition, but of his other educational works as well. A look at current scholarship focused upon musical reconstruction within the GDR demonstrates that there is potential for further exploration of musical education in the GDR, specifically didactic compositions such as *Das Vorbild*.

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<sup>30</sup> Due to the limitations of physical copies that may be made, I have transcribed a large majority of these materials to a digital format. Earlier drafts of musical excerpts were transcribed via a musical notation program and then edited with in order to transfer the various markings and hand-written notes that could not be communicated via music alone.

<sup>31</sup> I have chosen these dates because they represent the first and last performances of *Das Vorbild* within the GDR.

## CHAPTER 2

### EISLER'S DESIRES FOR A NEW MUSICAL CULTURE

That Hanns Eisler contributed considerably to raising awareness of a new societal function of music, that he succeeded in this—one of these functions was to compose a diverse range of relevant and rich musical works—is reason to associate him with the intent of learning in particular.<sup>1</sup>

One of Eisler's largest criticisms of capitalist society was that it made art music a product available only to the elite. He believed that capitalism had distanced the proletariat from classical music by preventing them from acquiring the knowledge necessary for its comprehension and appreciation. Marxist thought inspired this observation as well as his later recommendations for change. His efforts to mitigate this issue involved education of the audience through didactic compositions. He was not alone in seeking to educate through music—*Lehrstücke* and *Gebrauchsmusik* were two contemporaneous types of educational compositions. However, these were often participatory pieces that sought to educate amateurs and non-specialists via performance.<sup>2</sup> Although Eisler also composed the music for several *Lehrstücke*, he began to write in a non-participatory didactic manner

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Fritz Haug, ““Kunst und Gesellschaft” und Hanns Eisler,” *Argument-Sonderbände 5: Hanns Eisler*, Wolfgang Fritz Haug, ed. (Berlin: Argument-Verlag GmbH 1975), 36.

<sup>2</sup> Eisler composed several *Lehrstücke* in collaboration with Bertolt Brecht. Within many of their *Lehrstücke*, the audience members would be the performers. The term *Gebrauchsmusik* often referred to music that was for use, rather than the enjoyment of the listener. While this may include dance music, composers such as Kurt Weill and Paul Hindemith often wrote pieces for musical participation. Partaking in the performance of the work could, in many situations, be musically or socially educational.

after the end of World War II in order to help reconstruct musical culture within the German Democratic Republic (GDR).<sup>3</sup> His 1952 composition, *Das Vorbild*, represents this style of didactic composition, with which he sought to educate the proletariat audience—rather than performer—within a concert hall setting.

Eisler's educational compositions have been the subject of scholarly study, particularly his *Lehrstücke*. Jürgen Engelhard's 1975 article, "Eisler's weg vom Agitprop zum Lehrstück" [Eisler's way from Agitprop to Lehrstück], was among the first scholarly publications to discuss the genesis of Eisler's *Lehrstücke*. Engelhard claimed that Eisler's experiences with Agitprop groups in the early 1920s caused him to compose music for Bertolt Brecht's *Lehrstücke*, such as *Die Maßnahme* (1931).<sup>4</sup> Much of the scholarship pertaining to Eisler's *Lehrstücke* focuses on the shift of the roles of the audience and performer and the social messages that were conveyed.<sup>5</sup> Because *Das Vorbild* is not categorized as a *Lehrstück*, currently, there are no detailed scholarly discussions of the piece.

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<sup>3</sup> Eisler found that his role in the GDR was to compose for the transition from the capitalist and fascist musical culture to a socialist musical culture. His understanding himself as a transitional composer informed his decisions to make use of the norms of the preexisting musical establishment in compositions like *Das Vorbild*.

<sup>4</sup> Jürgen Engelhardt, "Eislers Weg vom Agitprop zum Lehrstück," *Argument Sonderbände 5/6: Hanns Eisler*, Wolfgang Fritz Haug, ed. (Berlin: Argument-Verlag GmbH, 1975), 97-110.

<sup>5</sup> For further information on Eisler's *Lehrstücke*, see Gerhard Scheit, "Die Letzte Nacht vor der Maßnahme: Über Hanns Eisler und Karl Kraus," *Beiträge 2000: Hanns Eisler-Symposium – Zum 100. Geburtstag von Hanns Eisler*, Harald Goertz, ed. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2000), 66-76.

In this chapter, I rely on close readings of Eisler's writings largely from immediately prior to composition of *Das Vorbild* in 1952, in order to clarify his educational ideologies and their relation to concert hall compositions. After a brief description of Eisler's familiarity with Marxist thought, I discuss his critiques of music's role in capitalist society, wherein he established that the contemporary performance and patronage structure is inaccessible to the proletariat. I also explore how his criticisms informed his idiosyncratic understanding of music's educational function in the creation of a proper socialist society.

### **Eisler and Marxism**

Like many other educated Germans in the early-twentieth century, Eisler was familiar with Marxist thought. The Marxist evaluation of civilization informed his understanding of the interactions between music and society.<sup>6</sup> His unique interpretation of Marxism shaped his compositional style and the intended functions of his compositions. His early experiences with the subject—such as the October Revolution—were particularly formative.

Eisler's son, Georg, attributed much of his father's philosophical and literary education to Hann's own father, the philosopher Rudolf Eisler.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the

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<sup>6</sup> Albrecht Dümmling, "Eisler und Schönberg," *Argument-Sonderbände 5: Hanns Eisler*, 58.

<sup>7</sup> Rudolf Eisler earned a PhD in philosophy from the University of Leipzig. Upon completion, the family moved to Vienna, Austria, where Rudolf would be denied work at

philosophical foundation [Hanns] Eisler likely received at home, the October Revolution of 1917 profoundly influenced his philosophical understanding of the world. He cited the appeal of the revolution in 1947:

In 1917 I heard the news of the October Revolution in a Vienna Military hospital—while I lay as a wounded soldier. It was above all Lenin’s appeal “to everyone” that captivated me. For us exhausted, wounded soldiers, it was a new language. We were tired and nauseated of the imperial statesmen’s idle talk. When the (imperial) military police came up to our sickbeds and investigated whether or not we had Bolshevik pamphlets hidden under our beds—we hadn’t hid them in our beds, we had them in our hearts—there we knew, that the dangerous opposition of the imperialistic wars had just spoken.<sup>8</sup>

Eisler’s melodramatic depiction made it clear that the October Revolution was genuinely impactful. This passage does not identify a turn to a single philosophical or political ideology, but another reflection from Eisler clarifies his mindset. Eisler reminisced about the October Revolution a second time within an essay entitled “Das größte Erlebnis meines Lebens” [The Biggest Experience of My Life].

The biggest experience of my life was the October Revolution. It changed and determined my work and gave it a goal: To make the music

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the University of Vienna to his atheistic beliefs. Rudolf Eisler subsequently worked as an editor for a series of books on the subject of philosophy and sociology. Rudolf’s philosophical interests lay in phenomenism. Michael Haas, *Forbidden Music: The Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis* (New York: Yale University Press, 2013), 132. Georg Eisler, “My Father,” *Hanns Eisler: A Miscellany*, David Blake, ed. (Luxembourg: Harwood Academic Publishers GmbH, 1995), 75.

<sup>8</sup> Eisler, “Kurze Selbstbiographie I [1954],” *Musik und Politik: Schriften II 1948-1962* (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1982), 336.

that had been a privilege of the owning class, an object of the working class.<sup>9</sup>

The discussions of power structures and privileges within this passage suggests the events of the October Revolution prompted Eisler's unofficial turn toward Marxism. Nathan Notowicz contended that Eisler's involvement with *Die Rote Fahne*—a communist newspaper in Berlin—marks his official turn toward Marxism as occurring in 1925.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Role of Music in Capitalist Society**

The influences of Marxist thought upon Eisler was publically demonstrated when the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) placed Eisler on trial in 1947. The HUAC asked Eisler his opinion of being referred to as the “Karl Marx of the musical field;” Eisler simply replied, “I would be honored.”<sup>11</sup> His Marxist outlook led him to believe that capitalist society valued music as nothing more than a luxury good. According to Eisler, the function of music as a commodity rendered it inaccessible for many. An effect of this was sweeping “musical illiteracy;” the correction of which, was

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<sup>9</sup> Eisler, “Das größte Erlebnis meines Lebens [1948],” *Musik und Politik Schriften II 1948-1962*, 26.

<sup>10</sup> Nathan Notowicz, “Besprechungen,” *Argument-Sonderbände 5: Hanns Eisler*, 287.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Joy Calico, ““The Karl Marx of Music,” Hanns Eisler Reception in the United States after 1947,” *Hanns Eisler: 's müß dem Himmel Höllenangst werden*, Maren Köster, ed. (Hofheim: Wolker Verlag, 1998), 120.

the motivation for many of Eisler's musical endeavors.<sup>12</sup> As a result, elaboration upon his view of music's social role facilitates an understanding of the obstacles he was attempting to overcome.

Eisler's assessments of musical culture are rooted in his Marxist conception of history. The essay "Die Kunst als Lehrmeisterin im Klassenkampf" [Art as the Leader in the Class Struggle] inserted music into Marx's division of history.<sup>13</sup> Marx asserted that the exchange of goods has formed distinct eras; revolution brings about progression from one era to the next. Similarly, Eisler paired each era and revolution with a musical counterpoint and asserted that the Age of Capitalism has truly ushered in the notion of music as a luxury good.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Hanns Eisler, "Manifest II [1948]," *Musik und Politik: Schriften II 1948-1962*, 30.

<sup>13</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels are credited for developing the theories surrounding historical materialism. At the heart of their argument was that each epoch of society is defined the relationship of man with material things. The six eras of society are 1. Primitive Communism, 2. Slave Society, 3. Feudalism, 4. Capitalism, 5. Socialism, 6. Communism. For further reading, see Marx, "The German Ideology," *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 175-208.

<sup>14</sup> Eisler passively included music within the material commodity framework established by Marx. A commodity is created when the product of one's labor—any good or service—is offered as a product for sale. The material products in Eisler's concept of music as a commodity includes the act of performing, or production of a composition. A composer labors to create music by composing a work, and a performer labors to create a performance. What Eisler considers the "bourgeois music business" then places a monetary value on the products of this labor, effectively turning them into commodities. Eisler further supports the concept of music as a commodity in an analysis of the music business. He claims that the concert hall owners or agents determine which pieces are programmed, which musicians will perform, which directors will direct, etc.. Subsequently, all involved in the process of making music have no control over their product, which results in what Marx would consider alienated labor; the laborer loses the

Music as a luxury good caused money to be a motivating factor in its production, performance, and promotion. Eisler observed in his 1928 essay, “Vom bürgerlichen Konzertbetrieb” [On the Bourgeois Concert Business] that within the “bourgeois concert business,” music is programmed with little regard for the desires of the performers or composers.<sup>15</sup> Those who stood to gain monetarily were the concert hall owners, the newspaper reviewers, and the concert agents, among others. He asserted that these financial beneficiaries earned more from more numerous concerts. Because they were motivated by greed, they did not simply react to the existing demand for performances, but fabricated a greater need, which Eisler dubbed the “bourgeois musical hunger.”<sup>16</sup> The inflated consumer demand caused many concerts to be poorly attended; however, the financial beneficiaries managed to earn profits because they would pay the musicians very little. Eisler subsequently concluded “this kind of art business reveals like no other

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ability to decide their destiny or direct their actions. The alienated labor that results from the “bourgeois concert business” and the laborers involved compounds the inaccessibility to such music felt by the proletariat. The proletariat, who by definition engage in alienated labor, cannot transcend the class boundaries that would allow them to access the musical commodity.

<sup>15</sup> The alternative to this system would be the democratic structure of workers’ musical ensembles.

<sup>16</sup> Eisler, “Vom bürgerlichen Konzertbetrieb [1929],” *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1948* (Munich, Rogner & Bernhard, 1973), 74.

the relationship between art and capital,” because it creates prosperity for the financial beneficiaries from the exploitation of the artist.<sup>17</sup>

According to Eisler, not only did the “bourgeois music business” render music financially inaccessible, but it also distanced the proletariat from familiarity with major figures of German culture.<sup>18</sup> This was particularly a concern for Eisler because he believed that knowledge of Beethoven, Bach, or Goethe, was essential to understanding canonical works as well as contemporary music.<sup>19</sup>

In order to understand serious music, it is necessary to have a high level of general culture, to have a high standard of living. That means you must have time and money and education enough [...] you must have a more or less theoretical training, a certain general knowledge in the fine arts and literature, etc. [...] Without such social conditions and background you are more or less helpless in the “serious” type of music.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Eisler, “On the Bourgeois Concert Business,” *Hanns Eisler: A Miscellany*, 69-70.

<sup>18</sup> In addition to the historical pattern of the proletariat being unable to understand and access important works and artists of German culture heritage, Eisler believed that the rise of the National Socialist Party led to something far worse. He found that the National Socialists appropriated major works of art and artists purely for their own propagandistic purpose, while completely disregarding their historical value. Eisler, “Einiges über das Verhalten der Arbeitersänger und –musiker in Deutschland,” *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1948*, 242.

<sup>19</sup> Eisler, “Muß der Musikfreund etwas von Musiktheorie wissen? [1924],“ *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1948*, 23.

<sup>20</sup> Eisler, “Labor, labor movement and music: Speech to the International Ladies’ Garment Workers Union [1939],” *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1949*, 419.

