

Heinrich Schenker, Walter Dahms, and the Music of the South

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Over eighty years have passed since the publication of Heinrich Schenker's magnum opus *Der freie Satz* (1935). Since that time there has been an extraordinary amount of research about the Viennese music theorist. Schenker's theories of musical structure still exert an immense influence on North American musical scholarship and education and continue to draw commentary from numerous vantage points. Many, for example, have refined and/or expanded Schenker's theoretical ideas, while others have sought to trace the genesis and development of those ideas in his published and unpublished works. Still others have placed Schenker under severe scrutiny, whether for the shortcomings of his musical theories or for the political, cultural, and aesthetic ideology that often accompanied them.

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Schenker's German-nationalist ideals and conservative cultural and musical viewpoints are no secret. They have been subjected to detailed cultural critique, especially following the English translation of *Der freie Satz* in 1979 and of *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik* and *Der Tonwille* in the 1990s and 2000s.¹ The opening essay to issue 1 of *Der Tonwille*, "The Mission of

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¹ Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, trans. Ernst Oster (New York: Longman, 1979); idem, *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, 3 vols., ed. William Drabkin, trans. Ian Bent et al.

German Genius,” is especially virulent; it has received more commentary than perhaps any other essay in the series. In their preface to the English translation of *Der Tonwille*, Ian Bent and William Drabkin aptly note how it “set the agenda for the entire publication, and also for *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*.”² Nicholas Cook calls attention to the quality of “ritual incantation” in the “Mission.”³ He further claims that “there is no need to translate Schenker’s analyses into social or political terms because they are always already about society and politics.”⁴

Suzannah Clark explains that Schenker intended *Der Tonwille* “to give his readership a wake-up call.” “In his view,” she writes, “Germans had become their worst enemies. They were too readily embracing foreign policies, foreign ideals, foreign styles, foreign cultures—and the list of ‘betrayals’ that exasperated Schenker goes on, occupying almost the whole of ‘The Mission of German Genius.’”⁵ Among the many musical examples she cites from *Der Tonwille*, Clark at one point draws on Schenker’s analysis of Felix Mendelssohn’s *Venetianisches Gondellied* in F-sharp minor, op. 30, no. 6, found in issue 10 (1924). As an illustration of Schenker’s intermingling of politics and analysis, Clark explains how a direct chromatic succession of $\sharp 7$ to $\flat 7$ within Schenker’s *Urlinie* of the second half of the song, remarkable in itself for the way it defies Schenker’s later adherence to strict diatony, allowed the theorist to “turn his musical observation to political advantage.”⁶ As Clark argues, Schenker achieved this by alluding to an “artful” arpeggio to $\flat 7$ that represents an “artistic imitation of the naturalistic Italian singing style.” Finally, she suggests that the passage is but one example of Schenker’s desire to reveal Mendelssohn’s “brilliant tonal spirit,” which helps Schenker further support his opening pronouncement: “A German master sings a Venetian gondola song, and look, even Italian nature pales by comparison.”⁷

Today scholars such as Cook and Clark openly critique aspects of Schenker’s ideology while still acknowledging the utility of his musical

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994–97); and idem, *Der Tonwille: Pamphlets in Witness of the Immutable Laws of Music, Offered to a New Generation of Youth*, ed. William Drabkin, trans. Ian Bent et al., vol. 1, issues 1–5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 2, issues 6–10 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). When referring to *Der Tonwille* in the text I use the original issue number and year of Schenker’s publication. In my citations, however, I draw on the volume of the English translation.

² Ian Bent and William Drabkin, preface to Heinrich Schenker, *Der Tonwille*, 1:x.

³ Nicholas Cook, *The Schenker Project: Culture, Race, and Music Theory in Fin-de-siècle Vienna* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 144.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁵ Suzannah Clark, “The Politics of the Urlinie in Schenker’s *Der Tonwille* and *Der freie Satz*,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 132 (2007): 141–64, at 142.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁷ Schenker, “Mendelssohn’s Venetian Gondola Song, Op. 30, No. 6,” quoted in Clark, “The Politics of the Urlinie,” 160.

ideas, but it would have been unheard of for any direct pupil or disciple of Schenker to openly propose such a split decision, lest they fall out of favor with their teacher. As a result, most of Schenker's advocates avoided confrontation with his cultural-political ideologies or ignored them altogether, privately regarding them as at best uninteresting and at worst damaging to the dissemination of his musical ideas. Only following his death in 1935 did his pupils try to sanitize Schenker. Oswald Jonas and Felix Salzer actively suppressed the more questionable aspects of his thought in order to make his theories more palatable in a post-WWII environment—Jonas through his editing of Schenker's publications and Salzer through his own reworkings of Schenker.⁸

There was one notable exception: Walter Dahms. Born in Berlin in 1887, Dahms began work as a music critic, journalist, and biographer around 1910. Over the course of twenty years he wrote hundreds of articles in the German press, including everything from short concert and theater reviews to extended editorials on musicians, cultural affairs, contemporary music, even politics.⁹ He also wrote numerous books, among them composer biographies, fictional novels, and two historical-aesthetic studies that drew as heavily on Schenker's ideas as they did on the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche. After first hearing of the theorist around 1913, Dahms soon became one of the most proficient and productive writers in Schenker's inner circle and, unlike most of Schenker's followers, largely embraced his political, aesthetic, and cultural beliefs, providing the theorist with a strong advocate in the German press.

Nonetheless, Dahms's advocacy was not so clear-cut. The two men met in person only once, on a four-day visit to the small Austrian town of Altenmarkt im Pongau in August 1919. Nevertheless, they maintained a close correspondence over a period of eighteen years, from 1913 to

⁸ This is most readily apparent in the second edition of *Der freie Satz*, ed. Oswald Jonas (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1956) and in Salzer's textbook, *Structural Hearing* (New York: Charles Boni, 1952). As John Rothgeb notes, Jonas left Vienna in 1930 dismayed by Schenker's political viewpoints. John Rothgeb, "Oswald Jonas (1897–1978)," in *Schenker-Traditionen: Eine Wiener Schule der Musiktheorie und ihre internationale Verbreitung*, ed. Martin Eybl and Evelyn Fink-Mennel (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2006), 113–20, at 115–16.

⁹ The newspapers and journals that Dahms contributed to during the 1910s and 1920s included (in alphabetical order): *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*; *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*; *Bühne und Welt*; *Deutsche Kunstschau*; *Dresdner neueste Nachrichten*; *Feuer: Monatsschrift für Kunst und künstlerische Kultur*; *Fränkischer Kurier*; *Halbmonatsschrift für Schulmusikpflege*; *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*; *Der Hammer*; *Das kleine Journal*; *Konservative Monatschrift*; *Magdeburgerische Zeitung*; *Münchener neueste Nachrichten*; *The Musical Quarterly*; *Die Musik*; *Der Musikus Almanac*; *Neue Musik-Zeitung*; *Neue Preußische Kreuz-Zeitung*; *Das Orchester*; *Ostdeutsche Rundschau*; *Schweizerische Musik-Zeitung*; and *Württembergische Zeitung*. While some of these venues saw almost daily contributions from Dahms (notably the *Kreuz-Zeitung*), others contained only a few scattered articles, often republications of articles that had appeared in print elsewhere.

1931.¹⁰ Their correspondence illustrates how one devoted disciple absorbed, interpreted, and proselytized Schenker's ideas as they were developing. It also unveils the largely unknown events in Dahms's own enigmatic, often bewildering life. After serving in the German military on the Eastern front in World War I, Dahms became disillusioned with his homeland and sought refuge in southern Europe. After spending most of the 1920s in Italy and southern France, he eventually remarried, took Honduran citizenship, changed his name to Gualtério Armando, and, in 1935, emigrated to Portugal. He remained there, largely in seclusion, until his death in 1973.¹¹

In light of such extraordinary personal factors, it is all the more striking to note that despite his apparent utter devotion to Schenker's theories, and despite his agreement with Schenker's cultural conservatism, nationalism, and notions of German genius, Dahms exhibited tendencies that went far beyond Schenker's own intellectual (and physical) boundaries. Most notably, Dahms became infatuated with the "Music of the South" and with Mediterranean culture in general. He also proffered a vision of a renewed pan-European "Galant" style of music and professed a love of Italian opera and of Italian vocal technique, particularly bel canto singing. He eventually came to question his own ingrained ideals of German nationalism as well as those of Schenker, even if he could never entirely rid himself of them. Put another way, Dahms embraced the "foreign" at the same time that he was fighting for Schenker. That Schenker and Dahms used many of the same means to achieve very different ends is a symptom of the complexities of interwar politics and culture. This article considers how these two figures interacted with one another over the course of the 1910s and 1920s, and how Dahms ultimately came to reinforce Schenker's *Weltanschauung* while adding his own deeply conflicted interpretive layer to it. The first part explores aspects of Dahms's life as they pertain to his relationship with Schenker.

¹⁰ The entire extant Dahms-Schenker correspondence, 105 items in total, can be found on the website of the *Schenker Documents Online* project (schenkerdocumentsonline.org; henceforth *SDO*). For reasons of space, the German has not been provided for any of the translated material in this article, unless necessary for clarification. A selection of the Dahms-Schenker correspondence has recently been published in *Heinrich Schenker: Selected Correspondence*, ed. Ian Bent et al. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), 326–49. For consistency I will refer to the letters on *SDO* and will use the citation method advised by the website. While Dahms's side of the correspondence is mostly complete, Schenker's letters to Dahms appear to have been lost.

