

More than anything else ^{in modern} opera is dependent upon the social conditions of the epoch. ^(the world of) Opera is the most expensive of all musical exhibitions, and therefore more sensitive for all kinds of economic fluctuations. In examining the present state of opera, we will find many important clues by looking to the social and economic background of operatic life. There are practically only two countries with a comprehensive and living operatic tradition; they are Italy and Germany. Of course, there are opera-houses in France, in Scandinavia, in Poland, Russia, and so on. But opera playing and producing is an intrinsic part of musical activities only in those two countries. One could find reasons for this fact in some ethnical peculiarities of the German and Italian nations, but it seems to be of more importance, that both countries were divided into a lot of independent and rivaling territories when opera became fashionable. Everyone of these ^{who ruled over small sections of the country} princes and dukes had to have his own opera house, and thus opera became a form of art permeating the whole nation. Later on, when the princes disappeared, the municipalities, city and state governments, took over the opera houses in Germany where there is no private opera house since long time. In Italy the situation developed differently. There the system of local and traveling managers went into being. Whereas the German opera houses ~~keep~~ permanently keep an ensemble which is supposed to be ready for ^{performing} practically every task the Italian manager hires a group of singers for a special task to be performed during a limited period. Opera houses in other countries, as the Grand Opera of Paris, or the National opera houses in the capitals of smaller countries are of less importance for ^{elaboration of a special} the type of ~~an~~ operatic style. They are more or less representative institutions. — Article

Modern opera must be considered from the angle how it got along ^{in handling} ~~with~~ the heritage of Richard Wagner. He coined the style of opera playing directly and indirectly even there where he evoked strong opposition. Generations of singers and conductors have been trained in ~~the~~ performing the demands of his style. The ^{exceptionally} ~~outstandingly~~ suggestive power, the ^{nearly obtrusive} ~~prominent~~ eloquence of his language ~~gave rise to his style~~ explain the extraordinary ~~the~~ influence he had on the operatic world for decades. His overwhelming success

2/ can partly be explained by the fact that the emotional and intellectual content of his work glorifies and magnifies the intellectual and emotional set-up of the middle class which began its slow ascent to power in the second half of the 19th century. The behaviour of Wagner's heroes certainly ~~supports~~ arguments the self-confidence and promotes the self-justification of small business people. The main idea of Wagner's operatic style is illusion. The central concept of what he called "Gesamtkunstwerk" is illusion. The effect which is supposed to be the result of the cooperation of arts in this "universal art work" is the illusion of a complete, autarkic, self-sufficient artistic world. The unity of word, music, stage, color, light and ~~on~~ ^{himself} ~~is intended to become~~ ^{one} that the listener feels transported in a kind of super-world. The artificial character of this world, however, should be forgotten, ^{therefore} the apparatus which produces the spell is concealed ^(by all means). It is very significant, for instance, that Wagner ~~ordered~~ the orchestra to be invisible to the public.

Another important stylistic device for the creation of an illusionary world is the idea that the music never ceases ^(in going on), that all of the words ^(of the libretto) are sung. That means, of course, that one should not become aware that there is another artistic world outside of the Gesamtkunstwerk. Thus the medium which is the most artificial in opera, the music, is imperiously put on duty to perform just the main task of the illusion that there is no artificial arrangement, but a kind of record sublime nature.

Opera developed mainly along this line, during the decades after Wagner's death. Even a composer like Debussy could not destroy the spell, although deliberately bending to other principles. It was only the world war and what followed afterwards which undetermined definitely the idea of illusion both in life and in art. We are no more apt to believe in a complete and equilibrated picture of the outside world. Science taught us the relativity of physical concepts, and ~~the~~ the reality of life convinces us that there is no stability in social and political systems. We are inclined to emphasize contradictions rather than to conceal them. Yet, the process leading to such an insight is long and runs through many various attempts of setting forth new ideas. The first approach to a new conception of opera ~~led~~ ^{led} to a revival of its primitive character of a stage play with rather miraculous means.

The music should be more evident as accompaniment, an element outside of the stage, not an indispensable ingredient of the whole mystic entirety of the Gesamtkunstwerk. For this concept of the sound the artist is not to be aware of how things are made, they are simply created by the artist.

(3) song and dance. The content of the play is no more transformed into a ~~new~~ different and somewhat mysterious medium but presented as it is, an arrangement of musical and scenic elements. In regard to the music, there is a revival of ~~the~~ ^{like those which} purely musical forms ~~which~~ were usual before Wagner, arias, ensembles, finales, and so on. This formal tendency was never broken up entirely in opera, as ~~the~~ the example of Verdi shows, but it was very much overshadowed by Wagner's ~~new~~ concept of the supremacy of the dramatic expression over the formal elements. I want to show you as an example of this tendency some fragments of my opera 'Jonny Quilt and'.