This passage demonstrates Eisler's belief that capitalism had distanced many from "serious" music.<sup>21</sup> Knowledge necessary to understanding "serious" music was financially inaccessible; this had made it increasingly difficult for the proletariat to achieve equal knowledge.<sup>22</sup>

Eisler maintained that contemporary composers exacerbated the proletariat's difficulty in understanding art music. He believed that the bourgeois music business created a culture of exclusivity that had influenced modern composers.<sup>23</sup> In 1949, he wrote, "Rarely in the history of music has the composer been so unfriendly to the listener."<sup>24</sup> He believed these composers were not writing for the sake of aural accessibility or relevancy to the audience. Rather, they composed to inflate their own status as a composer and cultivate an audience. In 1932, Eisler dubbed the overall

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<sup>21</sup> Pierre Bourdieu would be among the first sociologists to explore the concept of various aspects of culture as a perpetuator of class boundaries—or a tool for transcending them—in 1973. For a more thorough explanation of culture capital, see: David Throsby, "Cultural Capital," *Journal of Cultural Economics* 23 (1999): 3-12.

<sup>22</sup> Eisler, "Die Kunst als Lehrmeisterin im Klassenkampf [1931]," *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1948*, 124.

<sup>23</sup> Eisler, "Gedanken zu einer Musikdiskussion [1951]," *Musik und Politik: Schriften II 1948-1962*, 155.

<sup>24</sup> Eisler, "Hörer und Komponist [1949]," *Musik und Politik: Schriften II 1948-1962*, 49.

inaccessibility of both contemporary and historical styles of music as a “crisis in music.”<sup>25</sup>

### **A New Type of Didactic Composition**

Eisler believed the reconstruction of musical culture within a socialist society could remedy the “crisis in music”—something he had been advocating for since the 1917 October Revolution.<sup>26</sup> His descriptions for reconstruction continually emphasized the elimination of musical illiteracy through education. Music and other aspects of “serious” culture were to be taught through performances. However, his educational compositions that served this purpose were fundamentally distinct from other educational works such as *Lehrstücke* or *Gebrauchsmusik*. Further inspection in his educational goals will give insight into how he formed his directives for the reconstruction of musical culture.

Hartmut Fladt and Hans-Werner Heister agree that Eisler’s work toward remedying musical illiteracy was among his most important endeavors.<sup>27</sup> Eisler’s 1948 essay, “Die Erbauer einer neuen Musikkultur” [The Builders of a New Musical Culture]

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<sup>25</sup> Eisler, “Zur Krise der bürgerlichen Musik [1932],” *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1948*, 184-189.

<sup>26</sup> Eisler, “On the Bourgeois Concert Business,” *Hanns Eisler: A Miscellany*, 69-70.

<sup>27</sup> Hartmut Fladt and Hanns-Werner Heister, “Besprechung,” *Argument-Sonderbände 5: Hanns Eisler*, 282.

laid out the steps that musicians and composers must take in order to form a new musical culture.

The overcoming of this crisis seems possible to us when:

1. When composers begin to move beyond their own isolation and come to know and truly understand the reality of today, when they overcome their tendencies of extreme individualism and subjectivity, and overcome the music, they can represent the ideas and feelings of the larger masses.
2. When the artists unite their work closely with the national culture of their land, and work against the tendency to diminish cultural differences, then the real internationalism of music can surrender itself to the construction of a national character.
3. When the composer's concentration can be directed on musical forms that enable this, particularly regarding vocal forms like operas, oratorios, cantatas, choirs and songs.
4. When the composers, critics, and musicologists can work on how to practically overcome the music-illiteracy of the larger masses.<sup>28</sup>

It is apparent from the above section that Eisler believed overcoming music illiteracy would not be achieved in a classroom setting, but rather, in the concert hall. Furthermore, he placed particular importance upon the composers' constant reflection upon the needs of the audience; the composition of vocal forms of music would meet these needs. Among his primary goals is his desire to create a "national character" through music—this sentiment is reflected in the textual and musical content of *Das Vorbild*.

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<sup>28</sup> Eisler, "Manifest II [1948]," *Musik und Politik: Schriften II 1924-1948*, 30.

In 1936, Eisler stated his preference for educational endeavors rooted in performance and entertainment.<sup>29</sup>

Understandably, the teaching and acquisition of musical logic should not be presented in a dry and didactic way, but rather in a means-of-expression-of-music including way. Furthermore, it would put even more value upon entertainment, given that it is particularly important for pedagogical aspects.<sup>30</sup>

Educating the audience, or performers, was not a new concept to Eisler; his music for *Lehrstücke* and works for mass choirs educate via participation. In the 1930 *Lehrstück, Die Maßnahme* (The Decision/The Measures Taken), Brecht and Eisler intended to teach the amateur actors and singers about Leninist morality. Albrecht Betz's study of the composition describes it as serving the purpose of furthering the *Verfremdung* (alienation) effect of the play's text by "the assimilation of what is understood as the message alongside one's own experience."<sup>31</sup> The personal subjectivity present in *Die Maßnahme*, or any other *Lehrstück*, is not present in *Das Vorbild*. Despite his acceptance for education through performance, he did not approve of *Gebrauchsmusik* [Music for Use], which Hindemith notably employed.<sup>32</sup> Although Hindemith's *Gebrauchsmusik*

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<sup>29</sup> This statement came seventeen years after his first experiences with the composition of music for *Lehrstücke*.

<sup>30</sup> Eisler, "Vorbemerkung des Autors: Einleitung zum Präludium und Fuge über B-A-C-H [1936]," *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1948*, 377.

<sup>31</sup> Albrecht Betz, *Hanns Eisler*, 101.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 377.

frequently allowed the performer to learn about music from experience, Eisler felt that education was not its true purpose. In an article decrying greed in the musical world, he declared that composers of *Gebrauchsmusik* were guilty of using the genre for financial gain:

After the First World War, when the giving of concerts became increasingly questionable and the economic state of the composers even more deplorable, one wrote for a variety of practical occasions and deemed it “Gebrauchsmusik.”<sup>33</sup>

He implied in this passage that composers found that a possibility for financial gain existed in the composition of *Gebrauchsmusik*. Subsequently, he rejected it, arguing that music composed solely for financial gain would not function appropriately in a socialist society.<sup>34</sup> Eisler advocated for the use of *Lehrstücke* (didactic plays with music) but believed they were not an appropriate way to overcome musical illiteracy because their performance format only permitted the education of smaller groups, not mass audiences.<sup>35</sup> He maintained that the best way to educate the masses would be to make use

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<sup>33</sup> Eisler, “Brief nach Westdeutschland [1951],” *Musik und Politik: Schriften II 1948-1962*, 184.

<sup>34</sup> Theodor Adorno’s understanding of *Gebrauchsmusik* further explains Eisler’s disdain for the genre. Adorno found that *Gebrauchsmusik* was an attempt to ignore all commodity value that had been placed in music by capitalist society. Eisler, on the other hand, sought to reclaim the commodified music and move forward in society. For more information on Adorno’s interpretation of *Gebrauchsmusik*, see Theodor W. Adorno, *Einleitung in die Musiksoziologie: zwölf theoretische Vorlesungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1962).

<sup>35</sup> Eisler thought they would be effective in communicating political ideas in an already-implemented socialist musical culture.

of the existing concert system that would be more financially accessible to all in a socialist society.<sup>36</sup>

Eisler sought to reconstruct musical culture and resolve issues of musical illiteracy within the concert hall, but he did not insist upon abandoning the existing performance model. He believed that concert music would ideally serve a different function than in capitalist society:

It [concert music] serves more to preserve tradition for the listener, to perfect technique for the musician, and to provide instructional material than to afford aesthetic pleasure to the listener.<sup>37</sup>

This passage demonstrates that he believed concert music could be used to educate and serve several functions within the context of a socialist society. His support for the continued use of concert music—despite its sordid history—becomes clear in his declaration that the genre must be reformed, or “applied”:

Correspondingly, one could maintain, with some caution, that applied music will gain hegemony [over concert music] in the future, at least during a transitional period. This will not lead to the demise or even the end of concert music; rather it will change it—the concert style will be “applied.” Moreover, by means of applied music, a new musical style

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<sup>36</sup> Eisler does not describe financial accessibility within the GDR or a socialist society. It can be inferred from his writings that his ideas for musical education in a socialist society are predicated on a financially accessible concert culture. This conclusion is made based on the GDR’s commitment to financial accessibility to concerts. Erich Brüll editor, *Music Education in the GDR* (Berlin: Music Council of the German Democratic Republic, 1972).

<sup>37</sup> Hanns Eisler, “Letter to a Musician, and Others,” Kay Goodman, trans., *New German Critique* 2 (Spring 1974), 70.

will be the quickest to take hold of the masses, because it gives music the backbone so necessary for the present, and enables it to rise from the private to the general and the social.<sup>38</sup>

The application of concert music, thus, was to serve the purpose of educating the masses in order to lead to the proletariat's reclamation of concert hall music from the bourgeoisie. Concert music that existed in capitalist society served the function of private gain. However, following its application, and eventual reappropriation, it could be used for broader, social gain.<sup>39</sup>

Eisler envisioned the applied style of concert music—that had the function of educating the masses—as music that would be composed in a more accessible manner, thus effectively educating the masses.<sup>40</sup> He called for composers to write with the listener in mind and gave recommendations for the ideal instrumental and vocal compositional style. For example, he denounced the twelve-tone compositional method, proclaiming it

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, Eisler believed that if the proletariat were to become musically educated, then they could insulate themselves from the “entertainment industry’s production of trash.” Ibid., 64.

<sup>40</sup> Jochen Eisentraut defines musical accessibility as having three components: physical access, personal perception, and participation. Eisler’s educational works fulfill all three. Within a socialist society, physical access will be available to all. For the compositions in question, participation is created through the educational information imparted upon the audience. For this section of the chapter, Eisler’s compositional style is integral do a discussion of personal perception. Jochen Eisentraut, *The Accessibility of Music: Participation, Reception and Contact* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 15.

to be too complex for the inexperienced listener.<sup>41</sup> However, he also found ways in which it could be rendered accessible. He understood his *Fuge über B-A-C-H* (1934) to represent the aurally simplified twelve-tone composition. His comments concerning the fugue state that “This twelve-tone composition seeks to show that a relatively easy to understand twelve tone composition method is possible.”<sup>42</sup> With regard to vocal compositions, he felt that the addition of a monophonic vocal line would promote accessibility.<sup>43</sup> He contended that the content of texts permitted the audience to simply listen in order to leave the concert with new knowledge. Aurally accessible music can educate the audience on musical styles, and of composers who are a part of German cultural heritage. Knowledge of the more famous composers, artists, and works is necessary to understanding modern music, and to moving forward with the reconstruction of musical culture.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Additionally, Eisler found that through this simplicity, and acknowledgement of the text’s content, music can, and should, help convey the message of a text in a song. Eisler, “Geschichte der Arbeitmusikerbewegung von 1848,” *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1948*, 211.

<sup>42</sup> Eisler, “Einleitung zum Trio Präludium und Fuge über B-A-C-H [1936],” *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1948*, 380.

<sup>43</sup> Eisler, “Einiges über das Verhältnis von Text und Musik [1950],” *Musik und Politik: Schriften II 1948-1982*, 92.

<sup>44</sup> Eisler, “Gedanken zu einer Musikdiskussion [1951],” *Musik und Politik: Schriften II 1948-1962*, 155.

## Conclusion

Eisler's idiosyncratic synthesis of music and politics gave nearly every one of his compositions a dualistic purpose.<sup>45</sup> Not only did he hope his music would serve to musically and culturally educate the masses about their German cultural heritage, but also that it would encourage support for the newly founded socialist society. In 1935, he wrote, "the proper conduct in art can also be an example for the proper conduct in politics."<sup>46</sup> Indeed, Eisler worked to instill the values of socialism within audiences.<sup>47</sup>

A deep commitment to his Marxist beliefs is also apparent in Eisler's writings and influenced his musical ideals. He consistently voiced his discontent with the state of musical culture within a capitalist society in his writings prior to 1949. His complaints, however, were not without suggestions for change. He believed that before socialism could create a new musical culture, the proletariat must first be educated. This mass education could build upon the existing concert hall performance medium, reclaiming it for the use of the proletariat. His writings document his theories; the practical application of these theories is found in his compositions, in particular *Das Vorbild*, which is analyzed in Chapter 3.

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<sup>45</sup> For more on Eisler's integration of music and politics, see Albrecht Dümling, "Die Entwicklung der politischen und ästhetischen Position Eislers," *Argument-Sonderbände 5: Hanns Eisler*, 57-85.

<sup>46</sup> Eisler, "Einiges über das Verhalten der Arbeitsänger und –musiker in Deutschland [1935]," *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1948*, 242.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*.

## CHAPTER 3

### EISLER'S COMPOSITIONAL ACCESSIBILITY IN *DAS VORBILD*

The cantata—composed for my students—seeks to show how one can create works of high art through accessible means.<sup>1</sup>

In 1935, Eisler wrote that music illiteracy might be overcome in a socialist society by reclaiming major figures of classical music, so that the proletarian listener may become familiar with their works.<sup>2</sup> This statement was not one of idealistic longing, for Eisler had a clear plan for making the proletariat familiar with works of high art, and over the course of his lifetime, he made many efforts in this area.<sup>3</sup> Within the context of the newly formed German Democratic Republic, he found that the best way to go about this task was to make use of the preexisting concert hall structure and compose aurally didactic works. An excellent illustration of such works is Eisler's 1952 composition, *Das Vorbild* [The Example]. The composition contains an adaptation of J.S. Bach's BWV 861 and two poems by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe—the inclusion of which are illustrative of Eisler's attempts to acquaint the proletariat with figures and works of German cultural heritage. Furthermore, the composition also works to overcome music illiteracy by presenting musical elements—such as the elements of a fugue—in an easy-to-understand

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<sup>1</sup> Hanns Eisler, "Bemerkung zum Triptychon 'Das Vorbild,'" *Musik und Politik: Schriften II 1948-1962* (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1982), 448.