¹¹ Though he published a number of biographies and works of fiction, Dahms-Armando spent most of his later career composing. For a study of Gualtério Armando and his compositions, see René Pérez Torres, "Gualtério Armando's *34 Canciones Hispanoamericanas Para Canto y Piano*: A Comprehensive Edition and an Analytical Study of the Work's Thematic Unity, Chromaticism, and Use of Musical Quotations" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Texas, 2014). Pérez Torres identifies 1931 as the year Dahms changed his name to Armando, just after he moved to Paris and ceased contact with Schenker.

The second part looks at the aesthetic and theoretical aspects of Dahms's work, especially his fusion of Schenker and Nietzsche. The third part synthesizes the biographical with the aesthetic and theoretical through a discussion of Schenker's analysis of Mendelssohn's gondola song in F-sharp minor.

Walter Dahms, persona non grata

Dahms has long remained a forgotten figure; until recently, even descendants of his own family were unaware of his German roots.¹² Unconnected with the rise of the Third Reich, his abrupt change of identity and relocation in the 1930s have their roots in a Germany still years away from the Nazi power grab.¹³ During the 1910s and 1920s, not only did Dahms suffer tremendous personal, psychological, and legal problems, but he also made a name for himself in Germany as an arch-conservative, Prussian nationalist.¹⁴ On numerous occasions he used his position in the German press to rail against the rise of Western social democracy, capitalism, and materialism, particularly for the newspaper *Die Neue Preußische Kreuz-Zeitung*, the voice of the Prussian monarchy.

In the early stages of his career Dahms also maintained a conservative attitude that estranged him from large segments of the music world. He regularly mocked performances of modern music and publicly criticized composers. The review that established his name appeared in *Das kleine Journal* on 26 February 1912 and was titled "Open Letter to Arnold Schoenberg." In it Dahms mocked a Berlin performance of Schoenberg's *Drei Klavierstücke* (op. 11), likening it to a bad joke that Schoenberg had played on the public. Referring to Schoenberg's music with an unutterable "K-Ku-Kunst (Verzeihung!)," Dahms instructed Schoenberg, who was attempting to establish himself in Berlin at the time, to pack his bags and return to Vienna. He concluded: "I will consider it my greatest task [meine höchste Aufgabe] to expose an impostor and humbug [Gaukler und

¹² The first scholar to elucidate Dahms's relationship with Schenker was Hellmut Federhofer in *Heinrich Schenker: Nach Tagebüchern und Briefen in der Oswald Jonas Memorial Collection, University of California, Riverside* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1985), 87–96. I am grateful to Dahms's granddaughter, Cristina Teixeira Coelho, for sharing details of Dahms-Armando's life with me and for granting me access to his papers.

¹³ For an insightful (albeit one-sided and somewhat belittling) perspective on Dahms's disappearance and change of identity, see Nicolas Slonimsky, "Lexicographic secundus post Herculem labor," *Notes* 33 (1977): 763–82, at 777–78. See also idem, "Dahms, Walter," in *The Concise Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 8th ed. (New York: Schirmer Books, 1994), 211.

¹⁴ As documented in the Dahms-Schenker correspondence and summarized on *SDO*, Dahms went through years of legal battles to secure a divorce from his first wife (Agnes Matulke) and obtain a marriage license with his second (Margarete Ohmann). See *SDO* (<http://schenkerdocumentsonline.org/profiles/person/entity-000149.html>); accessed 2 August 2016.

Humbugmacher] such as yourself in all your wretchedness and to open the eyes (and ears) of the public, even though this should not even really be necessary. Because every child must detect in your ‘music’ (sorry! I do not want to offend you with this word) your complete and utter lack of ability.”¹⁵

Dahms’s open letter did not go unnoticed by the Schoenberg circle. Although the composer himself did not answer Dahms’s polemic, his advocates sent a rather patronizing message to Dahms via the art journal *Pan*, telling him essentially to calm down. At the same time, an anonymous writer from Vienna (“Einer für Viele”), also dismayed by Schoenberg’s music, explained to *Das kleine Journal* that Vienna did not want the composer back.¹⁶ Dahms responded to these rejoinders with another scathing article about Schoenberg and his associates.¹⁷ Years later his open letter to Schoenberg came back to haunt him: the journal *Musikblätter des Anbruch* republished it as a joke in a *Festschrift* for Schoenberg’s fiftieth birthday. Dahms sued *Anbruch* for copyright infringement; the journal further mocked him in a follow-up essay (“Walter Dahms is offended”), referring to his “A-A-Artikel (Verzeihung!)” as a pathetic attempt to make it into the history books.¹⁸ Dahms in other words had branded himself an enemy of modern music and tarnished his reputation as a critic just as his career was getting off the ground.

Schoenberg was not the only target of Dahms’s polemics. Using his positions at the *Kreuz-Zeitung* and the theater journal *Bühne und Welt*, Dahms also worked to undermine Richard Strauss. He saw Strauss as a charlatan and his music as the epitome of romantic decadence—he deplored the idea, common at that time, that Strauss somehow pointed the way for the future of German music. (Strauss was, in Dahms’s eyes, as “unGerman” as they came.)¹⁹ For Dahms, Strauss’s case was far worse, for unlike Schoenberg, Strauss had succeeded in winning over large audiences through his use of coloristic orchestral effects, sensationalism, eroticism, and programmatic music at the expense of what Dahms (following Schenker) called

¹⁵ Dahms’s open letter to Schoenberg was also published in the *Neues Wiener Journal*. Walter Dahms, “Vehementer Kritikerangriff gegen Arnold Schönberg,” *Neues Wiener Journal*, 28 February 1912. Dahms was not the only Berlin critic to attack Schoenberg on this occasion. Leopold Schmidt, a more prominent critic, had engaged in an open debate with the composer in the *Berliner Tageblatt*. See Walter B. Bailey, “Composer Versus Critic: The Schoenberg-Schmidt Polemic,” *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 4 (1980): 119–37.

¹⁶ The open letter to Dahms appears in *Pan: Wochenschrift* 16, 7 March 1912 and the anonymous letter from a Viennese commentator in *Das kleine Journal*, 4 March 1912.

¹⁷ Walter Dahms, “Noch einmal Herr Arnold Schönberg,” *Das kleine Journal*, 11 March 1912 (“dritte Beilage”).

¹⁸ Paul Bechert, “Walter Dahms is beleidigt,” *Musikblätter des Anbruch: Monatschrift für moderne Musik* 7 (1925): 451–53.

¹⁹ Walter Dahms, “Musikalische Zeitgeschichte,” *Bühne und Welt* 17, no. 5 (1915): 227–28.

“musical technique.”²⁰ Above all, Dahms viewed Strauss’s degenerate nature as a broader symptom of post-Wagnerian sickness:

Strauss is the typical artist of musical decadence. His art is detached from what is healthy and from the source of nationalism and of the folk. It has become a purely artificial art, conceived solely on the outside, rotten on the inside, and sick from weak ideas. The healthiness of the Great Style [Der große Stil des Gesunden] is absent. Nietzsche called Wagner a great ruin [Verderb] for music: “In music he calculated a means by which to stimulate tired nerves—in this way he made music sick.” We could even more justifiably apply this to Strauss.²¹

Dahms’s comment about the “Great Style” and his reference to the Nietzsche-Wagner affair anticipate two central themes in his later writings. Dahms intended to use them to reinforce his views about the decline of Western music since the eighteenth century, above all the decline of Italian opera and classicism. While such views betrayed a rather unattractive conservatism and historical pessimism, they also led to Dahms’s vision of a renewed musical culture centered on the principles of finite melody and the rebirth of bel canto singing—what Dahms aptly called the “Music of the South.”

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Dahms, Schenker, and the Great War

Unsurprisingly, Dahms became a *bona fide* propagandist for Schenker: he took every opportunity to push Schenker’s ideology (and his own) in the German press. Like Schenker, Dahms saw himself as immersed in a cultural struggle for the restoration of German genius to its place as the epitome of high, aristocratic musical culture. He took it upon himself to write promotional reviews of all of Schenker’s publications from the 1910s and 1920s, and he made frequent reference to Schenker in his other writings—he even penned an article in honor of Schenker’s fiftieth birthday and one dedicated to Schenker’s “personality,” despite knowing him almost exclusively through written correspondence.²²

From the very beginning of their epistolary acquaintance Dahms expressed nothing but the strongest allegiance to Schenker. Having already reviewed Schenker’s edition of J.S. Bach’s *Chromatic Fantasy and*

²⁰ See Heinrich Schenker, *Counterpoint*, 2 vols., trans. John Rothgeb and Jürgen Thym (New York: Schirmer Books, 1987), 1:xxii.

²¹ Walter Dahms, “Richard Strauss,” *Bühne und Welt* 16, nos. 21/22 (1914): 382–85, at 383.

²² See Walter Dahms, “Heinrich Schenker zu seinem 50. Geburtstag an 19. Juni 1918,” *Konservative Monatsschrift*, June 1918, 647–49; idem, “Heinrich Schenkers Persönlichkeit,” *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, 3 August 1923, 511–12.

Fugue and his *Erläuterungsausgabe* to Beethoven's Piano Sonata op. 109 in the *Kreuz-Zeitung* in 1913, Dahms intended to move to Vienna to take private lessons with Schenker.²³ But these plans soon came to a halt because of the onset of the war. During the conflict Dahms was sent to the Eastern front twice by the German army: he worked first as a "Pioneer" (presumably a manual laborer) in the Masurian swamps of eastern Prussia, and later as a librarian in the city of Vilnius.

