Anna G. Piotrowska

New and Old Tendencies in Labour Mediation among Early Twentieth-Century U.S. and European Composers: An Outline of Applied Attitudes[1]

Abstract: New and Old Tendencies in Labour Mediation among Early Twentieth-Century U.S. and European Composers: An Outline of Applied Attitudes. This paper presents strategies used by early twentieth-century composers in order to secure an income. In the wake of new economic realities, the Romantic legacy of the musician as creator was confronted by new expectations of his position within society. An analysis of written accounts by composers of various origins (British, German, French, Russian or American), including their artistic preferences and family backgrounds, reveals how they often resorted to jobs associated with musicianship such as conducting or teaching. In other cases, they willingly relied on patronage or actively sought new sources of employment offered by the nascent film industry and assorted foundations. Finally, composers also benefited from organized associations and leagues that campaigned for their professional recognition.

Key Words: composers, 20th century, employment, vacation, film industry, patronage, foundations

Introduction

Strategies undertaken by early twentieth-century composers to secure their income were highly determined by their position within society.[2] Already around 1900, composers confronted a new reality: the definition of a composer inherited from earlier centuries no longer applied. As will be demonstrated by an analysis of their

Anna G. Piotrowska, Institute of Musicology, the Jagiellonian University (Krakow), ul. Westerplatte 10, PL-31-033 Kraków; agpiotrowska@interia.pl

memoirs, diaries and correspondence, those educated as professional musicians and determined to make their living as active composers had to deal with similar career challenges – regardless of their origins (British, German, French, Russian or American), their artistic preferences, or their family backgrounds. Despite different political opinions and philosophical beliefs most early twentieth-century composers dealt on daily basis with the issue of securing proper income for themselves and their families. They were also prone to expressing their concerns and worries openly in the form of published statements. I would argue that in forming these job-related opinions, neither national nor class background played a decisive role. Rather, I believe that these overt comments – although made by artists coming from different walks of life – can be productively compared. This presupposes that earning money is strongly connected with a human need to secure stability, affecting all people alike. I concur here with the American psychologist Abraham H. Maslow that this need finds expression in "the common preference for a job with tenure and protection, the desire for a savings account, and for insurance of various kinds (medical, dental, unemployment, disability, old age)".[3]

To present as truthful as possible a picture of what composers actually thought of new and old tendencies in their labour mediation, the 'O-Ton' (Original/Ton) methodology was applied. Its principles were borrowed from media theories developed in German research of the late 20th century[4] and privileging the non-reproducible character of quotations. Consequently, the extensive usage of citations in this paper aims at substantiating the presented issue by sustaining the unique characteristics of composers' personal style of utterance.

As already signalled, the composers under discussion not only stemmed from Europe and the U.S. but also represented a heterogeneous group, even if white males from (usually, but not always) middle-class families predominated. The broad spectrum of composers in the twentieth century redefined their career patterns in accordance with the available resources. This assessment encompasses artists whose inclination towards serious music was confronted with the twentieth-century prevalence of popular music. The demand for songs and film scores for the masses as well as other new job opportunities encouraged composers to adapt to these circumstances. While maintaining many of the strategies of securing income established in the nineteenth century, they were quick to notice the potential in the rapidly developing realm of popular art.

Indeed, in 1961, the British composer Michael Tippett summarized the changing attitude of composers towards writing 'popular music'. He remarked that "the enjoyment of popular art […] is much more often of the same kind as the enjoyment of the more serious art (though not of the same quality) than snob circles like to think".[5] Tippett did not differentiate composers into those associated with popular

music and those committed to 'serious music'. Rather, his understanding of the role of the composer in the twentieth century embraced musicians engaged in all styles of artistic creation. Hence, he characterized the relationship between the composer and the audience as linking "the producer and the consumer, because that is the relation between artist and public".[6] Another British composer, Ned Rorem, agreed with Tippett stating that "music […] has become a business, every last aspect of all of it".[7]