<sup>2</sup> Hanns Eisler, "Einiges über die Krise der kapitalistischen Musik und über den Aufbau der sozialistischen Musikkultur," *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1948* (Munich: Rogner & Bernhard 1973), 311.

<sup>3</sup> More about his desires to do so may be found in Chapter 2.

way; as a result, the audience member is able to learn not only about German cultural heritage, but they also attain a deeper comprehension of musical elements. *Das Vorbild*, was, as its title suggests, an example for the future of music within the GDR.

Despite its status as a model composition, there have been no scholarly attempts to analyze the piece musically or contextually. Arnold Pistiak (2013) examines *Das Vorbild* and borrowed poetry.<sup>4</sup> The only other existing discussion of *Das Vorbild* comes within the context of other compositions. Gerd Reinäcker uses *Das Vorbild* to transition into a greater discussion of Eisler's use of Bachian counterpoint.<sup>5</sup> Because the didactic qualities of *Das Vorbild* are uninvestigated, it may be unclear how Eisler intended to use this composition to build a new musical culture.

In this chapter, I conduct the first in-depth, musical analysis of *Das Vorbild*. I discuss its genesis and educational content to reveal the various ways in which Eisler musically presents the educational and political ideologies I established in Chapter 2. My exploration of *Das Vorbild* makes use of both archival materials and the contemporary published score in order to discuss Eisler's creative approach to meeting his pedagogical goals. I look at Eisler's efforts to convey musical elements and resolve the issue of

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<sup>4</sup> Arnold Pistiak, *Darf ich auch Verse von Goethe verwenden?: Hanns Eislers Goethe-Kompositionen* (Berlin: Edition Bodoni, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Gerd Reinäcker, "Vorbilder – Landkarten – Maximen? Über Schwierigkeiten, aufs Neue zu beginning," *Hanns Eisler: 's müßt dem Himmel Höllenangst werden*, Maren Köster, ed. (Hofheim: Wolke Verlag, 1998), 11-26.

musical illiteracy. Additionally, a close reading of Eisler's adaptation of the Goethe poems reveals his desire for music to be socially relevant. Throughout the analyses of each movement, I emphasize his attempts at composing a work of high art in an accessible manner.<sup>6</sup> I conclude that *Das Vorbild* is an important example of Eisler's vision for the future of musical culture.

### **Genesis of *Das Vorbild***

*Das Vorbild* prominently displays Eisler's educational goal of making the proletariat familiar with figures of bourgeois culture—particularly J.S. Bach. Eisler began to consider the importance of Bach's works in his 1927 essay published in *Die Rote Fahne*, "Musik und Musikverständnis" [Music and the Understanding of Music]. He declared that without knowledge of musical elements, the listener comprehend Bach no more than they can discern meaning from a foreign language. He continued, "The listener cannot understand it [Bach] without a musical example."<sup>7</sup> The adaptation of Bach's fugue in G Minor, BWV 861, within the first movement of *Das Vorbild*, provided the necessary example. The following musical analysis of the first movement will demonstrate the

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<sup>6</sup> I use Jochen Eisentraut's qualifications of "accessible music" throughout this chapter to validate my assessments of Eisler's efforts to compose accessibly. Jochen Eisentraut, *The Accessibility of Music: Participation, Reception and Contact* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Hanns Eisler, "Musik und Musik Verständnis," *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1948*, 43.

ways in which Eisler reinterpreted Bach’s BWV 861 in order to render it accessible for a proletarian audience.

The genesis of *Das Vorbild* supports the notion that each of Eisler’s edits was intended to make the work a more apt representation of the ideal new musical culture within the GDR. While Eisler was living in the United States, he composed this first version of the fugue as a demonstration for a student on May 11, 1946.<sup>8</sup> Subsequent changes are listed below in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Development of *Das Vorbild***<sup>9</sup>

Date	Title	Movements within the work	Performances
1947	“Fuge”	None	In the film <i>The Woman on the Beach</i> <sup>10</sup>
1950	“Friedenslied”	None	None

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<sup>8</sup> Although it is currently unclear whether or not the fugue was written for a single private student or a group of students in a master class, it is certain that the composition of exemplary pieces was a common practice for Eisler. For more information, see: Hanns Eisler, “Präludium und Fuge über B-A-C-H (mit 12 Tönen)—Vorbemerkung (des Autors),” *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1948*, 377-378.

<sup>9</sup> Manfred Grabs, “Hanns Eisler: Das Vorbild,” HEA 1651, Hanns Eisler Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin. Rudolf Herrnstadt, “Aus den Funkprogrammen,” *Neues Deutschland Zeitung* (23 März 1952, Jahrgang 7, Ausgabe 71), 6.

<sup>10</sup> In 1947 it was added to the soundtrack for the film *The Woman on the Beach*. These two early versions of the fugue were similar to the Bach original in that they were both scored for piano. The manuscript sketches for the first draft of the fugue indicate that Eisler did not alter the content in any way. Über den Frieden Manuscripts, HEA 644, Hanns Eisler Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.

1951/1952	<i>Über den Frieden</i>	“Einleitung und Fuge,” “Friedenslied,” “Symbolum”	April 5, 1952 Radio Premier
September 1952	<i>Das Vorbild</i>	“Einleitung und Fuge,” “Arie,” “Symbolum”	September 23, 1952 Live Premier
March 1953	<i>Das Vorbild</i>	“Fuge,” “Arie,” “Symbolum”	March 9, 1953 Radio Concert
October 1959	<i>Das Vorbild</i>	“Fuge,” “Arie,” “Symbolum”	October 11, 1959 Live Performance

As the chart demonstrates, he renamed *Über den Frieden* as *Das Vorbild* for the live premier of the work. The title change followed his discovery of Goethe’s poem *Das Göttliche* with which he then replaced the second movement “Friedenslied.”<sup>11</sup> Although he often referred to *Das Göttliche* as “Edel sei der Mensch,” he named the second movement “Arie.” The “Arie,” and the third movement, “Symbolum,” contains a message within the text that further aid his social-educational goals. The revision process involved with *Das Vorbild* undoubtedly created a piece for the GDR and the new musical culture.

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<sup>11</sup> “Ich ersetze es durch ein anderes Goethefragment (“Edel sei der Mensch, hilfreich und gut”. Das klingt wieder beim Aufbau des Sozialismus!) und nenne das Ganze: Vorbild.” [I am replacing it [*Friedenslied*] with another Goethe fragment. (“Man should be noble, helpful, and good”. That really sounds like the building of socialism!) and name the entire thing: Vorbild.] Letter, Hanns Eisler to Bertolt Brecht, August 13, 1952, HEA 5748, Hanns Eisler Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.

## Movement 1: “Fuge”

The “Einleitung” introduced the subject of the fugue that would follow. In Figure 3.1, **Error! Reference source not found.** the first four notes are extracted from the subject of the fugue. The subject of the fugue in “Fuge” can be seen in Figure 3.3.

The image shows a musical score for the first five measures of the 'Einleitung' section of 'Das Vorbild' by Hanns Eisler. The score is in 3/2 time and B-flat major. It features four staves: Flute, Clarinet in B-flat, Bassoon, and Horn in F. The Clarinet in B-flat part begins with a melodic subject marked 'p' (piano) in the first measure. The Bassoon part enters in the fourth measure with a lower register version of the subject marked 'pp' (pianissimo). The Flute and Horn parts are silent throughout these five measures.

**Figure 3.1: The fugal subject in Eisler, “Einleitung,” *Das Vorbild*, mm. 1-5**

Karl Schönewolf found that the “Einleitung” memorably introduced the form. Schönewolf asserted that it contained exaggerated rhythms—particularly in the dotted quarter and sixteenth notes—that led to easier recognition of the subject within the fugue itself.<sup>12</sup> The conspicuous setting of the subject fulfilled Eisler’s insistence that “in the GDR—and the students must remember this as much as the teachers—that we have new

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<sup>12</sup> Karl Schönewolf, “Über den Frieden: Eine neue Komposition Hanns Eislers,” April, 13 1952, HEA 3819, Hanns Eisler Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.

listeners with still unpracticed ears, for whom classical music still causes difficulties.”<sup>13</sup>

The presentation of the subject within “Einleitung” is an educational moment; Eisler allowed the audience to practice identifying this basic element. Eisler removed the “Einleitung” for the 1953 production. He did not give a specific reason for the edit, but analysis of the “Fuge” demonstrates that the “Einleitung” Eisler simply have been viewed as unnecessary.

Eisler altered the meter and the orchestration from the Bach original (Figure 3.2). Additionally, his change from a piano setting to a string quartet (Figure 3.3) caused a timbral change that rendered his fugue more aurally accessible.



**Figure 3.2: Subject of the fugue in Bach, *Fugue*, BWV 861, mm.1-2<sup>14</sup>**

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<sup>13</sup> “Das Musikhören verlangt Übung. Einem ungeübten Ohr ist auch das Einfache fremd und neu, [und] ernst [die] Übung des Hörens erzeugt Kunstgeschmack, Urteilsfähigkeit [und schließlich], Freude an der Musik.“ Hanns Eisler, “Gedanken zur einer Musikdiskussion,” *Hanns Eisler: Musik und Politik: Schriften 1948-1952*, 155.

<sup>14</sup> Johann Sebastian Bach, “Fugue in G# Minor, BWV 861,” *The Well-Tempered Clavier – Book 1*, (Leipzig: Bach Gesellschaft Edition, 1926), 57-59.

**Figure 3.3: Orchestration in Eisler, *Das Vorbild*, mm 1-7<sup>15</sup>**

By introducing various elements of the fugue—such as subject, countersubject, and answer—in different, timbrally distinct instrument, Eisler increased the possibility for aural comprehension within the “Fuge.”<sup>16</sup>

Eisler took additional steps toward aural accessibility and the recognition of fugal elements by inserting definitive ends to each phrase with sequences. His transitional sequences are significant because they communicate a simplified version of the content from Bach’s fugue. Each of Eisler’s sequences begins on a variation of the A-G-C-b<sub>b</sub> descending line—this is shown in Figure 3.4 and Figure 3.6.

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<sup>15</sup> Hanns Eisler, *Das Vorbild: Triptychon für Altosolo und Orchester nach Texten von Goethe* (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1970).

<sup>16</sup> Despite the four instrumental parts, Eisler does not write an independent melodic line for the contrabass; he instead doubles it with the violoncello.



**Figure 3.4: Initial phrase of transitional sequence in Eisler “Fuge,” *Das Vorbild*,  
mm. 5-6**

The source of this sequence comes from the circled notes (Figure 3.4) in Bach’s answer begins with the G-B<sub>b</sub>-D-C, but while it is sounding, he inserted a section of free counterpoint (a-g-f in the bass clef).<sup>17</sup> Additionally, the answer begins before the subject has come to a clear and definable end—there is no pause, as exists in Eisler’s fugue.

Eisler’s transitional sequence mimics what is present in Bach’s fugue between the end of the subject, beginning of the answer, and beginning of a free counterpoint section (Figure 3.5).

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<sup>17</sup> Notes above middle C are indicated by a capital letter. Below middle C, they are indicated by a lower-case letter.



**Figure 3.5: Source of Eisler’s transitional sequence in Bach, *Fugue*, BWV 861, mm.**

2-3

Both Eisler’s fugue and Bach’s fugue contain two pairs of descending seconds (major and minor) that are separated by a leap (Figure 3.5). A possibility of a relationship between the two outlined segments exists—despite an overall difference in relationship—because Eisler considered melodic contour more important than the precise intervals.<sup>18</sup> He appears to have taken what is aurally present between two voices in Bach’s fugue (half step, third, half step) and synthesized it into a single voice within his own fugue. The repetition creates a moment of finality for the subject because it is a moment in which Eisler did not introduce any new material.

Eisler’s addition of transitional sequences further aids the recognition of elements such as the subject—this is a pedagogical move supported by theories of second language acquisition. These sequences serve as transitions and provide a momentary halt so that the audience can more easily recognize the subject (Figure 3.6).

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<sup>18</sup> Melodic contour has been demonstrated to be more memorable than specific pitches. Josh McDermott, Marc Hauser, “The Origins of Music: Innateness, Uniqueness, and Evolution,” *Music Perception: an Interdisciplinary Journal* 223 (September 2005): 33.



**Figure 3.6: Transitional sequence in Eisler, “Fuge,” *Das Vorbild*, mm. 5-9**

The location of these sequences—after the statement of the subjects and answers—signal the end of a phrase and give the listener time to process the events.<sup>19</sup> They serve as a “pause” in that they do not contain the subject, countersubject, or answer—they exist between these important events. Furthermore, the repetition inherently contained within a sequence reaffirms the concept of a phrase ending. Principles of second language acquisition reinforce the success of Eisler’s use of sequences. This parallel is drawn because of Eisler’s description of Bach being as difficult for the untrained listener to understand as a foreign language. Regarding language acquisition, Klaus Brandl asserted, “The repetition of passages appears to facilitate listening comprehension [...] By pausing the spoken input, [...] we in effect ‘slow down the listening process’ to allow the listener

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<sup>19</sup> These transitional sequences have somewhat replaced the function of the countersubject that is present in the original Bach fugue, in the sense that they often continued in to the statement of the answer. However, it is not possible that these transitional sequences are the countersubject as no two sequences are exact replicas in rhythm or pitch.

to monitor their listening more closely.”<sup>20</sup> Like one who is teaching a foreign language, Eisler’s use of repetitions further comprehension of his target language: the fugue.