In the early stages of the war Dahms, like many others, thought that Germany would achieve a swift victory. To help the war effort, he wrote two articles for the *Kreuz-Zeitung*, encouraging people to take up arms against the Entente. Titled "Idealism" and "Truth," these articles called on the German people to defend Germany against what he saw as the materialist takeover of the West.²⁴ And in *Bühne und Welt*, Dahms berated the Deutsches Opernhaus in Charlottenburg for allowing the performance of the French opera *Fra Diavolo* by Daniel Auber. The opera house threatened to take legal action if Dahms did not publicly apologize. In response, *Bühne und Welt* allowed Dahms to deliver a sermon to the German people: "National dignity is something that at least in wartime must be sustained. One considers above all that the case of *Fra Diavolo* at the German opera house is just a particularly glaring and arrant sign of the *general denationalization* of our German stage."²⁵ None of Schenker's other followers, and not even Schenker himself, played such an active role in wartime propaganda.

Shortly after Dahms's arrival at the front in early 1915, he wrote a letter expressing his gratitude to Schenker for his support. He also applauded Schenker's praise for the "genius" of German General Paul von Hindenburg: "You are correct about the wonderful 'voice-leading' of Hindenburg. Even here we find the eternal laws of the beautiful and practical in agreement with one another. In Berlin I had the opportunity to hear Hindenburg's brother, who said that the great general is really an artist by nature in the most elevated sense."²⁶ Dahms also voiced his

²³ Dahms's review of the *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* is titled "Musikalische Bearbeitungen" (*Kreuz-Zeitung*, 15 July 1913); and his review of the *Erläuterungsausgabe* to op. 109 is titled "Beethoven redivivus" (*Kreuz-Zeitung*, 31 December 1913). Other reviews of Schenker's publications from 1913 to 1926 include two more Beethoven *Erläuterungsausgaben*, opp. 110 and 111 (*Kreuz-Zeitung*, April 1915 and June 1916); *Der Tonwille* (*Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, 1921; *Feuer*, April 1921; *Neue Musik-Zeitung*, 1922); and *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, vols. 1 and 2 (*Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, December 1926 and February 1928). Dahms's article for the *Ostdeutsche Rundschau* on "Musikalische Biologie" (16 October 1913) can also be read as a belated review of Schenker's 1906 *Harmonielehre*.

²⁴ Walter Dahms, "Idealismus," *Neue Preußische Kreuz-Zeitung*, 14 August 1914 (re-published as "Der Sieg des Idealismus," *Der Hammer*, December 1914) and idem, "Wahrheit," *Neue Preußische Kreuz-Zeitung*, 3 January 1915.

²⁵ Walter Dahms, "Nationale Würde und das Deutsche Opernhaus, Charlottenburg," *Bühne und Welt* 17, no. 2 (1915): 76–80, at 77.

²⁶ Dahms, letter to Schenker dated 25 April 1915, *SDO*, OJ 10/1, [8].

support for Schenker's politics in his review of Schenker's *Erläuterungsausgabe* to Beethoven's op. 111 for the *Kreuz-Zeitung*: "Passionately Schenker also brings up the World War in the course of his extensive discussions, above all to denounce the heinous and criminal petty-mindedness of England."²⁷ In such cases Dahms's and Schenker's views became virtually indistinguishable from one another.

But as the war slowly turned into one of attrition, Dahms's views changed and he suffered both physical and mental collapse, in large part owing to the harshness he and his fellow soldiers suffered at the hands of the officer classes. He began to think that the true enemy of Germany came not so much from Russia, England, or France, but from within Germany itself. From a military hospital in Berlin he wrote to Schenker:

When I look at the activity in political and cultural life, how it is anxious to continue carrying on shamelessly with the same old demented scam, and how the stupid German people again will fall for and have already fallen for such rotten tricks—then I am happy to remain committed to the difficult struggle for the future, which is more difficult to fight for than against the foulness of England. . . . [I]n the younger generation, to which I belong, there are (God forbid) unfortunately only a few of us who do not hold allegiance to fashionable grandeur and crap art.²⁸

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In reading Dahms's letters from the front, one is struck by the way Schenker provided solace and comfort for the Berlin critic; above all, his "pure" musical thoughts on harmony and counterpoint offered Dahms an escape from the harshness of wartime reality. At the same time, Dahms immersed himself in the writings of Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, and, even more, Nietzsche as a way of recovering from the brutal treatment he had received from his superiors during the war and from his dejection at Germany's loss. Thus, as he became disenchanted with the politics and the war machine created by the German Republic, Dahms took up the cause of fighting solely for the notion of German musical genius.

The war cast a long shadow over Dahms's life, coloring almost everything he wrote in the years that followed, including his correspondence with Schenker. Near the end of the war Dahms fled Berlin and made his way to Bavaria. Since traveling to Vienna to study with Schenker was impossible, Dahms decided to study with another theorist, Otto Vrieslander, himself a former pupil of Schenker. Alongside practical lessons in strict counterpoint, Dahms and Vrieslander undertook a close study of Schenker's *Harmonielehre* (1906) and the first volume of his *Kontrapunkt*

²⁷ Walter Dahms, "Neue Musikkritik," *Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung*, 14 June 1916, Ernst Oster Collection of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, OC 2/49.

²⁸ Dahms, letter to Schenker dated 1 November 1915, *SDO*, OJ 10/1, [13].

(1910).²⁹ It was during this time that Dahms also began to notice a stronger connection between Schenker's and Nietzsche's ideas. Writing to Schenker about his first encounter with Vrieslander, Dahms exclaimed: "There I could finally speak with someone who is up to your standards. If my 'Will to Schenker' (that is, Will to the truth) could ever become stronger, then it does so when I am with Vrieslander."³⁰ He later told Schenker: "I escape from German misery into the pure world of counterpoint, and bury myself for hours in Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. At the same time, I see with horror just how awfully accurate these two illustrious souls were in their judgment of mankind."³¹

Schenker and Dahms met one another for the first and only time in summer 1919. From 27 to 30 August, Dahms visited Schenker in the town of Altenmarkt im Pongau, where Schenker was spending his summer holiday. Increasingly dissatisfied with his lessons from Vrieslander, Dahms intended to use the visit to consult Schenker about a further course of study, but the two could not avoid discussing the war. Dahms saw Germany as the culprit and expressed joy in the defeat of German militarism, but Schenker did not see Germany as guilty of any misdeeds. On the very first evening they launched into a heated debate, which Schenker recorded in his diary:

In the evening, [Schenker's pupil Hans] Weisse delivers a few sayings by Goethe, but Dahms and I slip into a political controversy; namely, he, while affected by the war, is deeply resentful of those formerly in power and the army generals, apostrophizing Hindenburg as a sergent, Ludendorff as a felon—no doubt that this betrays a certain limitation that does not exactly lead one to hope for the best for his artistic development. But I avoid pushing it to the limit, given that [my wife] Lie-Liechen is also watching to see that we do not slip too deeply into differences of opinion nor dare to advance too far into politics; but I always indicate strongly enough how differently I think about all of these issues.³²

Following the visit to Altenmarkt, Dahms and Schenker continued to debate the war in their correspondence. Schenker accused Dahms of

²⁹ Dahms's counterpoint studies with Vrieslander are in the private possession of Dahms's heirs. For a discussion of Vrieslander's work in connection with Schenker's *Harmonielehre*, see Robert Wason, "From *Harmonielehre* to *Harmony*: Schenker's Theory of Harmony and Its Americanization," in *Essays from the Fourth International Schenker Symposium*, ed. Allen Cadwallader, vol. 1 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2008), 214–58; Florian Vogt, "Otto Vrieslanders Kommentar zu Heinrich Schenkers *Harmonielehre*; Ein Beitrag zur frühen Schenker-Rezeption," *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie* 3 (2006): 183–207 (<http://www.gmth.de/zeitschrift/artikel/228.aspx>).

³⁰ Dahms, letter to Schenker dated 29 July 1918, *SDO*, OJ 10/1, [34].

³¹ Dahms, letter to Schenker dated 11 June 1919, *SDO*, OJ 10/1, [37].

³² Schenker, diary entry dated 27 August 1919, *SDO*.

psychosis—he felt Dahms was betraying his German “brothers” and explained that Nietzsche was “better replaced by other leaders.”³³ The debate reached a boiling point when Dahms, in a moment of intense anger, lashed out at Schenker for failing to admit Germany’s own atrocities in the war. His letter dated 26 September 1919 is a rare example of a devoted Schenker disciple standing up to the master. Over the course of six crammed pages of text Dahms lambasted the corruptness of the German officer class and mocked their cultural vacuousness: “[t]hese wretched people, who never even heard a single Beethoven symphony.” He fulminated against the treatment of the rank-and-file: “standing to attention in excrement-covered embankments, while the officer riff-raff and their whores walked the footpaths”; and he poured scorn on Schenker’s accusations of psychosis: “[y]ou want to call this hatred toward Germany a psychosis. Whom do I have to thank for such a thing? Not the Entente powers, but only Wilhelm II and his ‘brothers.’ And we are a million in number. The misdeeds that have been done to us are so boundless that the earth would have to burst asunder for a pardon to be granted.”³⁴

Finally, by way of historical demonstration, and surely in an effort to strike a chord with Schenker, Dahms raised the case of Mendelssohn, writing: “What a difference in treatment the master experienced from every single Englishman, in contrast to the scandalous nastiness, know-it-allness, and true Prussian vileness and deceitfulness that he as a mature man of the world had to endure from the riff-raff in Berlin.” Schenker expressed his annoyance at Dahms’s letter in a short diary entry from 2 October 1919. What disturbed him most was Dahms’s invocation of a German musical master: “[Dahms] even tries to win me over with a reference to Mendelssohn, who found greater recognition in England than in Berlin, and in fact felt drawn more to Englishmen.”³⁵

Dahms’s and Schenker’s strongly divergent opinions about the war did not dampen their relationship—they continued to correspond for the next eleven years or so. Nor did their disagreements diminish their efforts to promote the idea of German genius, Mendelssohn included. Yet their conflicts marked a divergence in the two men’s ideologies, evident in Dahms’s subsequent writings about Schenker in ways large and small. As Schenker doubled down on his ultra-nationalistic position, Dahms began to question his own German nationalism and to seek

³³ Schenker, diary entry dated 16 September 1919, *SDO*.