The nineteenth-century legacy

Significant alterations in the realm of musical life (part and parcel of the entire cultural tradition) took place in the early nineteenth century as a result of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, and the decline of aristocratic fortunes.[8] Musicians were no longer as willingly supported by aristocratic families, whether in the form of patronage or employment. Consequently, instrumentalists were hired as servants to play (but also compose) music in popular Habsburg *Hauskapellen*. In the nineteenth century, the upper and middle classes created new musical rituals highlighting the significance of public concerts.[9] This in turn enhanced the social status of musicians. Yet composers providing the repertoire for such concerts were expected to comply with the tastes of the newly established bourgeoisie, who might also end up promoting their music. The upper classes in particular managed to take on cultural leadership – a privilege previously reserved for the aristocracy. In this atmosphere, the role of a composer became associated with a mission: Ludwig van Beethoven is credited as the archetypal composer and closely linked with an idea of genius that gained increasing distinction in the Romantic era.[10] Composers were viewed as individualistic artists, not dependent on rules, and hailed as creators whose ability to conceive a work of art was associated with divine inspiration. As representatives of an artistic *bohème*, composers were also expected to be alienated from ordinary people, thus sustaining a Romantic image of long-haired intellectuals withdrawn from the turmoil of everyday life.

In the nineteenth century, the place of the composer was associated more with creative talent than with a concrete job. The majority of composers supported themselves from sources others than writing music. The most successful – those who managed to find their way into high society – could afford a life of luxury by giving lessons to a wealthy clientele. *Frédéric* Chopin, for instance, heralded as the national composer of Poland, was lionized in Paris, where he socialized mainly with "the rich bourgeoisie and cosmopolitan […] circles".[11]

The shift in social attitude towards composers in the early twentieth century was principally tied to the perception of their role. The changing social and eco-

nomic situation in Europe and the U.S. forced composers around 1900 to question the Romantic legacy. As a result, they distanced themselves from the old-fashioned definition of a composer, attempting to adapt to new realities. Challenging the nineteenth-century notion of the composer-genius was not only realized in new ways of acquiring financial security. Rather, it also entailed a new understanding of the role of a composer among composers themselves.

Music-related jobs: instrumentalists, conductors and teachers

Redefining the position of the composer did not mean negating all previous forms of achieving financial security. Those strategies – reflecting the nineteenth-century understanding of a composer as an artist uninterested in money-making – meant undertaking music-related jobs, thus being dependent on freelancing. Hence, musicians were well-established as active virtuosos (piano and violin preferably) as well as conductors. Traditionally, composing was only a part of their activity. Quite often they produced music for private use. Being aware of their own limitations, they were able to include original piece into their concert repertoire, thus enabling them to display their virtuosity while simultaneously concealing their shortcomings.

Some composers found it unbearable to be active performers instead of completely devoting themselves to writing music. Coming from a family with musical traditions and expected to become an instrumentalist like his parents and siblings, Alfredo Casella in Italy confessed his unwillingness to become a virtuoso in the early years of the twentieth century: "I was not very enthusiastic about the career as a pianist, feeling in myself an obscure but powerful force which pushed me rather toward creative activity."[12] The internal division between creative and interpretive activity was one of the possible obstacles preventing some aspiring composers from pursuing a career as an instrumentalist. An acute observer of musical life in the early 20th century, the Australian Percy Grainger stated that "the fact that art music has been written down instead of improvised has divided musical creators and executants into quite separate classes: the former autocratic and the latter comparatively slavish".[13] Some musicians clearly differentiated these two roles in their own lives. For instance, Arthur Schnabel as a pianist was poles apart from Schnabel as a composer. While performing, he preferred classical pieces by Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, etc. Yet his own music was characterized by an insistently atonal and progressive style. As Wilhelm Furtwängler concluded, Schnabel "made a distinction between creator and interpreter, even in himself".[14]

Continuing the older tradition composers often served simultaneously as conductors, for it seemed appealing to maintain control over one's own works once they

were finished. Being a conductor might also open up new possibilities. Pierre Boulez explained that conducting was virtually "indispensable", stimulating composers to "reflect on speculation and performance […] [which] are like two mirrors. You have the mirror of speculation and the mirror of performance […] reflect[ing] each other".[15] Indeed it seems that it was the audience itself that encouraged the combining of these two functions. Interested as it was in creators' visions, it expected them to conduct their orchestral works, hoping to experience the composer live. In 1919 Grainger wrote, "music lovers in England are genuinely intrigued by composers, native and foreign, and deem it a privilege to hear the first performance of a new composition under its creator's guidance".[16]