The rhythmic content of Eisler’s fugue, again, demonstrates a simplified texture and allows the most important part—such as the subject—to be easily recognized. This allows the listener to identify the most significant lines within the fugue with ease, and demonstrates Eisler’s desire to create an aurally accessible composition.<sup>21</sup> This is most easily discernable through the rhythmic durations in Eisler’s fugue. When notes of shorter rhythmic durations are present, the length of notes in other parts is longer. This is present in the doubled bass clef part in Figure 3.7.



**Figure 3.7: Simplified texture in Eisler, “Fuge,” *Das Vorbild*, mm. 25-26**

In this case, the voices sounding in simultaneity with the eight notes allow the faster line to be more apparent. Eisler’s simplification of rhythmic textures demonstrates his desire

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<sup>20</sup> Klaus Brandl, *Communicative Language Teaching in Action: Putting Principles to Work* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 247.

<sup>21</sup> These efforts were recognized in Hansjürgen Schäfer’s October 13, 1959 review of a performance of *Das Vorbild*. In this, Schäfer described the work as being unexaggerated [unpathetisch], clear, and transparent. Hansjürgen Schäfer, “Der Republik gewidmet: Konzert und Kompositionen zum 10. Jahrestag,” *Berliner Zeitung*, October 13, 1959, 3.

to communicate a clear, single, melodic idea rather than engage in the composition of complex counterpoint.

Eisler's commitment to a simplified texture is also noticeable in his frequent use of parallel motion within passages that contain eighth notes (second level divisions of the beat) in more than one voice. In reducing the overall number of voices with contrary motion, he decreased the chances of composing a "tonally startling," and subsequently inaccessible, phrase.<sup>22</sup> Instances of parallel motion are seen in the doubling of the bass and tenor voices in measures twenty-five and twenty-six (Figure 3.7). Another instance of parallel eight-note motion occurs in measure thirty-seven (Figure 3.8).



**Figure 3.8: Simultaneous eighth notes in two voices in Eisler, “Fuge,” *Das Vorbild*, m. 37**

In measure thirty-seven, the alto and tenor voices contain minor sixths in parallel motion. There are only two sets of eighth notes where Eisler does not move in parallel motion; these are contained in measures twenty-eight and twenty-nine (Figure 3.9).

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<sup>22</sup> Samuel Miller asserted that contrary and oblique motion in melodic lines creates (particularly in fugues) creates a startling aesthetic. Samuel D. Miller, “Motion in Musical Texture and Aesthetic Impact,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 17 (Spring 1983): 64.



**Figure 3.9: Simultaneous eighth notes in contrary motion in Eisler, “Fuge,” *Das Vorbild*, mm. 28-29**

In beat four of these measures, the soprano voice moves in step-wise contrary motion to the bass and tenor voices. Even within this context, the contrary motion is justified by the overall downward sequence contained. The bass and tenor, and soprano eighth notes lead to a repeat of the previous melodic in the next measure. As a result, the contrary motion facilitates a transition into the next measure. This is somewhat similar to Bach’s frequent use of contrary motion in second level divisions of the beat (sixteenth notes) (Figure 3.10).



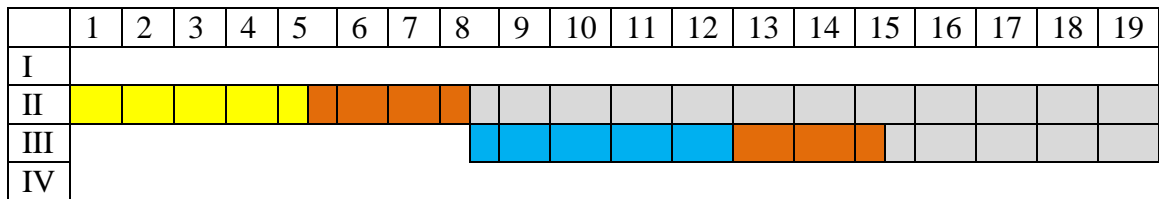
**Figure 3.10: Contrary motion in Bach, *Fugue*, BWV 861, m. 18**

The contrary motion seen in Figure 3.10 exists in the third beat of the measure in the alto and bass voices. Bach’s contrary motion is similar to Eisler’s because they both resolve with step-wise motion. However, the instances of contrary motion in second level divisions of the beat within Bach’s *Fugue* is far more prevalent than the single occurrence

within Eisler’s “Fuge.”<sup>23</sup> Eisler evades contrary motion in second-level division of the beat, which results in a fugue that is more aurally simplistic and accessible than Bach’s fugue.

Eisler’s simple texture consistently presents the subject and answer in a straightforward manner. The transitional sequences (Figure 3.6) allow for ample time between the beginning and end of each subject and answer. Additionally, Eisler does not include a countersubject within his fugue. As a result, there are only two distinct, repetitive, phrases: the subject and answer, and the transitional sequence.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, Eisler’s fugue only contains three distinct parts, with the bass doubling the violoncello intermittently, whereas Bach’s fugue contains four distinct parts. The diagrams of both fugues, seen below, present a visual representation.

**Figure 3.11: Diagram of Eisler, “Fuge,” *Das Vorbild***



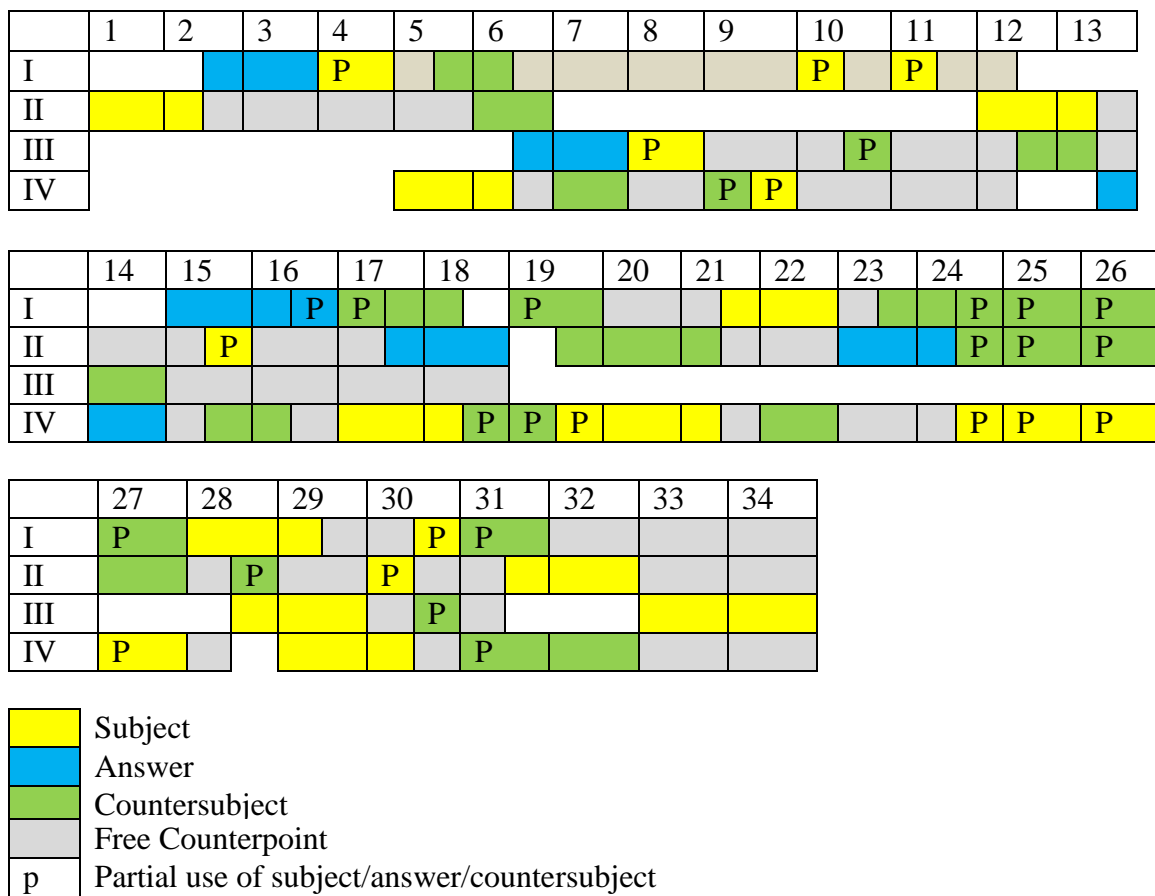

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<sup>23</sup> Contrary motion in second level divisions of the beat occurs no fewer than twenty-six times within Bach’s *Fugue*, BWV 861.

<sup>24</sup> I have grouped together Eisler’s subject and answer due to his use of a real answer. Eisentraut established that the melodic shape of a phrase is more discernable to the untrained listener than the pitches in themselves. Eisentraut, *The Accessibility of Music*, 77.



Figure 3.12: Diagram of Bach, BWV 861 <sup>25</sup>



The diagram of Eisler’s fugue (Figure 3.11) demonstrates his use of distinct phrases (subject, answer, or transitional sequence) in non-grey colors. It is visually discernable how Eisler creates space between each. Additionally, the texture is made even less dense because Eisler wrote a three-part fugue—with the bass intermittently doubling the tenor—whereas Bach’s contains an additional fourth voice. Because the subject, answer,

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<sup>25</sup> Map of BWV 861 adapted from José Rodríguez Alvira and José D. Sandín, “Graphic Analysis of the G Minor Fugue from the WTC Book I (BWV861),” *teoria.com*, visited 5 April 2014, updated 2002, <http://www.teoria.com/articulos/analysis/BWV861/graphic.htm>.

and transitional sequence are the only parts of his fugue that are repeated, it is more likely that the “musically illiterate” will remember them.

The first movement of *Das Vorbild* represents a simplified fugue, particularly because of the clear, uncomplicated, texture. Eisler made the most basic part of a fugue, the subject, discernable to the musically illiterate listener because of his use of repetition and pauses. Eisler’s effort at composing an accessible fugue allow the audience to attain familiarity with the genre that had been previously incomprehensible. The function of “Fuge” as an educational movement will become more apparent upon analysis of the rest of *Das Vorbild* within this chapter.

## Movement 2: “Arie”

The second movement, “Arie,” was not a part of the original sketches for *Das Vorbild*. The first three performances of the piece contained the *Friedenslied*.<sup>26</sup> Eisler began to reconsider the piece’s role in his triptych in the summer of 1951. Eisler expressed his discontent with the work in letter to Brecht. Eisler stated that he was continuing to work on the piece because the *Friedenslied* does not fit musically; “I continue to work on my triptych; the *Friedenslied* needs to be taken out and put elsewhere because it simply does not fit musically.”<sup>27</sup> A review for the radio premier explains Eisler’s discontent. In this review, Karl Schönewolf assessed the second movement in a dismissive manner and attributed terms such as “funny,” “light,” and “happy” to the work.<sup>28</sup> This assessment seems to describe a work quite contrary to Eisler’s 1932 declarations of his disapproval of light music.<sup>29</sup> In the same letter to Brecht, Eisler declared that he had found a solution; he would replace *Friedenslied* with Goethe’s *Das Göttliche* (1783). Eisler found that *Das Göttliche* “really sounds like the building of

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<sup>26</sup> *Friedenslied* (also referred to as *Lied über den Frieden*) comprised of Brecht’s poem, after Pablo Naruda, by the same name. *Friedenslied* is currently categorized as a “children’s song.” Hanns Eisler, *Friedenslied (Kinderlied)* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel).

<sup>27</sup> Letter, Hanns Eisler to Bertolt Brecht, August 13, 1952, HEA 5748, Hanns Eisler Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.

<sup>28</sup> Karl Schönewolf, “Über den Frieden: Eine neue Komposition Hanns Eislers,” April, 13 1952, HEA 3819, Hanns Eisler Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.

<sup>29</sup> Eisler, “Die Aufgaben der Musikkonferenz der MRTO,” *Musik und Politik: Schriften I 1924-1948*, 175.

socialism!”<sup>30</sup> The final version of *Das Vorbild*, with *Das Göttliche* as the text to the second movement would not be performed until 1959.<sup>31</sup> In the analysis of this movement, I discuss Eisler’s choice of text and the musical setting, with a focus upon the simplified texture.

Eisler’s adaptation of *Das Göttliche* further facilitates interpretation of the poem as something that “sound[s] like the building of socialism!”<sup>32</sup> Goethe wrote *Das Göttliche* [On the Divine/ The Divinity] in 1783 during his infamous relationship with Charlotte von Stein. Nicholas Boyle has read the poem as demonstrating Goethe’s break with the *Sturm und Drang* due to the objectivity with which he separates man from nature.<sup>33</sup> Boyle has expressed the “divinity” of the work as lying within the duality that arises out of man having control over nature, while also being subjected to the “same mechanical

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<sup>30</sup> Letter, Hanns Eisler to Bertolt Brecht, HEA 5748.

<sup>31</sup> Manuscripts associated with *Das Vorbild*, the *Friedenslied*, or *Über den Frieden* contain sketches of melodic lines that do not belong to any version of *Das Vorbild*. Eisler added no descriptive text to the sketches of melodic lines. It is assumed that these sketches belong to the body of work that Eisler was referencing in his letter to Brecht—“I continue to work on my tryptichon.”

<sup>32</sup> Letter, Hanns Eisler to Bertolt Brecht, HEA 5748.

<sup>33</sup> The separation of man from nature is in direct opposition with the unity that was crucial to the *Sturm und Drang* period. Boyle writes that this poem “shows how far he had moved away, not only from his recent tragic fear of the power of gods and fate, but also from the earlier Storm and Stress awareness of the material, social, and historical determinants of human behavior, and towards the official culture of absolutist bureaucracy.” Nicholas Boyle, *Goethe: The poet and the Age, Volume I: The Poetry of Desire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 351.

laws.”<sup>34</sup> Ultimately, Eisler only set forty-three of the sixty-one lines of Goethe’s original poem to music.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid..