³⁴ All from Dahms, letter to Schenker dated 26 September 1919, *SDO*, OJ 10/1, [45].

³⁵ Schenker, diary entry dated 2 October 1919, *SDO*. It is worth noting that at this time Dahms was preparing a biography of Mendelssohn that he eventually sent to Schenker. See Dahms, letter to Schenker dated 19 August 1920, *SDO*, OJ 10/1 [56]. See also Walter Dahms, *Mendelssohn* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1919), 151.

a pan-European basis for greatness in music. He also continued to commit himself to the superiority of Schenker's musical geniuses—a difficult balancing act that would assume many forms over the next decade. The correspondence between Dahms and Schenker after the war coincided with some of the most imaginative and provocative musical writings of the interwar period—Schenker's *Tonwille* and *Meisterwerk* pamphlets, on the one hand, and Dahms's *Die Offenbarung der Musik* and *Musik des Südens*, on the other.

Schenker's Pamphlets, Dahms's (Re)views

Schenker and Dahms continued to exchange ideas even after Dahms left for Italy in 1921, and each man began to publish his thoughts on genius, the war, and modern musical culture. Schenker started a series of "Pamphlets in Witness of the Immutable Laws of Music, offered to a New Generation of Youth," namely *Der Tonwille*. Published in ten issues between 1921 and 1924, *Der Tonwille* has received commentary as much for its penetrating analytical insights as for its bigotry and downright hatred of all things non-German.³⁶ The opening essay to issue 1, "The Mission of German Genius," already discussed in this article's introduction, is a case in point. In it Schenker launched his assault against the Entente and individuals in the social, political, and cultural spheres who he felt undermined Germany and Austria during the war. He also lambasted composers and other artists whose work had damaged the status of German genius in society. Quite easily the most controversial piece he ever published, the "Mission" set the tone for Schenker's writings for the next three years.³⁷

As he plotted the dissemination of his ideas, Schenker saw Dahms as a tremendous resource. He dubbed him a "valiant fighter for German musical genius." Not only did Schenker arrange for complimentary copies of *Der Tonwille* to be sent to Dahms (as he did for other devotees), but he also drew Dahms's attention to specific sections, in part with the aim of guiding Dahms's forthcoming reviews. It is clear from his correspondence and diaries that Schenker cared, above all, about Dahms's thoughts on the "Miscellanea" (*Vermischtes*)—those sections in which Schenker unleashed his full polemical forces. And just as we can presume that many of the

³⁶ Joseph Lubben, "Schenker the Progressive: Analytic Practice in *Der Tonwille*," *Music Theory Spectrum* 15 (1993): 59–75.

³⁷ For an interpretation that connects Schenker's essay to the broader movement of cultural conservatism in Vienna in the 1920s, see Andrea Reiter, "'Von der Sendung des deutschen Genies': The music theorist Heinrich Schenker (1868–1935) and cultural conservatism," in *Resounding Concerns*, ed. Rüdiger Görner (Munich: Iudicium Verlag, 2003), 135–59; and Ian Bent, "Heinrich Schenker and the Mission of German Genius," *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 26 (1991): 3–34.

passages cited or mentioned in Dahms's reviews were a result of their correspondence (although Schenker's letters are no longer extant, in his diary entries he did in fact point to passages), so too can one trace passages of the Miscellanea in later volumes back to the correspondence and to Dahms's reviews.

Consider a review Dahms wrote of the first issue, published as "The Mission of Genius" in the journal *Feuer: Monatschrift für Kunst und künstlerische Kultur* and as "The Power of Genius" in the *Neue Musik-Zeitung*.³⁸ It is instructive to see how a specific passage from Schenker's text was appropriated by Dahms and subsequently found its way in still another form back into a later issue of *Der Tonwille*. In a passage near the end of Schenker's "Mission" essay, Schenker commands Germans to "not just overlook [the] lies and slander [of Western nations], products of their inferior nature and lack of cultivation, but [to] once and for all state the truth, calmly, looking them straight in the eye, holding a mirror up to them so that they can see themselves as they really are, not as they would prefer to see themselves."³⁹ In his review, Dahms stresses the "truth" of genius in the face of the lies of modern society, but then hands the metaphorical mirror of the Germans to Schenker:

What counts for one type of art counts for the others. And so it is a fortunate circumstance, one we cannot value enough, when in one art a man emerges, a fighter and a prophet for his art, who pronounces unequivocally once again the will to genius, who holds up a mirror to [his] time, but who also shows an unending comfort that for humankind arises from the awareness of genius and from this alone. . . . Dr. Heinrich Schenker is this man for music.⁴⁰

Schenker, who had requested a copy of this review, responded in kind to the mirror metaphor, writing one year later in the Miscellanea to issue 5:

Gifted by the grace of our greatest ones, I hold up a mirror to musical art in a way that no one has been able to do before—neither the philosophers of antiquity, the Middle Ages, or the modern era, nor the musicians, music historians, or aestheticians, nor all of them combined. I am the first to demonstrate music's own laws, that which constitutes its own life. . . . Following our masters, I have, as it were, for the first time opened the aural dimension to the word and to communication, thereby enriching human existence with a new dimension.⁴¹

³⁸ Walter Dahms, "Von der Sendung des Genies," *Feuer: Monatschrift für Kunst und künstlerische Kultur* 3, no. 7 (1922): 79–80; and idem, "Die Macht des Genies," *Neue Musik-Zeitung* 43 (1922): 52–53.

³⁹ Schenker, *Der Tonwille*, 1:19.

⁴⁰ Dahms, "Von der Sendung des Genies," 80.

⁴¹ Schenker, *Der Tonwille*, 1:222.

Noticeably absent from both the titles and the text to Dahms's review is the word "German," which is certainly no coincidence. Although Dahms praised Schenker's musical-cultural polemic (above all through his call to "the will to genius, the belief in genius, and the veneration for genius"),⁴² he distanced himself from Schenker's strictly political views. In his third review of *Der Tonwille*, written for the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, Dahms further criticized Schenker's "Mission" essay. He questions, for instance, Schenker's repeated reference to figures like Hindenburg and Ludendorff, no doubt in Dahms's eyes a spillover from his letter of 26 September 1919. "What," he asks rhetorically, "does Ludendorff have to do with Beethoven's symphonies?"⁴³ He then advises those interested in music to skip the "Mission" essay and start directly at "The Uralinie: A Preliminary Remark." Dahms remained deeply conflicted: he molded his review around Schenker's most enraged polemic and drew on Schenker's own metaphor of a mirror, and only then questioned its political content. He remained committed to Schenker's musical genius yet hesitant to acknowledge its "Germanness." Residue of Dahms's 1919 letter is evident in both Schenker's "Mission" essay and Dahms's reviews. Dahms was clearly captivated by Schenker's "Mission," but he was at pains both to praise Schenker's call to genius while softening its "Germanness" and thoroughly rejecting its accompanying politics.

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Further tension between Dahms's and Schenker's political views appears in a letter Dahms wrote to Schenker shortly after receiving issue 3:

I devoured [it] immediately after receiving it. Everything, every word is to be underlined. Even in the "Miscellanea" there is not a single ambiguous point. Either/or! A third one does not exist. But here much misunderstanding will begin. Perhaps, dear Master, you can declare in your clear, convincing voice at the next opportunity once again in no uncertain terms and in detail, that "democratic" is not a political but rather a cultural concept. . . . You thereby knock from the hand of opponents not a dangerous but an unpleasant and debilitating weapon.⁴⁴

To these comments Schenker remarked in his diary: "From Dahms: approves of the 'Miscellanea' and finally understands that I mean the fight against democracy less in a political than in an artistic sense."⁴⁵ From this exchange it appears there was a misunderstanding: while Dahms wanted Schenker to make this distinction clearer in future issues,

⁴² Dahms, "Die Macht des Genies," 53.

⁴³ Walter Dahms, "Heinrich Schenker's 'Tonwille,'" *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* 48 (1921): 949.

⁴⁴ Dahms, letter to Schenker dated 9 February 1923, *SDO*, OJ 10/1, [74].

⁴⁵ Schenker, diary entry dated 12 February 1923, *SDO*.

hoping no doubt to tone down its political implications, Schenker took Dahms's comment as a sign that he "finally" got the point. Yet it is doubly ironic that Dahms, far more politically active than Schenker in the press (for instance, through his work as a political correspondent from Italy for the *Kreuz-Zeitung*), would ask his *Meister* to abstain from political excursions. Schenker nonetheless took note of Dahms's advice—in later issues he made further efforts to distinguish his polemic from conventional politics. As he put it at the end of the Miscellanea to issue 5, "I do not do politics. I am simply clearly conscious—as few Germans are—of the cultural war, which is a non-political, holy war."⁴⁶ In this way, Dahms and Schenker could continue to rest their musical ideas on similar cultural, intellectual, and even spiritual foundations.