Other forms of earning money were imported by composers into the twentieth century. It suffices to note that private instruction was seen as "a job that has some kind of connection with music, because two activities within one sphere are easier to fit in with one another".[17] Moreover, "many composers have been active as critics and theorists"[18], Roger Sessions recalled. It was therefore possible to combine composing with assessing others' works and performances. Yet the changed situation in the early twentieth century entailed some modifications of the old forms of securing financial stability. Thus teaching music – the occupation always associated with musicianship – continued to be one of the most important sources of income, even during difficult times. (Thus, Henri Dutilleux gave harmony lessons in wartime France.)[19] At the same time, however, it changed considerably inasmuch as composers no longer relied on the private sector but turned instead to institutionalized and formalized types of music pedagogy. With a growing number of universities – especially in the US and western Europe – offering courses in music (rather than restricting music to specialist conservatories), a niche emerged after 1900 for composers seeking employment. On the one hand, this possibility secured their social and financial position. On the other, there was concern it might impede the creative process. Arthur Berger understood the situation very well, complaining that "composers on university faculties now have enervating teaching hours and administrative responsibilities and have to do their composing in [their] spare time".[20] Furthermore, composers feared that their potential as creators was repressed by the rigours of teaching. Elliot Carter thought that "it could be an unhealthy situation for composers to be too much involved with education, especially in a university. For the age level of students, and their preparation is always the same in each new class […] while the composer changes and develops and naturally grows older – and more experienced in the ways of his own generation".[21] And finally the question of the sense of teaching composition in schools was raised, affirming a nineteenth-century understanding of the composer not as a trained professional but as someone selected naturally from the ranks of musicians. Milton Babbitt nonetheless

observed: "the university […] has provided so many contemporary composers with their professional training and general education".[22]

Changes also affected composers engaged in music criticism. They soon realized the new possibilities offered by advances in the media (especially radio). As always, there were objections – some justified, others not – towards aspiring composers becoming critics. Charles Wuorinen in 1962 protested that "unfortunately the rank of critics are formed from failed musicians" who had tried to become composers or performers.[23] Critics were thus often accused by active composers of being mediocre musicians unable to listen to music free of the prejudices from their unsuccessful past.

The role of individual, institutionalized and state patronage

Since the tradition of patronage was well established in European culture, composers were well aware of this possibility of securing stable financial income. Roberto Gerhard remarked that "for centuries the composer worked for the Church, the theatre or the enlightened wealthy patrons".[24] *Krenek* divided patronage as it was practiced in the past into two dominating forms, i.e. provided by church congregations or private patrons. He did not mention the third form of patronage – 'collective patrons' as represented by courts or towns.[25] However, he was also averred that in the early 20th century "patronage, by prosperous individuals or organization, is in a bad state".[26]

Composers nonetheless carried on the tradition of working under patronage. The generosity of the rich was cultivated, although composers were at the same time painfully aware of their economic dependence. Hanns Eisler – a strong believer in Communistic ideology – felt that "the modern composer has meanwhile become a parasite, supported by wealthy patrons out of personal interests".[27] However, it is well-known that Eisler's achievements as well as his writings need to be read in the context of his political views and the "passionate commitment to the creation of an alternative music on the behalf of an excluded, 'disenfranchised' class of working people".[28]

And yet, other composers greeted the possibility of being supported by benefactors, claiming that "there are some good moments in a composer's life. As a matter of fact, some delightful people [the patrons, A.P.] inhabit that world".[29] In fact, some composers especially those from capitalistic countries, considered money spent on them as a kind of financial savings. Henry F.B. Gilbert – an American musician who was once very popular and today almost forgotten – wrote in 1915 that "money, advanced to a composer to free him from the necessity of earning it, should

be regarded in the light of an investment; not as a material investment […] but as a spiritual investment which shall eventually bring rich returns of an artistic or cultural nature".[30]