Eisler		Goethe
1 Edel sei der Mensch, Hilfreich und gut! Denn das Unterscheidet ihn	Let man be noble, Generous and good; For that [alone] Distinguishes him	1 Edel sei der Mensch, Hilfreich und gut! Denn das allein Unterscheidet ihn
5 Von allen Wesen, Die wir kennen.	From all the living That we know	5 Von allen Wesen, Die wir kennen.
	[Hail to the unknown Higher beings, That we know! Let man be alike! Let his example teach us to believe in them.]	Heil den unbekanntem Höhem Wesen, Die wir ahnen! 10 Ihnen gleiche der Mensch! Sein Beispiel lehr uns Jene glauben.
Denn unführend Denn unführend Ist die Natur:	For unfeeling For unfeeling Is nature:	Denn unführend Ist die Natur:
10 Es leuchtet die Sonne Über Bös und Gute, Und dem Verbrecher Glänzen wie dem Guten Der Mond und die Sterne	It shines the sun The sun sheds its light Over evil and good And the moon and the stars Shine on the criminal	15 Es leuchtet die Sonne Über Bös und Gute, Und dem Verbrecher Glänzen wie dem Besten Der Mond und die Sterne.
15 Wind und Ströme, Donner und Hagel Rauschen ihren Weg Und ergreifen Vorüber eilend	As on the best of us. The wind and rivers, Hail and thunder, Storm on their way And seize	20 Wind und Ströme, Donner und Hagel Rauschen ihren Weg Und ergreifen Vorüber eilend
20 Einen um den andern.	One after another as they rush past.	25 Einen um den andern.
So Auch das Glück Tappt unter die Menge, Faßt bald des Knaben Lockige Unschuld,	So too does fortune, Grove through the crowd Grabbing the boy's Curly-haired Innocence	Auch so das Glück Tappt unter die Menge, Faßt bald des Knaben Lockige Unschuld,
25 Bald auch den kahlen Schuldigen Scheitel.	And just as soon The bald and guilty.	30 Bald auch den kahlen Schuldigen Scheitel.
	[As eternal, honorable, Great laws Dictate, we must all	Nach ewigen, ehrnen, Großen Gesetzen Müssen wir alle

		Complete the cycles Of our existence.]	35	Unsreres Daseins Kreise vollenden.
	Nur allein der Mensch Vermag das Unmögliche: Er unterscheidet, 30 Wählet und richtet; Er kann dem Augenblick Dauer verleihen.	Only mankind Can do the impossible: He can distinguish, He chooses and judges, 40 He can give permanence To the moment.		Nur allein der Mensch Vermag das Unmögliche: Er unterscheidet, Wählet und richtet; Er kann dem Augenblick Dauer verleihen.
	Er allein darf Den Guten lohnen, 35 Den Bösen strafen, Heilen und retten, Alles Irrende, Schweifende Nützlich verbinden.	He alone may Reward the good And punish the wicked; He may heal and save And usefully bind All that strays And wanders.	45	Er allein darf Den Guten lohnen, Den Bösen strafen, Heilen und retten, Alles Irrende, Schweifende Nützlich verbinden.
		[And we revere The immortals, as if They were human beings Who do on a great scale What little the best of us Does or endeavors.]	50	Und wir verehren Die Unsterblichen, Als wären sie Menschen, Täten im großen, Was der Beste im kleinen 55 Tut oder möchte.
	Der edle Mensch 40 Sei hilfreich und gut! Unermüdet schaff er Das Nützliche, Rechte, Sei uns ein Vorbild Jener geahneten Wesen!	Let the noble man Be generous and good, Tirelessly achieving What is just and useful. Let him be a model 60 For those beings whom he surmises. <sup>35</sup>		Der edle Mensch Sei hilfreich und gut! Unermüdet schaff er Das Nützliche, Rechte, Sei uns ein Vorbild Jener geahneten Wesen!

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<sup>35</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Goethe: Das Göttliche / On the Divine," translated by David Luke, on *golempoem*, accessed 18 April 2014, updated 2 May 2008, <http://matthewsalomon.wordpress.com/2008/05/02/goethe-das-gottliche-on-the-divine/>.

Eisler omitted lines 7-12, 32-36, and 49-54 from the Goethe original. Each omitted strophe contains phrase that uses *wir* [we]: “und wir verehren,” “müssen wir allen,” “und wir ahnen.” What is interesting is that Eisler retains the various instances of *uns* [us] in his adaptation. It can be postulated that the reason for doing so lies in the distance that *wir* creates between the reader and the *edle Mensch* [noble man]. By using only *uns*, Eisler makes the *edle Mensch* a part of the audience, rather than being a separate figure who the *wir* must admire. In the second omitted strophe, “As eternal, honorable, / Great laws / Dictate, we must all / Complete the cycles / Of our existence,” the agency of the listener—the *uns*—is replaced by a more teleological mandate of existence. Eisler’s removal of this passage allows this movement to retain the socialist-societal aspirations. Additionally, the third strophe which has been omitted, “And we revere / The immortals, as if / They were human beings / Who do on a great scale / What little the best of us / Does or endeavors,” places an emphasis on the success of the individual over the collective *uns*. The only time that Eisler kept the *wir* was in the sixth line “Die wir kennen;” the reason for this may be that it implies that the audience is already familiar with the *edle Mensch*.

Another interpretation that may be offered for the omission of the passages is due to Goethe’s inferred reference to a possible higher power or purpose beyond creating a socialist society. In the first strophe, “Hail to the unknown / Higher beings / That we know! / Let man be alike! Let his example teach us to believe in them,” there exists the implication that man should strive to emulate higher powers in order to simply believe in

them, rather than for societal or social good.<sup>36</sup> The other omitted passages also possess the divine elements of *Das Göttliche*, such as “eternal . . . great laws,” or “immortals.” Eisler’s references to the poem as *Edel sei der Mensch* (in the movement entitled “Arie”), rather than *Das Göttliche* supports this interpretation.<sup>37</sup>

Eisler’s edits facilitate a Marxist reading of *Edel sei der Mensch*. The content of the text indicate a direct tie to the building of a socialist society—more specifically, the conduct and agency of the individual in its construction.<sup>38</sup> The first two strophes (of Eisler’s reduction) serve to separate man from nature and while the third demonstrates the qualities which man possesses that are the cause of this detachment. In doing so, these strophes place the power to change within the hands of man—a quality that is highly important in a newly formed republic. The purpose of the fourth strophe, within a socialistic interpretation, infers man’s ability to unite all under a common cause. Within the last strophe, the concept of the text as a display of the model after which man should follow is reinforced. The last line in particular, “let him be a model / for all those beings whom he surmises” moves somewhat beyond the scope of the GDR and socialist society, in that the individual (man) may be an example for a larger group than the simple *uns* to

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<sup>36</sup> Heil den unbekanntem / Höhern Wesen / Die wir ahnen! / Ihnen gleiche der Mensch! / Sein Beispiel lehr uns / Jene glauben.

<sup>37</sup> Arnold Pistiak, *Darf ich auch Verse von Goethe verwenden?*, 41.

<sup>38</sup> No evidence exists to suggest that the audience may have already been familiar with *Das Göttliche*. However, given the popularity of Goethe in Germany, it is possible. Eisler did not appear to be concerned with the audience’s potential familiarity with the poem.

whom the poem refers. His edits allow the work to be seen as a call to understand the power for cooperation, change, and good that man possesses. These are qualities necessary for the establishment of a functioning socialist society.

Eisler’s intention for this composition to function within the context of a socialist society is evident beyond his choice of text. The musical setting of the text in “Arie” aids in general comprehension of the movement. He communicates the content and meaning of the text particularly through his rhythmic setting and the simplified texture.

The rhythmic setting of the text highlights the calls-to-action and socialist meanings contained within Eisler’s adaptation of the Goethe original. The natural stress of the first strophe of the text appears as follows:

/ X X X /  
 E | del sei der Mensch,  
 / X X X  
 Hilf | reich und gut!  
 / X  
 Denn das  
 / X / X X  
 Un | ter | scheid | et ihn  
 X / X / X  
 Von all | en Wes | en,  
 X X / X  
 Die wir ken | nen.



**Figure 3.13: Soprano line in “Aria,” *Das Vorbild*, mm. 1-5**

In the musical setting, Eisler’s emphasized the words *Mensch*, *hilfreich*, and *gut*, by giving them longer rhythmic values, which in turn conveyed the humanistic values of the

text. A lack of rhythmic emphasis in rest of the strophe, however, does not make any words or syllables more important than others. The meter changes between measures two and three, and then four and five, emphasize the words *denn*, *-scheid* (of *unterschiedet*), and *al-* (of *allen*). The meter changes permitted him to retain the stress of the first word in a phrase (*denn*) from the original text, as well as emphasize the inclusion of *all* beings (*allen Wesen*). Less emphasis is placed upon the other stressed syllables, although they are placed on strong beats within the measure, such as *un-* (of *unterschiedet*), *ihn*, *Wes-* (of *Wesen*), and *die*.

The rhythmic placement of the text appears to have been something that Eisler paid special attention to during the compositional process. In one sketch of this movement in particular, Eisler replaced the bar lines twice for the phrase “Es leuchtet die Sonne [...] So auch das Glück” (Figure 3.14).

12

S

Es leuch tet die Son ne über Bös und Gu te und dem Ver bre cher glän zen wie dem

3

12

Pno.

2 4

3

3

2 4

2 4

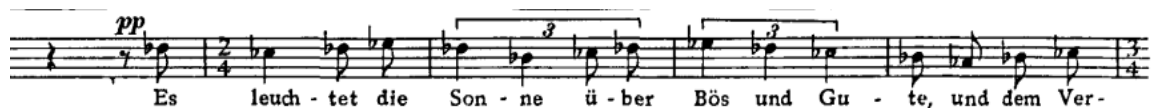
2 4

Figure 3.14: Transcribed sketch of “Aria,” *Das Vorbild*, mm. 12-17<sup>39</sup>

Eisler’s indecisive revisions regarding the placement of bar lines and the choice of meter are seen in Figure 3.14. In this revision, he wrote over the existing bar lines with longer vertical lines to indicate potential new metric phrasing (numbers next to the longer vertical lines). These changes did not endure further revisions, however, and the movement would be published as it was originally envisioned (Figure 3.15).

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<sup>39</sup> Sketches, *Das Vorbild*, HEA 460, Hanns Eisler Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.



**Figure 3.15: Soprano line in “Arie,” *Das Vorbild*, mm. 10-14**

Eisler’s seems to have experimented with the removal of the triplet figures because of the attempted, but unsuccessful, changes that are present in Figure 3.14. These specific alterations, however, do not appear in any other sketches of the Aria.

His 1950 essay, “Einiges über das Verhältnis von Text und Musik II” [Regarding the Relationship between Text and Music], may explain his uncertainty about the placement of bar lines. Within this text, he discussed the co-dependence of text and music and asserted that meter can significantly alter the meaning of the text.<sup>40</sup> In the published version (Figure 3.15), the placement of *Sonne* [sun] and *Böse* [bad] upon the downbeat emphasizes these two words. In the sketch (Figure 3.14), however, Eisler attempts to shift importance to *Güte* [good] alone. The published version acknowledges the importance of recognizing both the good and the bad.<sup>41</sup>

Much like in “Fuge,” Eisler added a melodic and rhythmic pause to the end of each phrase in “Arie.” The pause that is created aids in the overall comprehension of the text. The slowing pulse at the end of each phrase is more obviously audible than the

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<sup>40</sup> Hanns Eisler, “Einiges über das Verhältnis von Musik und Text,” *Musik und Politik: Schriften II 1948-1962*, 98.

<sup>41</sup> Recognition of the good and bad would be beneficial in the formative years of the GDR. Acknowledging the bad leaves room for correction, while taking note of the good provides an example by which the bad may be fixed.

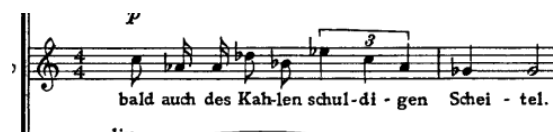
various meter changes and indicates ending phrases. For example, in the second half of the first strophe there is an audible deceleration of syllables.



**Figure 3.16: Rhythmic deceleration in phrase endings, “Arie,” *Das Vorbild*, mm. 16-**

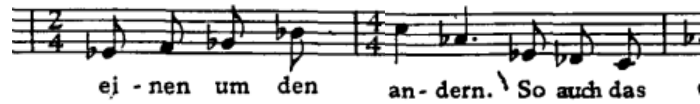
**17**

The vocal line slows down in an emphasis of the ending of a phrase; the rhythmic deceleration in “Mond und die Sterne” is one such example (Figure 3.16). The line “des Kahlen shuldigen Scheitel” also contains a variation of this rhythmic deceleration (Figure 3.17).



**Figure 3.17: Variation of rhythmic deceleration in phrase endings in “Arie,” *Das Vorbild*, mm. 29-30**

The end of every strophe in the *Aria* follows this rhythmic pattern, with the exception of the end of the third strophe. Within the phrase “Einen um den andern,” there are no triplet quarter or eighth notes (Figure 3.18).



**Figure 3.18: Irregular rhythmic deceleration, “Arie,” *Das Vorbild*, mm. 23-34**

This exception is likely the result of text painting. The phrase “Einen um den andern” [one after another] does not receive the typical rhythmic deceleration, but rather, it continues immediately into the beginning of the next strophe, much like the meaning of the text. The rhythmic qualities of all phrase endings conclusively correspond with the textual content.