The process of emphasizing the play-like elements of opera is ~~very~~ ^{very} naive in this piece, and the presentation of the idea through these elements ^{is} still in the realm of romanticism, that means there is no more ^{realistic} a world of illusion in the sense of Wagner, but the clear and simple musical forms which I tried to introduce are applied to the dramatic action rather superficially. The terrible fuss which this opera created but also the tremendous success it obtained ~~was~~ were mostly due to the fact that I let an opera singer make use of the telephone on stage and that one of the scenes presents a railroad station. ~~Although~~ Although such elements are really ^{rather} ~~very~~ ^{unimportant} but, they acted in the way of destroying illusions. One did not expect to see people in opera wearing modern clothes and behave themselves like living persons, and thus a shock was sent sort of a shock. I had, however, in mind to set forth some general idea drawn from the aspect of European life of the post-war period. I tried to confront the ^{relative} attitude of an artist with the utility I personified in the figure of the jazz-player Jonny. It is certainly the most important accomplishment of Richard Wagner that he raised opera to the level of an ~~an~~ adequate showplace of philosophical presentation. The desire to present our ideas by means of opera ^{opera} frustrated soon the endeavours of the most important composers of our time.

~~There is~~ A new interest in historic ~~the~~ subjects was the result of this desire. I want to show you some examples from the opera 'Maximilien' of the French composer Jarius Mithrad. It deals with the tragic fate of the Emperor Maximilian of Mexico.

(4) Another much more important attempt in this sense is made in Ditha's monumental work "Christophe Colomb". The book written by Paul Claudel is most interesting in regard to the destruction of illusion. The character of the play is strongly emphasized by ^{progressive} ~~fiction~~ the presentation of an announcer who starts to read the story of Columbus from a book, and of a chorus which represents the posterity invited to consider and to judge the deeds of the hero. The stage itself is divided into several showplaces, and even the person of Columbus is doubled. The real Columbus ~~leaves~~ the historical showplace and looks to his own doings which are acted by a double on a second stage. Some times the action is ~~presented~~ ^{even presented by moving pictures on} a screen. ~~in a~~ Here, the illusion of a self-sufficient operative world is destroyed entirely. Opera is conceived as a deliberately artificial arrangement of heterogeneous elements with the purpose to set forth a great philosophical idea.

F A very similar concept is realized in my last opera "Charles V." The subject is the story of the Hapsburg Emperor Charles who ruled in the 16th century over the greatest part of Europe and the newly discovered American territories. It was my aim to show how his magnificent idea of uniting all Christian nations of the world in a sort of replica of the old Roman empire and of providing them everlasting peace must fail because ~~it~~ it clashed with the ~~main~~ main evils of modern times, nationalism, heresy, and so on. Thus the tragedy of Charles V. was that he came either too late or too soon. Too late, because the spiritual unity of the catholic middle age already fell to pieces, too soon because the world just started on the road ~~leading~~ leading to the ordeal of nationalist struggles. This idea called for a comprehensive presentation of the highly complex story of the emperor, I had to show his feud against the nationalist king Louis I of France, his never ceasing ^{with} conflict with the stubborn nationalism of the German Protestants, the difficulties he encountered in Spain where the gold flowing in from America unfolded its corrupting power and the ingratiation ravaged the country. I had to show the fight of the emperor against narrow-minded popes who mistrusted him by cheap political reasons although ~~there~~ there was no more sincere supporter of the spiritual supremacy of the Holy See ^{than Charles V.} I had to present the merely mecha-

3) mical but nonetheless terrifying menace looming in the
past where the Turks became more and more powerful. How
could I ~~condense~~ all these tremendous historic events within
the brief extension of a normal opera performance? It was
only possible by abolishing completely the idea of illusion. The
~~piece~~ piece starts a few hours before the death of the emperor
who retired to the monastery of San Yuste in Extremadura. He
hears the voice of the Lord who asks him whether he ~~now~~ feels
himself justified for having abdicated, whether he ~~believes~~ believes
he had performed the holy task assigned to him, the unity
and peace of Christendom. The emperor who wishes to clarify
his mind calls for his young confessor and starts to tell
him the main events of his life. The past scenes of the history
are presented on a second plane, but only as illustrations, as
examples of what is discussed in the foreground. The young
monk interrupts the emperor often ^{with} questions, asking for
further explanation, raising objections against the argu-
ments, thus inducing the emperor to develop new facts
and so on. By this proceeding, I gained not only the technical
possibility to present many things in an abridged manner
as it seemed necessary - thus for instance, the meeting of the
Diet of Worms, decisive for the development of the German
problems, is condensed into ^{a short dialogue of} a few essential sentences, with-
out any preparations concerning mood and color; the de-
struction of Rome by the emperor's distressed soldiers, the
climax of his conflict with the Pope, takes hardly more than
4 minutes. On the other hand, this technique transports the
~~obscure~~ ^{obscure} historic facts from their ^{remoteness and indifference} distance of ~~their remoteness and indifference~~
stratify into the ^{orbit} of the attention of the listener. The young monk
who questions the emperor speaks for the listener, he is calling
for such explanations as the listener might claim when wit-
nessing a historic action which he first might consider ~~to~~
be of very little actual interest to him.]