Aspiring composers frequently turned to wealthy women for financial support. Arthur Honegger said that these "women understand that they have a mission to fulfil. They buy tickets, and bring others with them".[31] Hanns Eisler joked bitterly that if all these women of means suddenly disappeared, composers (and all musicians) "would be found on the bread lines".[32] As he put it, "composers […] must have close relationships with these wealthy women, whose sponsorship is not too wholesome"[33] because "generally speaking, art and music today are the prerogatives of rich ladies".[34] He further observed that they usually represented very affluent social classes: "the bankers, manufacturers, merchants and department store owners".[35] Some composers likewise objected that wealthy women "work out rather bad programs"[36] for concerts. Or they were said to treat composers as servants. Arthur Bliss remembered how "once came across the wrong type of millionaire patroness in America, who having engaged an eminent string quartet to play in her palatial music-room, sent them to the housekeeper's room for supper while the guests regaled themselves elsewhere".[37] Agreeing on the compliant character required of them by society, composers were highly aware of their historical predecessors, leading Eisler to declare in 1935, "the composer's profession still has something of the subservient character of the seventeenth century".[38]

While modernist composers willingly sustained the image of ladies as supportive patrons, at the same time they generally (although interestingly quite rarely) referred to their own wives as beloved women who inspired them, in this way continuing– to a very limited degree – the tradition of the muse.[39] Seldom if ever did they mention their own partners as responsible for arranging commissions, concerts, etc. For example, when Casella remarried (in July 1922, taking as wife his former student Yvonne Müller) he confessed in a rather uninformative manner that his life and "artistic activity took on from that day a fullness and a rhythm I had never known before".[40]

With wit and sarcasm Honegger characterized the financial relation (or rather dependence) between a composer and his wife. "Novels, plays, films often portray the successful composer. He marries the young girl of his love and installs her in a special hotel on the Avenue Bois de Boulogne".[41] Needless to say, in films the wife usually would turn out to be an heiress to a family fortune, thereby solving all of the composer's financial problems.

Alternatively, composers relied on their publishers as sponsors. While asking whether a publisher is a patron or a simple businessman, Honegger asserted that "he can and must be both".[42] Paul Hindemith, by contrast, was more radical in judg-

ing publishers. He decided that the typical one "buys and sells compositions as other dealers handle potatoes. With him nothing counts but the supply and demand of the market; the composer he publishes is a mere provider of cheapest trash".[43]

Only in the twentieth century did state-sponsored patronage become a key factor in job mediation for composers. Such patronage was widely discussed by composers themselves – in both positive and negative terms – thus demonstrating the importance of this type of help. Many composers insisted on the need for governmental support, contending that music must be "fostered and substantially encouraged if it is to take root and grow among people […] react[ing] upon them as a civilizer".[44] The left-wing British composer Benjamin Britten, well-known for his political views (e.g. his advocacy on behalf of pacifism) even claimed that composers should be treated as civil servants and be granted "a secure living and a pension".[45] In fact, in some countries of the post-Second World War 'Communist bloc', composers could count on the generosity of the state, provided they displayed loyalty to the powers-that-be. Carter once wrote that "many European composers still feel the need, today, to write for large orchestras and can get their works played because of state subsidies – the Stalinist symphonies of Dmitri Shostakovitch and quite a few recent Polish and German works".[46]

The dangers of such allegiances were well recognized by some Western composers. As Ernst Krenek expressed it, those in the West feared that "the proposal often put forward by socialist schools of thought – that art should be declared a national necessity and artists supported or aided by the state" might entail defining who was an artist and who deserved support of "a bureaucratic commission and […] the state, the wage-giver". Consequently, a governmental authority would "exercise an influence on the type and tendency of the art it was financing".[47] Although agreeing with this message in principle, many composers still seemed to long for a more formalized system of patronage.