But while such passages may whet our appetite for finding more parallels, fusions, and collisions between Schenker's and Dahms's thoughts, much of the relevant evidence remains indirect. Nonetheless, there is some direct testimony that shows the Dahms-Schenker correspondence lurking behind the pages of the Miscellanea. This is found in the only surviving letter draft from Schenker to Dahms, an unmarked document buried in the Ernst Oster Collection at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Dated 29 November 1922, this letter shows how greatly the idea of musical genius figured in Schenker and Dahms's exchange of ideas. It also makes an explicit link between Dahms and *Der Tonwille*, as Schenker makes a note to himself to put the letter into the *Tonwille* folder "for safekeeping."⁴⁷ Signing the letter "On behalf of genius," Schenker lambasts modern musicians, German intellectuals, and publishing houses for selling out to the West. He calls for a revision not only of the Versailles Treaty (in his letter, Schenker crosses out the word "Vertrag" and then writes "Diktat") but also of world history, that is, "to free the world from the lies, the commoners, and the greed of the West."⁴⁸ The genius, he exclaimed, will not die at the hands of mankind, but rather mankind will die at the hands of genius. This letter, it turns out, became the basis for the first section of the Miscellanea to issue 4.⁴⁹ Schenker even records in his diary some months after its publication: "To Dahms: [ask] whether the

⁴⁶ Schenker, *Der Tonwille*, vol. 1, issue 5, 225. See also Schenker's comments to the preface to *Counterpoint 2*, cited in Cook, *The Schenker Project*, 163–64. Lee Rothfarb has recently reminded us that, despite Schenker's desire to distance himself from politics, such a desire must be read as concealing a thoroughly political commitment. See his "Halm and Schenker: Culture, Politics, Aesthetics," in *Festschrift Hellmut Federhofer zum 100. Geburtstag*, ed. Axel Beer (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 2011), 401–17, at 416.

⁴⁷ Though it was most likely initially filed in the *Tonwille* folder, this letter ended up in another folder labeled "Fortschritt" (Progress).

⁴⁸ Schenker, letter to Dahms dated 29 November 1922, Ernst Oster Collection, OC 12/91–92, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

⁴⁹ See Schenker, *Der Tonwille*, 1:162.

fourth issue [is] in his hands; promise to return to a point for which up until now only he showed understanding, I mean the inadequacy *vis-à-vis* the genius, which is the root of all evil."⁵⁰

As Schenker moved into the next phase of his work, *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik* (published in three volumes between 1925 and 1930), Dahms continued to play a role behind the scenes.⁵¹ Not only did he write two lengthy reviews for the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, but he also offered propaganda material to Schenker for inclusion in the pamphlet. In March 1924 Dahms wrote to Schenker:

In the absence of a good joke book I am reading in the meantime the American music journal *Musical Courier*. Today I happened to find in it the following splendid aphorism by the editor-in-chief (from February 7, 1924):

"The United States has 110,000,000 inhabitants and not one Mozart or Beethoven or Wagner in all the number. But then, Germany or Austria never had a John D. Rockefeller."

Will you offer commentary on it??⁵²

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Schenker remarked: "This appears in the Musical Courier for February 7, 1924, Do I really need to translate or interpret it?"⁵³ Both the quotation and Schenker's comment found their way into the Miscellanea of volume 1 of *Das Meisterwerk*. In that same volume Schenker even took the occasion to promote Dahms's recent biography of J.S. Bach, in effect publicly signaling his affinity to the critic.⁵⁴ (It was not a frequent practice of Schenker to promote the work of his followers in his publications.) Dahms felt honored by Schenker's mention, but he nonetheless wanted to stay out of the picture. He writes: "Sincere thanks for having mentioned me. You mustn't, for God's sake, say anything more. One would become suspicious of you, for the horde always thinks that one is doing 'good business' by praising another person; because how would one come to it otherwise?"⁵⁵ Thus, whether it was a direct quotation, a general cultural or political sentiment, or an aesthetic viewpoint, Schenker seems to have taken his cue from Dahms on a number of

⁵⁰ Schenker, diary entry dated 19 August 1923, *SDO*.

⁵¹ Schenker, diary entry dated 6 November 1927. Dahms reviewed volumes 1 and 2 for the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*: Walter Dahms, "Schenkers 'Meisterwerk in der Musik,'" *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* 53 (1926): 1084–85; and idem, "Das Meisterwerk in der Musik," *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* 55 (1928): 115–17.

⁵² Dahms, letter to Schenker dated 5 March 1924, *SDO*, OJ 10/1, [84].

⁵³ Ibid. See also Schenker, *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, 1:121. My translation of Schenker's comment follows that of Ian Bent, the translator, with slight alterations.

⁵⁴ See Schenker, *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, 1:119–20.

⁵⁵ Dahms, letter to Schenker dated 26 June 1926, *SDO*, OJ 10/1, [94].

occasions; he also used Dahms as a sounding board for ideas he would later include in his publications, especially cultural-political ones. Perhaps other embryonic passages of *Der Tonwille* and *Das Meisterwerk* lie in Schenker's lost portion of the correspondence, seeing how highly Schenker valued Dahms's opinion of the *Miscellanea*.

Friedrich Nietzsche and the Will to Schenker

But how did Schenker's ideas find their way into Dahms's writings? How did Dahms transform those ideas to fit his own worldview? And how did Schenker respond to them? These questions bring us to the two books Dahms wrote to give broader scope to his Schenker-inspired thoughts on Western musical culture: *Die Offenbarung der Musik: eine Apotheose Friedrich Nietzsches* (The Revelation of Music: An Apotheosis of Friedrich Nietzsche), published in 1922; and *Musik des Südens* (Music of the South), published in 1923. It was largely through his engagement with Nietzsche's work that Dahms built the aesthetic foundation for his critique of musical romanticism and, by extension, of musical modernism, and it was Schenker's theories of musical synthesis that supported those aesthetic positions, at least as Dahms understood and interpreted them.

Nietzsche's ideas saturate Dahms's writings. One could even say that Nietzsche had a much greater intellectual impact on Dahms than Schenker did—after all, rather than study with Schenker in Vienna, Dahms decided to follow in Nietzsche's footsteps to Italy. Even in his correspondence with Schenker, Dahms frequently adopted Nietzsche's tone and point of view. Not only did Dahms embrace Nietzsche's philosophical and aesthetic position, but he also shared Nietzsche's disdain for modern German culture and his infatuation with the South. In large part, in the 1920s Dahms sought to rediscover in Italy what Nietzsche had discovered some forty years earlier: "the Music of the South."

Yet unlike Nietzsche, Dahms expressed disillusionment with Italy, and especially Rome, for in his view it had degenerated into the same kind of cosmopolitanism as Berlin. Dahms confided these thoughts not only to Schenker but also to Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, sister to the philosopher and head of the Nietzsche archive in Weimar. Despite his disillusionment with Rome, Dahms remained convinced that the Music of the South still existed and that it held the key to rescuing the future of music. Like Nietzsche, Dahms believed above all in the South's convalescent powers, be it through its climate, its landscape, its air, or the spirit of its people. In Italy Dahms hoped to cleanse his soul of the intoxicating depths of German romanticism and of modernism, and (in his words) to "breathe," "dance," and "sing" new hope and life into his

musical spirit. This deeply personal application of Nietzsche's ideas formed the basis of Dahms's desire to bring the pureness and innocence of the South into contact with Schenker's theories of musical masterworks.

Die Offenbarung der Musik *and Nietzsche's Aesthetic of the "Grand Style"*

In trying to understand how Dahms wedded his thoughts on Nietzsche and Schenker it is necessary to explore the underlying themes cutting across his *Die Offenbarung* and *Musik des Südens*. In the broadest terms, *Die Offenbarung* offered an account of Nietzsche's post-Wagnerian musical aesthetic, which rejected romanticism, dramatic music, and Wagner's *unendliche Melodie* in favor of a renewed commitment to simplicity, lightness, and above all finite and lawful melody—what Walter Frisch has termed "Nietzsche's neo-classical turn."⁵⁶ In assembling Nietzsche's thoughts on music as found in published and unpublished documents (notably his correspondence with Heinrich Köselitz, pen name Peter Gast), Dahms presented Nietzsche's aesthetic with the aim of ushering in a new style of music that was divorced from the excesses of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

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It is common knowledge that after their break in the late 1870s Nietzsche was keen on undoing Wagner's influence. In large part, he did so through a somewhat ironically conservative aesthetic and positivist turn of thought. Nietzsche's hearing of Bizet's *Carmen* for the first time in Turin in 1881, a crucial turning point in the philosopher's outlook, became the basis for his famous critique *The Case of Wagner* of 1888, by which point he had attested to having heard "Bizet's masterpiece" for the twentieth time.⁵⁷ Nietzsche, who suffered from chronic illness and constant mental anguish, had looked to the South to rid himself of the life-negating *décadence* of German Romanticism. For Dahms, Nietzsche was the only one to fully grasp the dangers of romanticism and its consequences for the future of music. Having been enthralled by romantic ideals himself in his earlier years (first through Schumann's music, then later through his association with Wagner), Nietzsche was perfectly situated to spell out the pitfalls of romantic longing and self-annihilation.