Eisler’s recitative-like setting furthers comprehension of the text. The majority of melodic movement occurs after the vocalist has concluded a phrase. The few existing interactions of the instrumental parts with the vocal part furthers the meaning through text painting. The sparse accompaniment for the text is seen in Figure 3.19.

**Figure 3.19: Vocal accompaniment in “Arie,” *Das Vorbild*, mm. 10-14**

While the vocalist continues the melody, the accompaniment (woodwinds are shown in reduction in the piano part) simply sustains a chord. There is subsequently a lack of competition for the attention of the listener because the accompaniment does not distract

from the vocal part. The most movement within the accompaniment occurs during the last strophe of the text and builds toward the end. In measure fifty-one, (Figure 3.20) Eisler added an upward-moving melodic line to nearly every instrument.

The image shows a musical score for the accompaniment in the last strophe of "Arie," mm. 51-54. The score is written for six parts: Alt-Solo, Viol., Va., Vc., Kb., and Klav.-ausz. The vocal line is in German: "Der ed-le Mensch sei hilf-reich und gut! Un-er-mü-det schaff'er das Nütz-li-che, Rech-te, sei uns ein". The score shows a crescendo and an upward-moving melodic line in the accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *fp*, and *div.* (diviso).

**Figure 3.20: Accompaniment in the last strophe of "Arie," *Das Vorbild*, mm. 51-54**

The last strophe, which mimics the first in content, also contains melodic excerpts from its first appearance (Figure 3.13). The vocal line, however, follows cues from the accompaniment. After the accompaniment increases the intensity with a crescendo and the addition of its own melodic material, the vocal part becomes faster and eventually





**Figure 3.22: Hand stops in the horn part of “Arie,” *Das Vorbild*, m. 10**

The muted horn adds an air of drama to the declaration that nature is unforgiving due to the harsh and muffled sound. Instances such as this occur throughout the movement and effectively communicate the intent of the text to the listener, while also inserting a pause that may aid in a greater overall understanding.

The compositional choices Eisler made throughout the second movement reinforce comprehension of the content of a text that is to reflect the values of a socialist society. The listener is subsequently experiencing high-art music—particularly what Eisler deemed an aria—while learning about the qualities for which they should strive. Furthermore, he musically communicated the affect of each strophe following its conclusion. This is beneficial to the listener who may be unfamiliar with *Das Göttliche*; he conveyed the positive and negative connotations of each strophe without the need for textual analysis. Subsequently, this compositional style facilitates the audience’s understanding of the movement’s social message.

### **Movement 3: “Symbolum”**

The qualities exemplary of a socialist society within *Das Vorbild* continue within the third movement, “Symbolum.” Unlike the second movement, “Arie,” “Symbolum” remained a part of *Das Vorbild/Über den Frieden* throughout nearly every version, with

the exception of one 1952 manuscript rendition. In this sketch, Eisler removed “Symbolum” and replaced it with the “Arie,” while retaining “Friedenslied” for the second movement.<sup>43</sup> This edit, however, did not appear in any subsequent manuscripts, nor was it performed. The revision history of “Symbolum” also differs from both “Arie”/“Edel sei der Mensch” and “Fuge” in that Eisler does not indicate that he intended it for any other work.

The style in which Eisler set the text of “Symbolum” resembles that of “Arie” Eisler’s setting of the text from “Symbolum” is similar to the principles by which the rest of the work abides. He modified the text in order to convey a positive outlook for the future of socialism. The simple melodic lines and repetition are reminiscent of a folk song and are serve as a third, contrasting style of composition in the triptych. Furthermore, the repetition, both of motifs and in overall form, convey the meaning of the text more easily to the audience members. These compositional choices all work toward increasing the accessibility of the movement, which is one of the overall goals of the work.

Similar to “Arie,” Eisler edited the text within “Symbolum” to promote a Marxist reading and increase the ease of accessibility. Below, Eisler’s interpretation is place in comparison with the Goethe original; both are separated by an English translation.

Eisler		Goethe	
1	Des <i>Mannes</i> Wandeln, Es gleicht dem Leben,	The mason’s [man’s] stead walk	1 Des Maurers Wandeln, Es gleicht dem Leben,

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<sup>43</sup> Sketch, Das Vorbild, HEA 401, Hanns Eisler Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.

5	Und sein Bestreben, Es gleicht dem Handeln Der Menschen auf Erden. Auf Erden.	5	Is a sign for life, And their endeavors, A sign for the acts, Of the people of the world.	5	Und sein Bestreben, Es gleicht dem Handeln Der Menschen auf Erden.
10	Die Zukunft decket Schmerzen und Glücke Schrittweis dem Blicke; Doch ungeschreckt Dringen wir vorwärts, wir vorwärts	10	Of the world. The future conceals All pain and joys, Now step-by-step With undaunted gaze, We press forward, Press forward.	10	Die Zukunft decket Schmerzen und Glücke Schrittweis dem Blicke; Doch ungeschreckt Dringen wir vorwärts
15	Und schwer und <i>schwerer</i> Hängt eine Hülle Mit Ehrfurcht. Stille Ruh'n oben die Sterne Und unten die Gräber	15	And difficult and more far-off [difficult] Hangs a cover Of Awe. Silent, The Stars above us, And the graves below us.	15	Und schwer und ferne Hängt eine Hülle, Mit Ehrfurcht, stille Ruhn oben die Sterne Und unten die Gräber.
20	Betracht' sie genauer Und siehe, so melden Im Busen den Helden Sich wandelnde	20	But watch closely now, And see, what effect The boding terror Has upon the bosom of the hero	20	Betracht' sie genauer Und siehe, so melden Im Busen der Helden Sich wandelnde Schauer
25	Schauer Und ernste Und ernste Gefühle	25	[And serious] And serious feelings.	25	Und ernste Gefühle.
30	Doch rufen von drüben Die Stimmen der Geister Die Stimmen der Meister	30	But heard from afar The voices of the spirit, The voices of the master, Do not fail [forget] to practice	30	Doch rufen von drüben Die Stimmen der Geister, Die Stimmen der Meister:
35	<i>Vergeßt</i> nicht zu üben Die Kräfte des Guten	35	The power of the good. Here crowns are prepared	35	Versäumt nicht zu üben, Die Kräfte des Guten!
	Hier flechten sich Kronen In ewiger Stille, Die sollen mit Fülle Die Tätigen lohnen		In eternal stillness, Which is filled with Worthwhile activity. We call for your hope [We call for your hope,		Hier winden sich Kronen In ewiger Stille, Die sollen mit Fülle Die Tätigen lohnen! Wir heißen euch hoffen.

Wir heißen euch hoffen We call for your hope]<sup>44</sup>  
 Wir heißen euch hoffen  
 Wir heißen euch hoffen

Eisler’s alterations to “Symbolum” are much more subtle than “Arie.” His choices of *vergeßt* [forget] instead of *versäumt* [fail] and *schwerer* [more difficult] instead of *ferne* [far-off] promote a less-harsh reading of the poem, particularly between *vergeßt* and *versäumt*. The choice of *Mannes* [man’s] instead of *Maurers* [mason’s] fits into the *Vorbild* theme of the poem by again bringing the subject matter closer to an audience member. Eisler’s switch of *Mannes* from the *Maurers* within the Goethe original further serves to reappropriate a work of bourgeois high-art for the proletariat audience.<sup>45</sup>

Eisler’s interpretation of the syllabic rhythm also aids in the overall comprehension of the piece because it emphasizes particular words.

X / X / X  
 Des Man | nes Wand | eln,  
 X / X / X  
 Es gleicht dem Le | ben,  
 X / X / X  
 Und sein Be | streb | en,  
 X / X / X  
 Es gleicht dem Hand | eln  
 X / X X / X  
 Der Men | schen auf Erd | en.  
 X / X  
 Auf Erd | en.

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<sup>44</sup> Adapted from Thomas Carlyle’s translation. Carlyle’s translation has been observed as being rather liberal with masonic symbolism. Friedrich Brie, “Carlyle und Goethes *Symbolum*,” *Anglia* 66 (1942): 228-254.

<sup>45</sup> This reappropriation allows the audience member to become familiarized with works of the bourgeois artistic canon that had been historically inaccessible.

Within the first strophe (Figure 3.24), Eisler uses the natural stresses and breaks between lines to manipulate the odd number of syllables within each line. There are five syllables in each line (with the exception of the last line), but he set the text to a triple meter rather than duple. Because of this, the naturally stressed syllables fall on the second beat of each measure; the first word of each line is on the first beat of each measure. Eisler adds additional stress to the end rhyme by setting it as a half note. In doing this, he provides greater aural continuity through each line of text.

“Symbolum” resembles a folk-song due to the simplicity of form and harmonic content.<sup>46</sup> Eisler’s preoccupation with the subject of folk songs in the early 1950 is embodied by his composition of *Neue deutsche Volkslieder* (1950). This creates a possibility for a connection between “Symbolum” and folk songs.<sup>47</sup> The concept of “Symbolum” as a folk song stems from its somewhat aurally simple melodic and harmonic content. The musical content reinforces the notion of “Symbolum” as a folksong written for the GDR.

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<sup>46</sup> Manfred Grabs noted these similarities in HEA 1651. The folk-like compositional style reflects Eisler’s desire to create a new set of folk song for the German Democratic Republic.

<sup>47</sup> The most obvious connection between *Symbolum* and another work stems from a sketchbook. In HEA 798, the title page displays the word “Symbolum,” which has been scratched out several times. Below the “~~SYMBOLUM~~” is the title “Johann Faustus.” The remaining pages of the sketchbook contain musical fragments from the *Faustus* opera. Although it is apparent that Eisler was thinking about both works at the same time, there are no fragments from *Symbolum*, or any of the variations upon *Das Vorbild* within this sketchbook. Sketch, *Das Vorbild*, HEA 798, Hanns Eisler Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.



**Figure 3.23: Piano reduction of the accompaniment in “Symbolum,” *Das Vorbild*, mm. 1-7**

The accompaniment throughout “Symbolum” is harmonically simple and inspires the interpretation of the work as a folk song. “Symbolum” functions in D major; this is the most unambiguous key area of all three movements within *Das Vorbild*. The first seven bars oscillate between doubled octaves on the first and fourth scale degrees before moving up to the second scale degree. The vocal part further emphasizes the harmonically straightforward compositional style in “Symbolum” (Figure 3.24).

Alt-Solo

1. Des Man-nes Wan-deln, es gleicht dem Le-ben, und sein Be-stre-ben, es gleicht dem  
 2. Die Zu-kunft dek-ket Schmer-zen und Glük-ke schritt-weis dem Blik-ke, doch un-ge-

Alt-Solo

Han-deln der Men-schen auf Er-den, auf Er-den. Und schwer und schwe-rer  
 schrek-ket drin-gen wir vor-wärts, wir vor-wärts.

**Figure 3.24: A section of “Symbolum” from *Das Vorbild*, mm. 1-13**

While the vocal part is harmonically uncomplicated, the expanded range of an octave and a fourth relegates “Symbolum” to a category of an art song that is imitating a folk song.

Like in “Fuge” and “Arie,” “Symbolum” contains several repeats of the A section (Figure 3.24); the overall form of the piece is A(A)BCB<sup>1</sup>A<sup>1</sup>. The reappearance of the A

section, again, aids in audience comprehension of the textual and harmonic content. The first B section occurs immediately after the repeat of the A section.

Und schwer und schwe-rer

Alt-Solo  
hängt ei-ne Hül-le mit Ehr - furcht. Stil - le ruh'n o - ben die Ster - ne und un - ten die

Alt-Solo  
Grä - - ber.

**Figure 3.25: B Section of “Symbolum,” in *Das Vorbild*, mm. 14-27<sup>48</sup>**

The beginning of the C section can be seen in Figure 3.26 below.

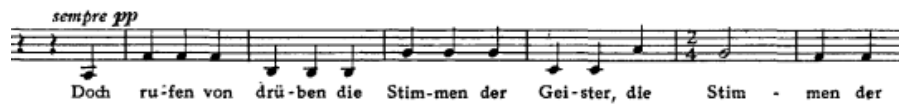
Be - tracht' sie ge - nau - er und sie - he, so mel - den im

**Figure 3.26: Portion of the C section in “Symbolum,” *Das Vorbild*, mm. 28-32**

The C section is melodically distinct from the other two sections because it does not contain melodic material that recurs anywhere else. Rather than an upwardly ascending melodic line, the C section oscillates between the upper and lower registers. What follows is the second B section (Figure 3.27).

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<sup>48</sup> The strophe is broken up among several lines because the figure was extracted from a full score.



**Figure 3.27: Second B section in “Symbolum,” *Das Vorbild*, mm. 41-47**

The second B section is not an exact reiteration of the first; however, it more closely resembles the B section than any others do. Like in “Fuge,” Eisler’s use of three entirely distinct sets of melodic material creates repetitions that aid in the overall comprehension of the movement.

“Symbolum” contains three distinct groups of melodic material, but within the A, B, and C sections, Eisler uses repeated motives. As a result, he has given the movement further melodic unity and increased the possibility for comprehension. The A and B sections contain an example of reused melodic material; both conclude with the same motive (Figure 3.28).



**Figure 3.28: Neighbor tone motive in “Symbolum,” *Das Vorbild*, mm. 51-56**

The neighbor tone motive present in the first two measures of Figure 3.28 appears throughout the movement ten times, within the vocal part alone.

Another instance of repetition of melodic material within “Symbolum” is the use of three repeated notes in a row. Like the motives in “Fuge,” and “Arie,” these repeated notes signal the end of a phrase, however, unlike the motives in the other movements; they may also signal the beginning of a phrase. Eisler used the three repeated notes within

the vocal line at the beginning of the B and C sections. These appear to indicate the beginning of a phrase and occur seven times in the vocal part (several instances may be viewed in Figure 3.26, Figure 3.27). The repetition of three notes is also common within the instrumental accompaniment. These occurrences, however, denote the end of a section.