In the twentieth century, corporations and foundations took over the role of patron with much success. Carter commented in 1939, "various composers, besides Kurt Weill, have been approached by commercial organizations that have apparently learned something from using serious sculptors, architects, and mural painters".[48] He added, "it is a very important step for our music to have these commercial, industrial, or public-building orders".[49] Composers praised sponsors such as the Rockefeller Foundation, which "supported modern symphony concerts played in universities, or performances with some of our better conservatory orchestras".[50] In European Communist nations, composers could count on commissions from unions of composers, although it was made quite clear that the straightforward support of the authorities would be directed towards those whose works affirmed the state ideology. Such circumstances – found on both sides of the Iron Curtain – led to a situation in which,

as Hindemith noted, many composers and "mind you, not senile fellows but men in their prime (…) lived on grants for twelve or more years here or in Europe, who, although having no fortune on their own, never faced the reality of earning their living in a normal musician's job".[51] But composers feared that the competitive nature of securing this support, although financially attractive, might undermine artistic quality. Wuorinen proclaimed in 1962 that "most of the time"[52] prizes were the badges of mediocrity, thereby echoing words of Carter that "prize contests do not solve the problem any better since the authority of juries is infrequently respected by musicians".[53] For his part, Honegger cautioned: "there is no common ratio between the reputation of certain musicians and their financial resources".[54]

Another source of commissions for composers in the twentieth century were the "thousands of festivals, symposia, [and] conferences".[55] Commissions coming from festivals, besides their financial support, also guaranteed opportunities for performing and comparing various works. In 1927, Eisler contended that "big music festivals have become downright stock exchanges, where the value of the work is assessed and contracts for the coming season are settled".[56] In time, the role of the festivals grew, more than doubling. Carter in his 1963 *Letter from Europe* observed that "the proliferation of European festivals and conferences focusing on contemporary music is becoming so great that if any of the group of musicians regularly invited were to accept all these invitations, he would be kept busy almost all year simply in travelling from one country to another".[57]

Composing for commissions

Commissions, either from foundations or festivals, were always treated as a source of income by composers. Yet many felt they were being treated as mere suppliers of a particular commodity. Carter grumbled about commissions generated by influential or simply wealthy

> "groups who have shown no previous interest in a composer's work by performing it or arranging for performances of it. Very often, a little research will reveal that the commissioners do not even know what kind of music the composer has written and hence is likely to write – with the curious result that the finished score comes as a disagreeable surprise to conductor and performers."[58]

The composer felt that most "commissions […] are very often given by those entirely concerned with publicity, a kind that feeds on the composer's reputation but is not interested in his actual work".[59] As a result, some composers decided to refuse this

kind of offer on the basis that they "did not feel like doing it"[60] – rather than being *unable* to do it. The composer György Ligeti confirmed this standpoint:

> "I have often been asked how I feel about being commissioned to compose music. Well, it is of course nice to be paid for music to write. So long as money remains a means of transactions, so long as you can buy food, pay for a home and other pleasant things in life with money. A composer is as much in need of it as an upholsterer or assistant bookkeeper. The prospect of earning money by itself is not enough to strike a resonance in the artist, but it may well increase his enthusiasm […] We need no illusion about that."[61]

Still other composers, such as Benjamin Britten or Vagn Holmboe, openly admitted accepting commissions. Moreover, they considered it stimulating and inspiring. Britten was never ashamed to acknowledge that he enjoyed writing for commissions since "almost every piece I have ever written has been composed with a certain occasion in mind, and usually for definite performers".[62] Holmboe as well was quite in favour of commissions stating "a commission can in itself provide stimulation".[63] In his opinion, commissions could be a great help: "[Y]ou can sometimes wait until something has ripened inside you. In this respect the situation is not too different from a composition that is completely open".[64] One time, Holmboe, having been commissioned to write a work for trumpet and organ, "soon had the impression that I myself had chosen the two instruments".[65] Generally sceptical about commissions himself, Carter admitted: "because it is difficult to get multiple performances with U.S. symphony orchestras, since they are interested mainly in *premieres*, composers do not write for this medium unless they are commissioned or have the stimulus of a prize contest".[66] Some composers, like Vincent Persichetti, decided to accept commissions only "when they coincide with the […] ideas forming at the time. My first four symphonies were written during a period when few commissions of any kind were forthcoming".[67] Hindemith, too, commonly considered musical factors when deciding whether to accept a commission.[68] There was, however, also a worry that composing for commissions might hinder artistic creativity. Two factors usually brought up, named by Holmboe, included the constraints connected with duration of the commissioned piece and the stress felt by composers when the deadline was approaching.[69]