This demonstrative, didactic style was also advanced
by the German writer Bert Brecht in some works he crea-
ted in collaboration with Kurt Weill. There is no doubt that this
style with its implication of short aphoristic scenes and quick
and sudden changes of showplaces is influenced by the tech-
nique of the moving pictures which ^{strongly} ~~developed~~ ^{developed} the public to a
higher pressure of mind ^{than it had before}. The same is
true with respect to the ^{of the public} musical means. The modern develop-
ment of musical language leading to Atomality and

Impulse technique acts in the same way against the illusion of completeness and self-sufficiency ^{of a musical style}. The static system of formal harmonies organized in well defined interdependencies ^{is replaced} by a more polyphonic concept of music where the idea of movement prevails. Therefore the new musical style is especially apt for fitting into the dramatic ideas of modern opera writing.

This most progressive line of modern opera is not yet followed up by many composers. Nevertheless, I believe that the future of opera, at least of its more extensive type, will depend on how far it will be able to ~~deal with~~ ^{deal with} the vital problems of mankind. Only under this condition ~~opera can~~ ^{opera can} justify the high expenses ~~involved~~ ^{involved} in its performances because there will ~~come~~ ^{come} sooner or later the moment where a new kind of public opinion will object ~~preposterous~~ ^{preposterous} spending only for the exhibition of star-singers and costly stage settings. — Article

I think that especially the first idea of the touring chamber opera should have many possibilities in America. It is true that many of the major cities already are subjected to the prejudice that opera ~~is~~ ^{only} can be conceived as a glamorous spectacle and that ~~therefore~~ ^{therefore} any attempt to perform operas ~~without displaying~~ ^{without displaying} the supposed magnificence of the New York Metropolitan Opera House is not worth while. Yet there are in this country numberless smaller communities ~~displaying~~ ^{showing} a most hopeful interest in drama with music, and they should offer a most fertile soil for evolving such an entirely new operatic style as I outlined in my second proposal. It is evident that only in this way even a genuine American type of opera, could be created, ~~which~~ ^{most eagerly sought after by many Americans}

a type which will never be attained by attempts to copy the worn-out type of the old European repertory theater. Of course, this task would require a new ~~new~~ organization framework set up by ~~other~~ ^{other} people than those who are running at present most of the American opera enterprises and who only try to exploit imported tastes and prejudices for the sake of money making. I hope that ~~the presence~~ ^{many} of ~~many~~ ^{many} younger European artists ~~to this~~ ^{to this} (forced or voluntary ^{immigration}) country might be helpful for the establishment of this American opera style when their insight and experience is used in the right way. To be sure, they do not wish anything better than to work for such a most interesting purpose.

AT THE CIVIC CENTER
HOTEL WHITCOMB
San Francisco

MARKET STREET AT EIGHTH

Maximilien P. 101, S. 53

Jenufa P. 23

There is only the folklore opera going a little
bit its own way, that means opera based deli-
berately on folksongs and dances, as for example
'Carmen' or the 'Bartered Bride' of Smetana. By far
the most original ^{works of this sort} were the operas of Moussorgsky, and this
unique amateur found the only congenial conti-
nuation in another half-amateurish composer of
the Slavic world, I mean the Czech Leoš Janáček.
This opera Jenufa, the only one I could obtain in
score, is one of his earlier works, but nonetheless
characteristic for his peculiarities. I show a short
scene of a dialogue where some young peasants
of Moravia exchange their opinions about the future
of the beautiful girl Jenufa who in fact is doomed
to a tragic fate. The folklore material is used
only as a material, not in order to produce
stylized folk-songs as in most of the popular
operas, but to create an original language in
itself. Janáček goes farther as Wagner insofar
as he deduces the short motives building up his
vague forms straight from the cadence of the
Czech language. And the dialogue reminds in
some way the monotonous antiphonies of the

old Slavic liturgy. Thus a really new though
limited musical medium is obtained. The later
works of Janacek show also a rather progressive
attitude in regard to the musical material
and an extraordinary imagination.

But, the idea of illusion is not yet directly
attacked.

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