Accompanying this infatuation with the South and an outright (if ultimately futile) rejection of romanticism is Nietzsche's notion of the "Grand Style" (*großer Stil*). As Frederick Love argued in 1977, the concept

⁵⁶ Walter Frisch, *German Modernism: Music and the Arts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 18–28.

⁵⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 157.

of the Grand Style forms a central part of Nietzsche's later aesthetic, even if Nietzsche never gave it precise definition. Love explains how the Grand Style relies on a dialectic between, on the one hand, "economy" and "severity," and on the other hand, "richness" and "complexity." In a sense, the Grand Style encompassed Nietzsche's renewed love for plainness in art and provided him with a mechanism for rejecting artistic superfluousness, whether in baroque or romantic art. Love concludes that "the concept 'großer Stil' became the single cypher for virtually all the unattained and even unattainable goals that Nietzsche had ever conceived for music, a term implicitly antithetical to the 'decadent' condition of contemporary [i.e., romantic] musical art."⁵⁸ Although Nietzsche never admitted any particular musical example to the idealized category of the Grand Style (in fact, the only concrete example he ever gave is the architectural design of the Florentine Palazzo Pitti), his emphasis on economy, severity, and simplicity, along with his reliance on musical logic and eternal laws, formed the core of his thoughts on music in the final years of his active life as a philosopher.

As Dahms saw it, Nietzsche's notion of the Grand Style was a way to reject romanticism and justify a rebirth of classicism, or what he more broadly referred to as the "Galant Style." Using the latter term with its connotations of "light texture, periodic phrasing with frequent cadences, liberally ornamented melody, simple harmony, and free treatment of dissonance" (with the exception of the last),⁵⁹ Dahms extended the term's scope to delineate a grander development of Western art music from Monteverdi to Mozart, from the dark ages to a pan-European style of music combining Italian, French, and German elements: "Italy and France had endowed 'gallant' music with spirit and form; to Germany was left the infusion of the emotional current. Only the combination of all elements could raise the 'gallant' style to the status of a great event, a grand style."⁶⁰

Dahms criticized romanticism for its lack of technique and abandonment of galant principles, filling the void with dream worlds, non-musical programs, and "magic gardens" (a not-too-subtle reference to *Parsifal*). He described romanticism as a "revolt against the strictness of a grand logic, of a grand style, of a rigid teaching and of a difficult life," and he deplored modern music as the most abominable extension of the

⁵⁸ Frederick R. Love, "Nietzsche's Quest for a New Aesthetic of Music: 'Die Allergrösste Symphonie,' 'Grosser Stil,' 'Musik des Südens,'" *Nietzsche Studien* 6 (1977): 154–94. A more recent publication pertaining to Nietzsche's thoughts on music and the South is Martine Prange, *Nietzsche, Wagner, Europe* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013).

⁵⁹ Eugene K. Wolf, "Galant Style," in *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th edition, ed. Don Michael Randel (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 341.

⁶⁰ Walter Dahms, "The 'Gallant' Style of Music," *The Musical Quarterly* 11 (1925): 356–72, at 362.

romantic idea, one utterly devoid of musical content.⁶¹ Unlike recent authors such as Love, Dahms interpreted Nietzsche's Grand Style as a direct argument for a return to the aesthetic ideals found in the music of such composers as Handel, Mozart, Rossini, Haydn, Chopin, Scarlatti, Purcell, Couperin, and Mendelssohn. In large part, *Die Offenbarung* aimed to retrace Nietzsche's steps on his journey from Mozart to Wagner and back. The only thing Nietzsche lacked was a technical understanding of the compositional attributes that could inform his aesthetic sensibilities.⁶²

While presenting Nietzsche's revelations about the Grand Style, Dahms also sought to uncover Schenker's own revelations about music. In the opening two chapters of *Die Offenbarung* ("Overture" and "Stages of Knowledge"), he positioned Schenker and Nietzsche as dual prophets, one grasping the technical inner workings of musical masterpieces and the other portraying the underlying aesthetic experience of those masterpieces. Dahms alerted Schenker to this prophetic image in a chapter-by-chapter synopsis that he sent to the theorist in a letter dated 29 December 1920. His synopsis of chapter one reads: "Relationship of philosophers to music from Socrates to Nietzsche. Final stage: Heinrich Schenker."⁶³ At one point Dahms even fashioned Schenker as a modern-day Zarathustra. Commenting on a portrait Schenker had sent to Dahms, the latter wrote: "I read into it a legend: 'There was once a man who, like the priest in the desert, proclaimed to mankind a divine message. But they did not hear him. And he lived on a high mountain, in final solitude next to the eternal ice, and he observed everything down below with deep melancholy.'"⁶⁴ For Dahms, Schenker represented the final stage of knowledge of musical thought—he fulfilled Nietzsche's vision.

Buttressing Dahms's ideas in *Die Offenbarung* are Schenker's early theories of *Stufe* (scale-step), *Stimmführung* (voice-leading), and especially *Auskomponierung* (composing-out), theories expressed predominantly in the *Harmonielehre* and *Kontrapunkt*.⁶⁵ It is worth recalling that these were the very works Dahms had been studying with Vrieslander as he was drafting *Die Offenbarung*: they function as Dahms's principal

⁶¹ Walter Dahms, *Die Offenbarung der Musik: Eine Apotheose Friedrich Nietzsches* (Munich: Musarion Verlag, 1922), 118.

⁶² One of the few ways in which Dahms deviates from Nietzsche's later thought is in his strong belief in the cult of genius, something Nietzsche firmly rejected. See Frisch, *German Modernism*, 18–19.

⁶³ Dahms, letter to Schenker dated 29 December 1920, *SDO*, OJ 10/1, [60].

⁶⁴ Dahms, letter to Schenker dated 1 December 1925, *SDO*, OJ 10/1, [91].

⁶⁵ Schenker's preferred word for "composing-out" in *Harmonielehre* and *Kontrapunkt* is "Auskomponieren," but I will use Schenker's more familiar neologism "Auskomponierung" as found in his writings from the 1920s onwards.

theoretical reference point. The following passage is typical of Dahms's use of Schenker's terms to fit his narrative:

The technique of the composing-out of ideas is gone (the power of synthesis). The empty sonorities of today are claims that are proven through nothing. The music of modern empty sonorities begins in the Romantic period, it makes further progress after Wagner, and it becomes the predominant principle for twentieth-century musicians and degenerates into the cretinism of "atonal music." Paralysis has thus occurred.⁶⁶

Beyond the core technical conceits of his early writings lay Schenker's broader metaphors of organicism, biology, and synthesis, all of which Dahms further used to position his own ideas. Dahms drew on these metaphors and the musical concepts associated with them: the principle of repetition, the abbreviation of nature, and the association of ideas—all of which come from the *Harmonielehre*.⁶⁷ Such thoughts take center stage in *Die Offenbarung*:

With Schenker's teaching of the biology of music the fog clears. The motive is recognized as the association of ideas in music. Through the principle of repetition it propagates itself, it achieves and generates life—life that we are now able to observe and recognize in its most mysterious impulses and utterances. Schenker, a man of consummate professionalism, the creative and inspired thinker, establishes a medium between analysis and synthesis.⁶⁸

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Nietzsche inspired Dahms to promote an aesthetic based on the Grand Style; Schenker offered a musical theory that eschewed dry formalism and revealed the biological urges of tones through the agency of musical genius. Dahms's aim was to fuse the insights of these two thinkers.

Musik des Südens and the North-South Dichotomy

If *Die Offenbarung der Musik* followed a consistent train of thought in articulating the problems of romanticism and modern music and in proposing a Nietzschean-Schenkerian solution to these problems, then *Musik des Südens* presented many of the same ideas in a more radically aestheticized form. It added another layer to Dahms's solution to the

⁶⁶ Dahms, *Die Offenbarung der Musik*, 179.

⁶⁷ Further contextualization of these notions can be found in Leslie Blasius, *Schenker's Argument and the Claims of Music Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Robert Snarrenberg, *Schenker's Interpretive Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁶⁸ Dahms, *Die Offenbarung der Musik*, 26. Dahms had already expressed many of these ideas in his article "Musikalische Biologie," *Ostdeutsche Rundschau*, 16 October 1913.

problem of modern music. Dahms's outspoken animosity toward modern musical culture and his aristocratism and belief in the cult of genius formed the centerpieces of *Musik des Südens*. Whereas *Die Offenbarung* showed Dahms's deep affinity for Nietzsche's work, *Musik des Südens* represented Dahms's attempt to become more like Nietzsche. This effort is evident in his convictions and his style of writing—ironic, aphoristic, and highly personal. *Musik des Südens* is thus in many ways a poetic elaboration of the more prosaic thoughts of *Die Offenbarung*.

Musik des Südens takes as its starting point a dualistic view of the world, one divided between the "Music of the North" and the "Music of the South." For Dahms there is virtually no aspect of musical thought that does not hinge on this North-South dichotomy. Musicians of the North, eternally preoccupied with a continuous longing and an insatiable thirst for the ineffable, probe the depths of their souls in search of metaphysical sublimity and deep harmonic connections. Musicians of the South, by contrast, content themselves with reality and have no need for such eternal longing or striving. They revel in the simplicity and immediacy of life, in the beautiful landscape, in the warm climate, and in the inspired spontaneity of a melody.