Associations of composers and other organizations

Feeling that composing could be defined straightforwardly as a job, composers appreciated the idea of organizing themselves into associations. They realized that

collective efforts would bring better results in terms of popularizing their own music as well as securing their social position – and their *income*. Ned Rorem observed that "today are we returning to craftsmanship, or at least an idea of it, and craftsmanship predating Classicism? Yes, to collective workers, a mass of apprentices without a master. Yet every one of these apprentices has the put-upon ego of a nineteenth-century genius, and a keen sense of twentieth-century gold".[70] Composers aware of the mechanisms behind commissions, performances, and the like also discerned that achieving success as a composer was like winning the lottery.[71] To promote their own work, composers established organizations that popularized contemporary music. Casella recalls how together with Malipiero he presented the idea of a 'Corporation of New Music' to Gabriele d'Annunzio, who then became enthusiastic about it and suggested the Latin motto *Concentus decimae nuntius musae* for the Rome-based organization.[72] In Germany there were also "modern music societies organizing a lot of concerts".[73] They took on various forms, though. For example, the *Schoenberg Society for Private Musical Performances* concentrated on performing compositions without conforming to a concert lifestyle.[74] In London, many composers owed their good fortune to the "delightful and generous Balfour Gardiner concerts of 1912–13".[75] In the U.S., composers wanting to help each other founded "such organizations as the League of Composers, the New Music Editions, the American Music Center, The Eastman Festival of American Music, and the rest".[76] In 1942 Carter praised above all the role of *American League of Composers* for in prior years having "encourag[ed] composers to write theatrical works for communities with modest resources".[77]

Composers realized they needed to arrange their commissions themselves. Yet doing so also required that they accepted, as Hans Werner Henze phrased it, that "a composer in the late-capitalist world is more or less a small industrialist, an entrepreneur, a self-employed producer whose products can't afford to be forgotten".[78] To be able to survive on composing alone without working additional jobs, composers were obliged not only to identify the needs of the market but to comply with them as well. At least three major areas where music was a marketable product were acknowledged as securing an income: working in the film industry, writing popular music, or composing for a niche/target audience such as children.

New possibilities

As early as 1916 Ernst Bloch proclaimed: "Art is becoming an industry". The figure of a composer seemed to resemble increasingly a merchant "forced to conform to the laws and the conditions of […] art-traffickers".[79] Accordingly, listeners were also

being perceived as mere consumers of music. Krenek stated that "the general public is a conglomeration of distrait, unimaginative and overworked consumers".[80] Even music itself was described as a product for consumption. Hindemith remarked that compositions rarely were thought of as creations "with an independent life […]. You have to take it as a manufactured product which must be brought into circulation and which has to reach its customer".[81] Carter similarly observed that "a piece of music is assimilated to a typical item of consumption in the traditional frame of a consumers' market".[82] Krenek went even as far as to subordinate composers to the laws of the market claiming they were solely dependent "on the law of supply and demand" of their compositions.[83] Hindemith offered a straightforward explanation of the situation, comparing it with "simple and brutal system of musical commercialism".[84] Indeed there was a feeling that the process of commercialising musical products was already in full swing by the 1920s. In the early 1930s Roger Sessions noted bitterly that "[t]he past ten years have witnessed the production of a vast quantity of music definitely written for purposes of practical 'consumption'".[85] Interestingly, the term 'consumption' in reference to participating in a musical life began to appear in a considerable number of other writings by other composers.[86]