**Figure 3.29: Three Db's at the end of the A section in "Symbolum," *Das Vorbild*, mm. 12-14**

These octave D<sub>b</sub>s occur at the end of every section in "Symbolum." This motive also exists, though slightly varied, in the second movement. In "Arie," the presence of the motive is most explicit in the last measure (Figure 3.30).



**Figure 3.30: Three Dbs at the end of “Arie,” *Das Vorbild* mm. 61-62**

Although this motive is present in “Arie,” it is most noticeable within “Symbolum.” The repeated notes are more obvious in “Symbolum” because Eisler added it to the end of every phrase, rather than at the end of the movement.

Following with the triptych theme, Eisler composed “Symbolum” in yet another distinct style. It is neither a fugue nor an aria, but rather, it resembles a folk song. He unified this movement with the others due to the simple texture and repetition. He presented a folk song-like composition that contained messages pertinent to a socialist society. Furthermore, the compositional style renders both the movement itself accessible, as well as the text. “Symbolum” provided an easy-to-understand conclusion to the compositional triptych.

### **Conclusion**

In addition to being an aurally accessible composition, Eisler’s other accomplishment with *Das Vorbild* is the presentation of two major figures of German culture—Bach and Goethe—to the audience. This reflects Eisler’s observation knowledge of these figures has been historically unavailable to the proletariat, despite familiarity with them being perquisite to any understanding of high art compositions. Because of Eisler’s alterations to the Bach fugue in the first movement, the listener can easily understand a basic element of the fugue—the subject. Within the second and third movements, he gave the listener access to poetry by Goethe. Although Eisler has altered the texts slightly, the musical settings of both aid in overall comprehension. Through *Das*

*Vorbild*, the listener is able to gain an understanding of works of art, which may previously have been difficult to comprehend or access.

The compositional triptych also imparts an understanding of three musical genres or styles upon the audience, united under the single purpose of remedying musical illiteracy. Eisler's simplification of a fugue presented the audience with a purely instrumental work. The "Arie," is a recitative-like aria that represents the high art vocal genre historically available only to the upper classes. The last movement features a folk song—a genre with which the proletariat would likely be familiar—in the context of a concert hall production. Eisler made it possible for the listener to become familiar with three distinct styles of composition within a single work.

The work is educational for students of composition, as well as established composers, because of its achievement of the previously discussed elements. As Eisler stated, the work was to act as an example of how one may compose in an accessible style.<sup>49</sup> Eisler achieved this goal; a review of the 1959 performance states, although "the easy is hard to produce, Eisler was indeed superlatively successful."<sup>50</sup>

In *Das Vorbild*, Eisler demonstrated a new compositional method that builds upon nearly five-hundred years of German artistic heritage. The work is a mixture of old forms, new forms, and a unifying motif. For the listener, the subsequent effect is an easily

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<sup>49</sup> Hanns Eisler, *Das Vorbild*, Manfred Grabs, ed., back cover.

<sup>50</sup> Hansjürgen Schäfer, "Der Republik gewidmet: Konzert und Kompositionen zum 10. Jahrestag," 3.

understandable work of art music. For the composer, the work is an example of the ways in which music should be composed for a new, socialist, society.

The analysis that I have provided in this chapter is certainly not exhaustive. There is still a significant amount of room for the interpretation of Eisler's compositional techniques within *Das Vorbild* alone, and in relation to his other works. I demonstrated that Eisler composed with accessibility and education in mind, particularly for concert hall works; elements of accessibility remain uninvestigated in his other compositions. Most importantly, this analysis of *Das Vorbild* demonstrates that he sought to use compositions in order to resolve the issue of musical illiteracy. It is now possible to assess his other compositions from the beginning of the GDR in order to determine if they served the purpose of educating the audience.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE SUCCESS OF *DAS VORBILD*

Hanns Eisler's music—his theoretical conception of a new socialist musical culture, all of his artistic works, politics works of art, and explicitly political works—from the end of the 1920s in Germany, to his years in exile, to his time working in DDR, to his death on the 6th of September, 1962, were characterized by his direct compassion for the proletariat, for the fight against fascism, for the construction of a new, antifascist, democratic, and socialist societal order, and the appropriate musical culture.<sup>1</sup>

Hansjürgen Schäfer's words in response to the Eisler-Tage der DDR 1978—a celebration of the eightieth anniversary of Eisler's birth—reflect the commonly held belief that Eisler embodied many of the German Democratic Republic's ideals. Eisler's legacy is acknowledge posthumously in the 1964 literary journal *Sinn und Form*. Here, Alan Bush, Alexander Goehr, Ernst Hermann Meyer, Alan Resnais, Dmitri Shostakovich, Rudolf Wagner-Régeny, and Arnold Zweig discuss Eisler's personal influence upon their compositions and lives.<sup>2</sup> From Schäfer's declaration of Eisler as one who fought for a socialist societal order, to the GDR's use of Eisler's *Auferstanden aus Ruinen* (1949) as the national anthem, to the his impact as acknowledged by important contemporary composers and cultural figures, Eisler's legacy was lauded within the GDR.

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<sup>1</sup> Hansjürgen Schäfer, "Tradition und Heute zum Ganzen gefügt: Ereignisreiche Eisler-Tage der DDR, 1978 in Berlin," *Neue Zeitung* (Berlin, Germany), July 3, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> Wilhelm Girnus, ed. *Sinn und Form: Sonderheft Hanns Eisler* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1964).

*Das Vorbild* is a musical manifestation of the Marxist lens through which Eisler viewed society—it sought to remedy the ill effects of capitalism upon musical culture.<sup>3</sup> The piece was to serve to musically and culturally educate the proletariat, and be an example of ideal composition techniques for a socialist society. The directive nature of *Das Vorbild* places it as an important composition for both Eisler and the GDR in general. However, scholars have yet to document its true influence.<sup>4</sup> Evaluation of *Das Vorbild*'s reception will establish its role in the reconstruction of musical culture as a transitional composition. Relying on concert reviews of *Das Vorbild*, both during and after Eisler's lifetime, and Eisler's commentary on the piece, I establish *Das Vorbild* as composition that was considered prominent in its own time, despite being overlooked by present scholarship. I interpret the descriptions of *Das Vorbild* within the reviews communicate Eisler's effective efforts in the reconstruction of a new, socialist, musical culture.

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<sup>3</sup> For a more in-depth exploration of Eisler's Marxist interpretation of musical culture, see Chapter 2. For an exploration of the manifestations his interpretation within *Das Vorbild*, see Chapter 3.

<sup>4</sup> Currently, only Arnold Pistiak and Gerd Rienäcker (1998) bring scholarly attention to *Das Vorbild*. See: Arnold Pistiak, *Darf ich auch Verse von Goethe verwenden?: Hanns Eislers Goethe Kompositionen* (Berlin: Edition Bodoni, 2013). Gerd Reinäcker, "Vorbilder – Landkarten – Maximen? Über Schwierigkeiten, aufs Neue zu beginnen," *Hanns Eisler: 's müßt dem Himmel Höllenangst werden*, Maren Köster, ed. (Hofheim: Wolke Verlag, 1998), 11-26.

## Reception

The events, at which *Das Vorbild* was performed, in addition to the reviews it received, revealed that it was successful in achieving Eisler's educational goals. *Das Vorbild* originally premiered under the title *Über den Frieden* on both the Berliner Rundfunk [Berlin Broadcasting] and Deutschlandsender [Radio Germany] on March 23, 1952.<sup>5</sup> The piece was performed several times, before and after his death, for various events commemorating Bach and Goethe, as well as Eisler himself. Despite the fact that it was performed multiple times, no work has been done in order to assess the critical reception of *Das Vorbild*.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Eisler only wrote directly about *Das Vorbild* twice: once for program notes and once a letter to Bertolt Brecht.<sup>7</sup> Both mentions of *Das Vorbild* by Eisler indicate that he intended it to aid in the construction of a socialist society—or rather musical culture within a socialist society—and that he intended it to educate the proletarian audience member. Because these Eisler did not provide a post-

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<sup>5</sup> “Aus den Funkprogrammen,” *Neues Deutschland* (Berlin, Germany), March 23, 1952.

<sup>6</sup> The audience reception of *Das Vorbild* would provide an interesting glimpse into the layperson's assessment of the work. Because *Das Vorbild* was performed at several state-sponsored concerts (*Festtage*), the audience's reaction has likely been recorded. This information is available in the Siftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR at the Bundesarchiv in Berlin, Germany. David Tompkins, *Composing the Party Line: Music and Politics in Early Cold War Poland and East Germany* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press 2013), 164.

<sup>7</sup> Letter, Hanns Eisler to Bertolt Brecht, August 13, 1952, HEA 5748, Hanns Eisler Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin. Hanns Eisler, “Bemerkung zum Triptychon “Das Vorbild,” *Musik und Politik: Schriften II 1948-1962* (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1982), 448.

premier commentary, it is necessary to turn to performances in order to determine whether or not he successfully achieved his goals. In this section, I use the function of *Das Vorbild* within its various performances to demonstrate the importance of the piece within the East German art music.

*Das Vorbild* was performed no fewer than seven times within the GDR, which can be seen in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Performance dates and program contents of *Das Vorbild***

Date	Concert Title	Program	Medium
March 23, 1952	Radio Performance	Berliner Rundfunk: 9:45 am, Hanns Eisler, <i>Lied über den Frieden</i> 10:10 am, Unknown, Volkstümliches Solistenkonzert  Deutschlandsender: 10:00 am, Unknown, Musik und Dichtung 10:40 am, Hanns Eisler, <i>Lied über den Frieden</i> 10:45 am, Unknown, Konzert für die Jugend <sup>8</sup>	Radio
October 1952	Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik (Berlin)	Ottmar Gerster, <i>Hüter des Lebens</i> (1951) Hanns Eisler, <i>Triptychon für Alt und kleines Orchestra</i> (1952) Ernst Hermann Meyer, <i>Der Flug der Taube</i> (1952)	Concert

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<sup>8</sup> “Aus den Funkprogrammen,” *Neues Deutschland* (Berlin, Germany), March 23, 1952.

April 18, 1953	Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik (Schwerin)	Hanns Eisler, <i>Triptychon für Alt und kleines Orchestra</i> (1952) Ludwig Diehn, <i>4 Sinfonie</i> (1952) Vaclav Dobias, <i>Friedenskantate</i> (1953)	Concert
October 15, 1959	10. Jahrestag der Republik	Max Butting, <i>Ouvertüre op. 69</i> Ottmar Gerster, <i>A-capelle Chören</i> Hanns Eisler, <i>Das Vorbild</i> Paul Dessau, <i>Hymne auf den Beginn einer neuen Geschichte der Menschheit</i> Fidelio Finke, <i>Glaubensbekenntnis</i> Ernst H. Meyer, <i>Das Tor von Buchenwald</i> Leo Spies, <i>Festzug und Kinderhymne</i> <sup>9</sup>	Concert
January 16, 1969	Berlin Sinfonie Orchester	Henry Purcell, <i>Der Sturm</i> (excerpts) Hanns Eisler, <i>Das Vorbild</i> Paul Dessau, <i>An die Mütter und die Lehrer</i> <sup>10</sup>	Concert
July 7, 1978	Hanns-Eisler-Tage der DDR	Hanns Eisler, <i>Das Vorbild</i> <sup>11</sup>	Lecture/ Concert
March 16, 1982	Messekonzert – Johann Wolfgang von Goethe 150.	Hanns Eisler, <i>Das Vorbild</i> Siegfried Thieles, <i>Gesänge an die Sonne</i> Ludwig van Beethoven, <i>Egmont Ouvertüre</i> Felix Mendelssohn, <i>Arie Nachtigall, Auf dem See</i> Ernst Peppings, <i>Storchengesang</i>	Concert

<sup>9</sup> Hansjürgen Schäfer, “Der Republik gewidmet: Konzerte und Kompositionen zum 10. Jahrestag,” *Berliner Zeitung* (Berlin, Germany), October 13, 1959.

<sup>10</sup> “Neue Musik – meisterliche dargeboten,” *Neue Zeit* (Berlin, Germany), January 16, 1969.

<sup>11</sup> “Leben und Werk von Hanns Eisler gewürdigt: Festveranstaltung zum 80. Geburtstag,” *Berliner Zeitung* (Berlin Germany), July 7, 1978.

		Heinrich Werner, <i>Heidenrösleins</i> Paul Dukas, <i>Der Zauberlehrling</i> Franz Liszt, <i>Faust</i> Sinfonie, mvt. 3 <sup>12</sup>	
November 1982	Bach-Tage der DDR	Works by: J.S. Bach, Oliver Messiaen, Johann Nepomuk David, Max Reger Hanns Eisler, <i>Das Vorbild</i> Renier Dennewitz, “Orgelwerk” <sup>13</sup>	

The multiple performances indicate that it successfully overcame the *Faustus* controversy and was approved as a composition worthy of state-sponsored performance.<sup>14</sup>

Nearly every performance of *Das Vorbild* demonstrates its importance in East German musical culture. The October 1952 performance took place in a concert dedicated to works by contemporary composers.<sup>15</sup> The Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik

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<sup>12</sup> Werner Wolf, “Musikalische Huldigung an den großen Dichter: Messekonzert im Neuen Leipziger Gewandhaus,” *Neues Deutschland* (Berlin, Germany), March 16, 1982.

<sup>13</sup> Exact title is unknown.