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Dahms viewed the North and the South in a symbiotic relationship. The South, the more innocent and purer of the two worlds, did not need a larger metaphysical or religious idea or the depths of harmony. Hence it could always remain somewhat oblivious to the North, even if that resulted in a degree of artistic and spiritual superficiality. The North, however, depended on the South, lest it fall victim to ruinous spiritual depth, endless metaphysical speculation, and boundless harmonies cut off from the controlling forces of well-formed melodies. Because of this very dependency, musicians of the North were capable of achieving a synthesis of musical material. Dahms made the following case:

The South does not necessarily search for the North. Its life is rich enough with sun; it is not a symbol of life, but rather life itself. And so it has the deep satisfaction of ownership and the happiness of daily fulfillment. But because of this the South will always have its definite boundaries. There is no drive for the distant or the unknown. Italian music has never transcended certain heights; it is complete enjoyment of the moment, while the North, striving beyond the closed circle of existence, longs for, fights for, and develops a metaphysical abundance.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Walter Dahms, *Musik des Südens* (Stuttgart and Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1923), 51–52.

He goes on a little later to write:

Everything enabled the South to take on a leading role in the development of art music. It offers a form of expression, sensuous beauty, aesthetic appeal, noble structure, and a vivid sense of form. But the North offered the idea, synthesis.⁷⁰

And he concludes that

in the history of music it has always been the destiny and the task of the great Northern musicians to achieve the immense culmination of the synthesis between the Northern and the Southern musical spirit.⁷¹

The Germanic musical genius of the eighteenth century stands at the forefront of Dahms's mind—above all Mozart, whom Dahms deems the ideal musician of the South and who achieved a sublimation (*Vergeistigung*) of the North-South synthesis.⁷² In Dahms's words: "Where all Northern accents dissolve in a sea of sensuous sound and where the Southern voice of jubilation gets lost in the deeply colored harmonies of Northern longing, there is a pinnacle of beauty in our Western music, there stands the master of its synthesis: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart."⁷³ This sublimated genius even transcends Dahms's description of the galant mentioned earlier, as it turns his tripartite and pan-European explanation of music into a strictly German-Italian affair.⁷⁴ As Dahms explains in *Musik des Südens*: "A new synthesis of German and Italian music—that is the solution to the question of a Dionysian music. Not from Italy alone, but rather only from the coalescing of the German and the Italian, of the Northern and the Southern spirit, can the great revolution and rejuvenation of music arise."⁷⁵

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Fusing Nietzsche and Schenker: Melody, Vocality, and Bel Canto

Although *Die Offenbarung* and *Musik des Südens* present slightly different content and distinguish themselves in tone, style, and vision, there are

⁷⁰ Ibid., 68.

⁷¹ Ibid., 70.

⁷² A purely empirical investigation of the North-South dichotomy is clearly not Dahms's aim. Thus, for Dahms, musicians like Chopin, Haydn, Schubert, and Beethoven, who never set foot in Italy, could still achieve a synthesis of the North and South in their works.

⁷³ Dahms, *Musik des Südens*, 88.

⁷⁴ Dahms's article on the galant style appeared two years after *Musik des Südens*. Dahms, "The 'Gallant' Style of Music," 362.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 258–59. Just as Nietzsche believed the composer Heinrich Köselitz could rejuvenate music, Dahms championed his contemporary Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari (1876–1948), a German-Italian composer who for Dahms embodied a renewed sense of "Music of the South." Walter Dahms, "Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari, zu seinem 50. Geburtstag," *Die Musik* 18, no. 4 (1926): 258–63.

a number of key issues that link them and that simultaneously bring Dahms's aesthetic and historical concerns in contact with more technical issues of musical construction. One of these, already mentioned above but now to be explained in more detail, is Nietzsche's desire for establishing laws of finite melody, which he saw as the antidote to Wagner's infinite (or unending) melody.⁷⁶ Nietzsche's thoughts on melody appear across his writings. In the *Gay Science*, for instance, he explains:

Finally, we might ask whether the contempt for melody that is now spreading more and more and the atrophy of the melodic sense in Germany should be understood as democratic bad manners and an aftereffect of the [1848] Revolution. For melody delights so openly in lawfulness and has such an antipathy for everything that is still becoming, still unformed and arbitrary, that it sounds like an echo of the *old* order in Europe and a seduction to go back to that.⁷⁷

Moreover, in Nietzsche's *The Will to Power* we read that "the decay of melody is the same as the decay of the 'idea,' of dialectic, of freedom of the most spiritual activity. . . . 'Dramatic music' nonsense! It is simply bad music—'Feeling,' 'passion' as surrogates when one no longer knows how to achieve an exalted spirituality and the happiness that attends it."⁷⁸

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Like Nietzsche, Dahms placed a premium on melodic construction. In *Die Offenbarung*, for instance, he writes that "melody is the meaning of music, it is music's means, its purpose, and its goal, it is above all everything that fulfills and clarifies the concept of music."⁷⁹ And in *Musik des Südens*, he argues that "[m]elody is the sign of a good musician; it proves that the musician as a person is complete and ready to beget a new life. We must once again measure with this criterion in order to free ourselves of the agonizing tyranny of bad musicians who have slandered and ostracized melody because they are not in possession of it."⁸⁰ On occasion Dahms even allowed himself to indulge in a more Nietzschean form of expression about melody:

Let us not think so much! Let us sing! Let us dance! Let us dream! If the new melodies do not fall on us and do not fly to us, where should we then search? The person who loves the South, who feels the desire for

⁷⁶ The verbal construction "finite melody" to describe Nietzsche's idea is my own; one could render it in German as "geschlossene-" or "geordnete Melodie," which stresses the cohesiveness of melodic structure better than a word like "endlich."

⁷⁷ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 159–60.

⁷⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 440.

⁷⁹ Dahms, *Die Offenbarung der Musik*, 182.

⁸⁰ Dahms, *Musik des Südens*, 285–86.

the South, that person has melody, has life and future. Therefore: let us remain Southern, in spirit and in truth, and harken to the flutes of Dionysus!⁸¹

For both Nietzsche and Dahms, melody was the key to unlocking the Music of the South.

Using the principle of finite melody, Dahms sought to form a further link to Schenker's notions of *Stufe* and *Auskomponierung*. In *Die Offenbarung* he explains:

A precondition for the establishment of a new and profound music is the creation of general technical foundations in the sense of [musical] technique from which the masterworks have arisen. This technique is absolutely necessary if musicians wish to get away from the dilettantish playing with motives and arrive again at cohesive melodic structures, if they [wish] to fill out form once again with real content, if they wish not only to set empty chords one after another but rather compose out harmonic *Stufen*.⁸²

He later writes that “faced with the necessity to return to a plain, clear, and healthy emotion without empty phrase[s], without cosmetics or distortion, the musician must grasp the clear, well-defined form as well as the well-proportioned melody and the logical composing-out of *Stufen* as a means of expression.”⁸³ In this way, Schenker's ideas about musical technique allowed Dahms to formalize Nietzsche's purely aesthetic attempt to express the lawfulness of melody.

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Beyond fusing Nietzsche and Schenker using their respective ideas about melody and musical technique, Dahms further proposed a theory of vocality and bel canto singing that could stand alongside Schenker's ideas about strict and free counterpoint expounded in *Kontrapunkt*. So crucial was this connection for Dahms that he even intended to write a book on the subject. He explained this in a letter to Schenker:

Beginning with vocal principles, [I] describe the anchoring of vocalization in composition and vice versa, to give the representation of the actual “art of bel canto” as one of counterpoint in composition corresponding to its parallel manifestation in song: bel canto as an experimental stage to actual art song. . . . It should, therefore, if somehow possible, become a complete and, as I hope, a new picture, new above all not insofar as a “singer” or a “vocal pedagogue” is concerned, but

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 440.

⁸² Dahms, *Die Offenbarung der Musik*, 252–53. These comments resonate strongly with Schenker's opening comments from his 1895 essay “Der Geist der musikalischen Technik.” See Cook, *The Schenker Project*, 319 ff.

⁸³ Dahms, *Die Offenbarung der Musik*, 258.

rather as a disciple of Heinrich Schenker, who grapples with things from another point of view, namely the musical one.⁸⁴

Though this book never came to fruition, Dahms managed to express many of his thoughts about vocality and bel canto in *Die Offenbarung* and especially in *Musik des Südens*, where he wrote a chapter titled “The Vocal Principle.”

Like Schenker’s chord of nature, the vocal principle acts for Dahms as a type of musical *a priori*. It rests on two basic traits: 1) the sensuality of pure sonority (i.e., the physical effect of a single tone); and 2) the spiritual-artistic expression of tones (that is, the transformation of tones into emotions and vice-versa). Dahms explains the principle as follows:

We have to think [about the vocal principle] as a comprehensive spiritual power, which, as the soulfulness of every sung tone, determines both its sensual and its spiritual effect. As an emotional driving force the vocal principle is the synthesis of these two effects, which truly weld together so closely that the most calculated analysis is hardly capable of pulling them apart. Perhaps one can also say: the vocal principle is the impulse of everything sung toward the effect of its natural properties.⁸⁵

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For Dahms the essence of vocality lies in the synthesis of the embodied tone and its soulful expression. But we experience this synthesis only through melody: “The vocal principle triumphs in melody; with melody the vocal principle stands or falls. Melody is the complete expression of the vocal; it alone reveals that mystical unity of sensual beauty and soulful expression that is the deepest mystery of music and that we sense as the actual essence of the vocal principle.”⁸⁶

The role of the vocal principle takes on another dimension when Dahms discusses its manifestation in the art of bel canto. A term that has undergone a bewildering array of definitions and interpretations, bel canto today usually refers to a manner of singing associated primarily with the works of Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti. According to the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, it is “a manner of singing that emphasizes beauty of sound, with an even tone throughout the full range of the voice; fine legato phrasing dependent on a mastery of breath control; agility in florid passages; and an apparent ease in attaining high notes.”⁸⁷ In Dahms’s time, however, the term’s meaning was much less stable. It could apply

⁸⁴ Dahms, letter to Schenker dated 9 February 1923, *SDO*, OJ 10/1, [74].