Since – as Hindemith had it – "music, as we practice it, is, in spite of its trend towards abstraction, a form of communication between the author and the consumer of his music"[87] – it can be stated that composers often acted as a 'one man firm'. As early as 1929, Grainger observed that "in music the composer alone is the producer, the performer being the middle-man and the public the consumer".[88] What preoccupied many of composers was then how to satisfy, even how to please, potential customers with their compositions. Gerhard commented: "the relationship between the producer and the consumer of music – to put it at its most trivial – is something that increasingly engages the attention of composers today".[89] Some composers worried about the demand for their products. Honegger remarked, "The profession of composer of music offers the peculiarity of being the activity and the preoccupation of a man who exerts himself to manufacture a product which no one is eager to consume".[90] Indeed, as some composers noticed, the market's laws were ruthless and the competition high. Krenek even jotted that "according to strict business standards, the manufacture of new symphonies, for instance, can be justified only if the old ones are worn out beyond repair and if new ones can be made faster and cheaper and sold to more people than old ones".[91] How difficult it was for certain composers to abide by these rules and to perceive themselves as producers who need to obey certain regulations may be illustrated by this ironic paragraph by Eric Satie, one of the epigones of Romanticism:

> "This is the precise timetable of my daily acts. I rise at 07.18; inspired: from 10.23 to 11.47. I lunch at 12.11 and leave the table at 12.14. Constitutional ride around my estate: from 13.19 to 14.53. Further inspiration: from 15.12 to 16.07."[92]

Yet in time composers realized that – as Henze expressed it – "a composer in the late-capitalist world is more or less a small industrialist, an entrepreneur, a self-employed producer whose products can't afford to be forgotten".[93]

The awareness of addressing music not only to elites and music experts but to a large, heterogeneous public 'consuming' musical products can be observed in a number of diaries, memoirs, and writings of 20th-century composers. It is especially visible among American musicians who – during the 1930s New Deal era celebrating the ideology of the 'common man' – "started to feel embarrassed at excluding the masses" as a result of writing "music that they found inaccessible or accessible with difficulty".[94] George Gershwin boldly proclaimed, "the composer who writes music for himself and doesn't want it to be heard is generally a bad composer".[95] Indeed, there was a growing understating that "composer, in spite of all, does write for a public"[96] and that eventually "the audience – the large over-all audience […] is the final arbiter of that which survives".[97]

A similar approach was adapted by European composers, either influenced by American experience or, more commonly – especially in Eastern Europe – by political views. In 1932 Eisler wrote, "the modern composer should not cut himself off from the mass movement".[98] Henze, also a politically engaged German composer, conceived of his role as "touch[ing] the sensibility of the masses".[99] Similarly, Honegger maintained that his "inclination and […] effort have always been to write music which would be comprehensible to the great mass of listeners and at the same time sufficiently free of banality to interest genuine music lovers".[100] Tippett went even as far as ridiculing composing only for elites:

> "[I]n our day, when there seems a kind of law that the more seriously a composer applies himself to his art, the less he can have at all, the serious young composer may come to feel he cannot start anywhere; that his public must remain ever non-existent."[101]

He continued that

> "if, then I as a composer want to have a living relation with this big public which goes to concerts and operas, I must consider how to get round, or to mitigate the incidence of, that law which seems to say that the more serious a modern composer is, the less able he is to speak to anything beyond a coterie".[102]

New possibilities, both to address compositions to larger audience and to earn sufficient income, were opened up for composers writing for the movies. Yet they also felt treated like mere suppliers of music, involved in a highly mechanical process often undertaken by five to six people, including an arranger hired by a film company.[103] Hindemith compared working for the film industry with shifts in a factory where composers toiled "in little booths provided with staff paper and piano […] [O]n the assembly-line music is produced".[104] Composing for films was generally regarded as a preparatory phase for 'real' composing. Bliss could therefore write: "I have written several scores for film […] and I am sure the discipline involved is good for a composer's technique. It certainly teaches him the value of the blue pencil, of having to delete whole bars, sew up the passage neatly to an exact timing, and express his thoughts in an aphoristic form. It is salutary to see how often compression improves the music".[105] In 1949, Sessions assured readers that composing "music for movies […] may be considered as 'professional'".[106] But if it was not sensed to be below their dignity as artists, most composers treated it as second choice for a career. Henri Dutilleaux admitted that composing for films was "a somewhat peripheral activity in my career".[107] Alfred Schnittke felt the same way: "When I was writing mainly film music (although I like writing it and much of the work was very interesting) for fifteen years, I naturally still felt it to be my secondary task".[108] And as he explained: "Eventually I began to feel uncomfortable, as though I were divided in half […] [W]hat I was doing in the cinema had no connection with what I was doing in my own compositions".[109] The strong opposition towards writing movie music as a way of selling (out) one's talent was very popular. (It is, in fact, still visible nowadays, as in Wojciech Kilar's division of his works into film and non-film categories.) Ligeti claimed openly: "I refused to write film music […] I was afraid that it would compromise my talent".[110]