<sup>14</sup> *Das Vorbild* was composed and premiered during the *Faustus* controversy. Subsequently, *Das Vorbild* met with some initial controversy, as it was included in several conversations regarding the formalistic elements of the *Faustus* libretto. For more on this, see Daniel Zur Weihen, *Komponieren in der DDR: Institutionen, Organisationen und die erste Kompositengeneration bis 1961: Analysen* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1999), 161-167.

<sup>15</sup> Although Eisler purportedly organized—at least conceptually—the *Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik* (Festival Days of Contemporary Music) as a venue to display the works of his students, an exchange of letters with Fritz Möller suggests otherwise. In a series of letters dating from June 12, 1952 – September 1, 1952, Möller coaxed Eisler into consenting to the performance of his work-in-progress, *Das Vorbild*. Letters, Hanns

[Festival Days of Contemporary Music] was a significant venue for the performance of Eisler's work due to the GDR and Soviet use of music festivals to propagate cultural values. Additionally, the inclusion of *Das Vorbild* in a state-sponsored music festival indicates that Eisler's composition was possibly viewed by its intended audience—the proletariat.<sup>16</sup> *Das Vorbild* was the only composition to be premiered on the first evening of the multi-day concert series alongside pre-existing works by other East German composers, such as Ottmar Gerster and Ernst Hermann Meyer.<sup>17</sup> The reviewer (name unknown) stated that this performance was similar to events in other artistic mediums, in which a central theme was the role of “German classics” and their assistance in the formation of a national identity.<sup>18</sup> The function of the October 1952 performance was duplicated in April of 1953 during a second Festtage zeitgenössischer Musik. This festival took place in the small, northern German city of Schwerin.

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Eisler and Fritz Möller, June 12, 1952 – September 1, 1952, HEA 8076, Hanns Eisler Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.

<sup>16</sup> David Tompkins stated that “Though not a high priority, attempts were made to include workers in the audience.” David Tompkins, “The Music Festival as Pedagogical Experience,” *Composing the Party Line: Music and Politics in Early Cold War Poland and East Germany* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2013), 176.

<sup>17</sup> “Auftakt der Musiktage: Konzert mit Werken zeitgenössischer Komponisten – Kammermusik, Kantaten, Sinfonien,” *Berliner Zeitung* (Berlin, Germany) October 1, 1952.

<sup>18</sup> “Die Stunde der Künstler,” *Berliner Zeitung* (Berlin, Germany), March 19, 1952.

*Das Vorbild* was performed for multiple anniversary celebrations, as well as in a single concert to which no significant event was tied. The version of *Das Vorbild* that was “premiered” in October 1959 featured the final form of the composition.<sup>19</sup> The performance is significant because it was a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the GDR, as well as a music festival.<sup>20</sup> Among the only non-festival performances is the Berlin Symphony Orchestra performance in January in 1969. The next significant performance would be in a celebration of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Eisler’s birth.<sup>21</sup> A newspaper article published three weeks before the beginning of the five-day festival stated that the “GDR remembers Eisler as a founder of the socialistic music culture and as a revolutionary artist who was closely tied with the working class and their party.”<sup>22</sup> The goal of the June 1978 performance of *Das Vorbild* was to familiarize the audience with the well-known and unknown works that demonstrate Eisler’s commitment to his

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<sup>19</sup> Hansjürgen Schäfer, “Der Republik gewidmet: Konzerte und Kompositionen zum 10. Jahrestag,” *Berliner Zeitung* (Berlin, Germany), October 13, 1959.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid..

<sup>21</sup> Martha Sprigge established the use of Eisler’s music to mourn his death as a common practice in her dissertation: Martha Sprigge, “Abilities to Mourn: Musical Commemoration in the German Democratic Republic (1945-1989)” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2013), 193. “Leben und Werk von Hanns Eisler gewürdigt Festveranstaltung zum 80. Geburtstag,” *Neue Zeit* (Berlin, Germany) July 7, 1982.

<sup>22</sup> Unknown, “Konstituierung des Komitees für die Hanns-Eisler-Ehrung: Zahlreiche Veranstaltungen zum 80. Geburtstag des Komponisten,” *Neues Deutschland* (Berlin, Germany), May 12, 1978.

political and social ideologies.<sup>23</sup> Overall, these three performances show that *Das Vorbild* represented not only Eisler's ideas, but also the goals of the state.

Two performances in 1982 mark *Das Vorbild* as significant because they were intended to celebrate both the lives of Bach and Goethe. *Das Vorbild* was chosen (along with several other compositions) as a contemporary representation of Goethe and Bach within these concerts. Although there are no available performance reviews of the concerts, the program demonstrates that despite the criticism Eisler received in the early 1950s, his interpretation of the "classics" was accepted at the state level by 1982.<sup>24</sup>

The fact that the GDR considered *Das Vorbild* to be a successful tool for educating the proletariat is evident not only in its recurrence at various concert hall functions, but also in the reviewers' commentaries. Reviews for *Das Vorbild* emphasize the composition's successes in achieving Eisler's goals of educating the audience in musical subjects and German cultural heritage, being accessible, and serving as an example for other composers. The musical analysis in Chapter 3 posits that through Eisler's compositional style, he was striving to realize new educational ideals—that of educating the masses in the concert hall through musical simplification. The following reviews suggest that Eisler achieved his goals with *Das Vorbild*.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid..

<sup>24</sup> For more information on Eisler's conflict with the Stakuko and Georg Lukác's interpretation of the role of the classics in the creation of East German culture, see: Elaine Kelly, "Writing the Nation," *Composing the Canon in the German Democratic Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 31-63.

Three of seven reviews discussed how aspects of educational content were effectively communicated. An anonymous reviewer simply stated that *Das Vorbild* communicated the wisdom of Goethe well; this sentiment was also communicated in Karl Laux's review.<sup>25</sup>

From Eisler's triptych, *Das Vorbild*, one came to know the words from Goethe. [...] In the prelude, consisting of an "Introduction and Fugue," Eisler demonstrated the mastery of his abilities, which were also put forth in the most beautiful instrumental accompaniment of the "Aria." Goethe's words ("Edel sei der Mensch" and "Symbolum"), with their humanistic qualities, were imparted upon the listener in a manner that was more declamatory than melodic.<sup>26</sup>

Another review of the concert echoed similar sentiments; the unknown reviewer stated that the recitative-like form of "Symbolum" brought the "lifestyle proverbs of the poet [Goethe] to the performance."<sup>27</sup> Additionally, the program of the October 1952 performance states that *Das Vorbild* is a way in which Goethe's commitment to humanism may be given an audible monument.<sup>28</sup> However, it is not just Goethe's

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<sup>25</sup> Unknown, "Konzerte mit Werken zeitgenössischer Komponisten / Kammermusik, Kantaten, Sinfonien," *Berliner Zeitung*, October 1, 1952.

<sup>26</sup> Karl Laux, "Die Neue Thematik der Deutschen Musik," HEA 3828, Hanns Eisler Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Germany.

<sup>27</sup> Unknown, "Konzert mit Werken zeitgenössischer Komponisten," *Berliner Zeitung* (Berlin, Germany) October 1, 1952.

<sup>28</sup> Eberhard Rebling, "Festtage Zeitgenössischer Musik 1952. 27.9-5.10.1952," *1. Jahreskongreß des Verbandes Deutscher Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler in Berlin*, Hanns Eisler Archive at the Academy of the Arts (Berlin): HEA 3339.

important concepts regarding humanism that are communicated; Eisler's use of the Bach fugue is also noted.

The use of *Das Vorbild* within the context of Bach and Goethe festivals indicates that it was valued as a composition that could communicate and represent these two artists. Both the reviews and the general use of *Das Vorbild* suggest that Eisler communicated many of the important characteristics of monumental figures of German culture—an imperative that is identified in Chapter 2.

Even though no reviewer mentions the importance of musical forms, styles, or techniques in particular, the reviews do explain what *Das Vorbild* was felt to have achieved in general terms: aural accessibility and the reconstruction of musical culture.<sup>29</sup> He aids in building a new musical culture with the appropriation of genres, styles, and contents of the musical culture that existed in capitalist society. Schönewolf acknowledged that Eisler successfully used the concert hall musical tradition for socialistic purposes in his statement that “its [*Das Vorbild*'s] combination with the classical tradition is apparent.”<sup>30</sup> Schönewolf also mentioned aural accessibility in his statements regarding the communication of Goethean ideals, stating that “in order to not disturb the heavy thoughts of the poem,” Eisler composed the melodic line in a way that

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<sup>29</sup> Unknown, “Neue Musik – meisterlich dargeboten: BSO-Konzert mit Oistrach und Aufführung der Singakademie,” *Neue Zeit* (Berlin, Germany) January 16, 1969.

<sup>30</sup> Karl Schönewolf, “Über den Frieden: eine neue Komposition Hanns Eislers,” HEA 3819, Hanns Eisler Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.

allowed for the “free rhythms of the words.”<sup>31</sup> Acknowledgement of the accessibility of *Das Vorbild* is also apparent in an article for the January 1969 performance, in which an anonymous reviewer declared it a “classic, clear, triptych.”<sup>32</sup> Hansjürgen Schäfer’s longer review of the October 1959 performance praised Eisler’s achievement of an accessible composition:

Indeed, “the easy is hard to produce,” (Brecht), but the master Eisler was superlatively successful: from the artful polyphony of the string introduction, the “naïve” reconciled melody through the Haydn-esque charm and effortless demurred closing movement. And Goethe’s knowledge of the human condition (“Edel sei der Mensch ...”) resplendent on such an unexaggerated, clear, transparent, musical foundation in such an intensive gloss. The work is a textbook for our young musicians!<sup>33</sup>

Schäfer’s commendation of *Das Vorbild* confirms Eisler’s success in creating a work accessible for the proletariat audience.

Perhaps just as important to Eisler as accessibility was his intent that his composition serve as an example for his students. He was equally successful in rendering *Das Vorbild* as an example as he was in writing an accessible composition. Schäfer’s plaudit “The work is a textbook for our young musicians!” confirms Eisler’s success in

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid..

<sup>32</sup> “Neue Musik – meisterlich dargeboten: BSO-Konzert mit Oistrach und Aufführung der Singakademie,” *Neue Zeit*.

<sup>33</sup> Hansjürgen Schäfer, “Der Republik gewidmet: Konzerte und Kompositionen zum 10. Jahrestag,” *Berliner Zeitung* (Berlin, German) October 13, 1959.

the creation of an exemplary composition.<sup>34</sup> *Das Vorbild* was touted as a model composition for the GDR in advertisements and reviews for concerts. The program for the October 1959 performance uses Eisler's description of the composition: "The cantata—written for my students—seeks to show, how one can create works of high art through simple means."<sup>35</sup> The same quotation appears in the review for the performance.<sup>36</sup> The use of Eisler's description of *Das Vorbild* within programs and reviews, as well as Schäfer's glorification, confirm that Eisler was successful in composing a composition that was an example for students.

### Conclusions

Reviews of Eisler's *Das Vorbild* indicate that the educational goals observed in Chapter 2 and 3 were recognized, but the lasting impact of the composition has yet to be determined. Those reviewing the work either directly or implicitly acknowledged that it imparted various values of German culture upon the audience, was accessible, and that it served as example for future composers. However, the fact that those reviewing *Das Vorbild* commented upon these educational elements is not enough to establish the short- and long-term effects of the composition on East German culture as a whole. Scholars

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid..

<sup>35</sup> "Festkonzert: Zum 10. Jahrestag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," Hanns Eisler Archive at the Academy of the Arts (Berlin, Germany): HEA 3402.

<sup>36</sup> "Neue Werke von Dessau, Eisler, Gerster und Erstaufführungen in zwei Konzerten in der Staatsoper," *Neue Zeit* (Berlin, Germany) October 15, 1959.

have yet to identify Eisler's impact upon musical culture, via compositions such as *Das Vorbild*. Furthermore, the fact that the cultural effects of works like *Das Vorbild* have remained unexplored reflects a larger trend in GDR musical scholarship.

Eisler's desire to construct a new musical culture has been overlooked in favor of the political controversies surrounding his works. Yet, widening the scholarly attention on Eisler enables scholars to focus on issues beyond the political debates surrounding his first decade in the GDR, and also allows us to better understand his musical output.

Toby Thacker notes that periodization of Germany from 1933-1955 has led scholars to focus intensely upon certain events; subsequently, the efforts of East Germans to construct a socialist musical culture as a whole remain underexplored.<sup>37</sup> There has been a recent surge in musical scholarship regarding post-War musical transition into East German socialist society, particularly regarding issues of denazification.<sup>38</sup> However, the efforts of GDR-sympathetic composers, musicians, and officials is a subject that has barely begun to be explored. Within the scholarship on socialist musical culture, issues of

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<sup>37</sup> Toby Thacker, "Music and Politics in Germany 1933-1955: Approaches and Challenges," *History Compass* 5/4 (2007): 1338-1358.

<sup>38</sup> See: David Monod, *Settling Scores: German Music, Denazification, and the Americans, 1943-1953* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005). Frida Reininghaus, "Zur neueren deutschen Bewegungslehre: Die Entnazifizierung der Musikforschung und -Publizistik," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 171 (March 2010): 52-54. Klaus Schröder, *Der SED-Staat: Geschichte und Strukturen der DDR 1949-1990* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2013). Thacker, "Music and Politics in Germany 1933-1955: Approaches and Challenges."

education, in particular, has rarely been discussed.<sup>39</sup> For these reasons, musical-pedagogical efforts—such as those embodied by Eisler’s *Das Vorbild*—are entirely open to study. A complete examination of music’s role in the post-World War II cultural reconstruction is integral to understanding the later successes, and failures, of cultural policy in East Germany.

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<sup>39</sup> Anicia Timberlake, “The Politics and Praxis of Children’s Music Education in the German Democratic Republic, 1949-1989,” PhD Diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2015.

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