Composing popular music was another option for composers determined to earn money on regular basis. In 1933, Sessions was already observing that many "composers busied themselves with the formation of a genuinely popular style, with rendering their music more accessible through a simplification of technique, with applying themselves seriously to the new problems offered by the radio, the cinema and mechanical means of reproduction".[111] Ernst Krenek summarized the general tendency, that "now in music the age has found the art that satisfies all its needs – popular music".[112] The growing popularity of light music increasingly provided opportunities of composing for money. The recognition popular music had gained by the 1950s meant that – as Rorem suggested – "rock [music] is *the* big promotion. And the promotion is dictated by accountants."[113] He went on to add that "[r]ock sells to a gigantic audience".[114] Concurrently, composers found themselves involved in heated debates about the value of popular music, between strong advocates

(e.g. Michael Tippett) and others who were strictly opposed (e.g. Alfred Schnittke, Karlheinz Stockhausen).

Finally, composers were actively searching for niche audiences that had been neglected in the past. They soon realized their music could be addressed exclusively to children. Not only songs and pedagogical pieces (used for training future musicians) but also other genres (especially for theatrical performance) found a place in children's repertoires – as well as being played by adults or watched and admired by youngsters. Radio promotion and school performances served as the primary instrument for transmitting these works. Composers showed respect for those writing pieces for children,[115] realizing that "the musical culture of a nation begins in school".[116] Composing for children was perceived as an investment that educated future listeners.

A considerable number of composers were less fortunate in searching for jobs and securing their daily existence. These had to resign themselves to occupations far away from the world of music. Upon returning from Europe to the U.S., Carter found the country deep in crisis and thus "it was hard to find a job. For a while I worked with my father, and after that I did anything I could find. I even worked in a factory. I didn't give up, though".[117] This type of situation was bitterly regretted by Henze, who affirmed that "every young composer knows the situation: if he has a job he has money but no time to write; if he writes, he has no money".[118] Some composers would have agreed entirely with Charles Ives that "it wasn't possible for a composer to earn a decent livelihood […] [if] he believed that money and music should be separate".[119] When Honegger listed the possible ways a composer might earn money, he added that composers could almost never rely on making a living with music alone: "Seriously, several paths are open to a composer: a professorship, a civil service position or the cinema".[120]

Towards a conclusion

Composers of the early twentieth century sought more formal and stable sources of income to be able to support themselves (and their families) while creating music. Initially some composers, such as Carlos Chavez, still believed that "one has to be free of 'occupations' to be able to occupy oneself with something".[121] Ralph Vaughan Williams feared that "so many artists are conquered by life and its realities. Money-making, marriage, family cars, all the practical things of life are too much for them, and as artists they succumb and the creative impulse shrivels and dies".[122] For the changing reality had let to the habit of taking the "traditional economic standard [of] a large segment of population"[123] and applying it to composing. As a result,

some composers felt that "the few pennies so patronizingly offered the composer for his work amount to payment so meagre as to be totally absurd; no sane person would give his time for such a pittance".[124] In other words, it became clear that "the 'profession of composer' can yield very little in the way of material means".[125] Honegger ridiculed the situation, avowing that "society women, industrialists, bankers, agree that that is a prosaic problem, unworthy of creative artists: a musician, lives by talent, nay, by genius".[126] Aware of the fact that "the composer needs to have a secondary occupation and […] can think himself lucky if it does not develop into his main occupation",[127] composers attempt to draw on the old legacy to support themselves in a more organized, institutionalized way. They never abandoned solutions from previous epochs, such as teaching or relying on patronage. Instead, acknowledging the new situation, they reinvented those old solutions in more systematized forms (universities, associations, unions, etc.). Even in our present day, the words of Britten still hold true, that "finding one's place in society as a composer is not a straightforward job".[128]

Notes

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