⁸⁵ Dahms, *Musik des Südens*, 308.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 310.

⁸⁷ N.a., “Bel canto,” in *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th edition, ed. Don Michael Randal (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 93–94.

equally to a technique of singing or the compositional attributes of a piece that gave rise to that particular style of singing, not only in nineteenth-century practices but also in music as far back as the mid-seventeenth century. And for Dahms it was not limited to the Italian masters of opera: he stressed the use of *bel canto* principles in Handel, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Schubert, and Chopin, and tied those principles back to his Nietzschean aesthetic of melody and to the Music of the South. Most importantly, *bel canto* melody represented for Dahms the ideal realization of the vocal principle and functioned as a prototype for artistic song.

As he suggested in the above-mentioned letter to Schenker, Dahms saw an intimate connection between the principle of vocality embodied in the practice of *bel canto* and Schenker's thinking about the prolongation of strict counterpoint in free composition. Dahms first expressed this idea at the end of *Die Offenbarung*:

Vocal composing means melodic composing. Singing is an education for the appreciation of melody. But much more: in vocal music the worth of musical composition reveals itself with splendid clarity. The only composition that rings [true] is one that is "pure" according to the rules of strict counterpoint and is capable of being traced back to the first species of two-voice counterpoint.⁸⁸

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In his chapter on "The Vocal Principle" in *Musik des Südens*, Dahms more closely compares transformations of the contrapuntal realm with those of the vocal realm:

The prolongation of counterpoint, its compositional application, leads to free composition, that is to say: counterpoint is not composition, but rather only a means to it. Similarly, *bel canto* is nothing more than a means to a goal. It is not yet art song. The difficulty in both cases lies in the transition, thus with *bel canto*, where its technical foundations should be transferred into the performance of song, that is, into the *connection between word and tone*, where it becomes the means of expression in the service of the artwork. As a result, *bel canto* as such brings the abstractness of the vocal principle to realization. It is an example of the limitless possibilities in which this principle can operate as an artistic factor, since it [the vocal principle] has become a central force.⁸⁹

Because the practice of *bel canto* singing had lost ground in the nineteenth century to Wagnerian dramatic singing (the term *bel canto* only came into general use at the moment of its perceived demise), it is little wonder that Dahms saw the art of *bel canto* in a decline parallel to that of

⁸⁸ Dahms, *Die Offenbarung der Musik*, 266.

⁸⁹ Dahms, *Musik des Südens*, 314.

the composing-out of the triad and the prolongation of strict counterpoint in free composition—his own “Herculaneum and Pompeii.”⁹⁰ The only way out was to re-embrace the vocal principle.

Schenker, the Music of the South, and Mendelssohn’s Gondola Song

Despite the strong Schenkerian overtones to all the passages cited above, and even though Schenker looked upon both *Die Offenbarung* and *Musik des Südens* with great favor, Dahms’s ideas about finite melody, vocality, bel canto, the galant style, and the Music of the South sit rather awkwardly next to many of Schenker’s own thoughts about music, especially as they were developing in the 1920s. As Schenker wrote to his friend Moriz Violin on 5 August 1922:

[Dahms’s book] is no longer a mere step forward; this is something that deserves respect and from which important consequences must be drawn. Basically, it [the “revelation”] is already here, if Dahms can write in this way and the Nietzsche Society can add its “Amen Chorus” to his words. All this in spite of the fact that Dahms does not yet have a deep understanding of my work and has committed the mistake of making such a close connection between me and Nietzsche. He of course intends it in the highest, most serious sense.⁹¹

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As mentioned above, Dahms’s technical understanding of Schenker’s theories derives primarily from his reading of the *Harmonielehre* and *Kontrapunkt*.⁹² But while he frequently drew on many of the core concepts of these books, and even mimicked Schenker’s position on the decline of musical technique and the decadence of contemporary composers, Dahms’s use of Schenker’s ideas often comes across more as an extension of his own cultural convictions than as a music-theoretical argument. And given that Dahms never published an analysis of a musical work and never studied with Schenker, we can surmise that many of the intricacies of Schenker’s theoretical concepts beginning with *Der Tonwille* went beyond Dahms’s comprehension. Even their respective views about

⁹⁰ Schenker, *Counterpoint*, I:xvii.

⁹¹ Schenker, letter to Moriz Violin dated 5 August 1922, *SDO OJ* 8/4 [14]. Despite Schenker’s perplexity with the connection Dahms sought between him and Nietzsche, Schenker was in his early years a firm believer in Nietzsche and adopted many of Nietzsche’s positions *vis-à-vis* organicist ideology. See Kevin Korsyn, “Schenker’s Organicism Reexamined,” *Intégral* 7 (1993): 95–102.

⁹² Even as late as 1934, when he published a portion of his galant style essay in German, Dahms continued to use the *Harmonielehre* as his primary source for Schenker’s theory. Walter Dahms, “Die Anfänge der ‘Galanten’ Musik,” *Die Musik* 26 (1934): 812–16. At this point *Die Musik* had formally become the “Official Organ of the National Socialist Cultural Community” (*Amtliches Organ der NS-Kulturgemeinde*), further throwing into question Dahms’s contradictory political leanings.

the notion of synthesis were largely at odds with one another: Dahms explained the synthesis as one between North and South, between harmony and melody, between the German and Italian spirit, and between the embodied tone and its soulful expression. For Schenker synthesis is ultimately something that resides in the unity of the *Urlinie*, the *Bassbrechung*, and the prolongation of the transformational layers in a causal and time-oriented process.⁹³ This mature notion of Schenkerian synthesis, already latent in the works of the 1920s, goes well beyond Dahms's own formulation of the term. The closest Dahms seems to have come to Schenker's notion of synthesis is with his 1925 article for *The Musical Quarterly* on the galant style. Even here the connection to Schenker remains tenuous: "The development of the musical forms plainly shows, in the 'gallant' style, a striving after melody and ever more melody, until finally something loftier than 'melody' sets the seal of perfection and lasting glory on the forms; this is what we have termed the 'synthesis,' the combination of all musical elements to create that classic 'eternal melody.'"⁹⁴

We can also be sure that Dahms's infatuation with the South and his attempt to put it on par with the North would have been dismissed by Schenker, given the latter's unwavering German nationalism. Schenker most certainly took pains in his writings to distinguish the German from the Italian, writing for instance in issue 2 of *Der Tonwille*: "The invention of synthesis from the *Urlinie* and the melody of the whole is German, German to the core—historically considered, a victory over short-nerved Italian melody incapable of widely spaced goals."⁹⁵ Perhaps Schenker's ultimate dissatisfaction with Dahms's attempt to synthesize North and South finds expression in the words of Thomas Mann, a well-known commentator on Nietzsche: "It was [Nietzsche], really, who took up the old opposition between North and South, between romantic and classic, the transcendence of which had been the aim of great German minds, and broadened and sharpened it into a distinction between the national and the European. A yearning interest in the Mediterranean created German classicism; Nietzsche's neoclassical synthesis yields: the good European."⁹⁶

As we now know, Dahms, too, envisioned a pan-European culture of music through his assessment of the galant style. Note also that in his

⁹³ For a detailed explanation of Schenker's concept of synthesis from a Kantian perspective see Kevin Korsyn, "Schenker and Kantian Epistemology," *Theoria* 3 (1988): 19–43.

⁹⁴ Dahms, "The 'Gallant' Style of Music," 365.

⁹⁵ Schenker, *Der Tonwille*, 1:54.

⁹⁶ Thomas Mann, *Letters of Heinrich and Thomas Mann, 1900–1949*, ed. Hans Wysling, trans. Don Reneau et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 284. I would like to thank Kevin Korsyn for pointing me to this passage in Mann's writings. The place in Nietzsche's writings that Mann most likely has in mind can be found in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 195.

rendering of both the South and of the galant, Dahms had to exclude the greatest German master of all, Beethoven, and at the same time include Schenker's greatest enemy, the French:

Haydn and Mozart were universal masters. This is shown in their sonatas, quartets and symphonies, their oratorios and operas. Germany looked with longing across the border, and reached out after foreign loveliness to assimilate it with her own. The great classical music of Vienna is representative of all elements of European music; the pathos and esprit of the French, the grace and mobility of the Italians, the reverie and introspection of the Germans. This combination Europe has seen but once.⁹⁷

Schenker most likely never came across this passage, but were he to have read it one could easily imagine his dismissal of Dahms's whole project, for his hatred of internationalism surpassed anything else, save that of the French.

Even though Dahms harbored such a diametrically opposed cultural outlook (which only grew more apparent with time), there was still sufficient correspondence between Dahms's and Schenker's ideas to allow them to consider their mission a joint one. It is unlikely, for instance, that Dahms would have attempted to adapt Nietzsche's aesthetic to Schenker's theories were it not for Schenker's insistence on the primacy of melody in his works—whether it be in the emancipation of melody from the overabundance of the vertical dimension (*Harmonielehre*); in the birth of melody through the introduction of the passing tone in strict counterpoint (*Kontrapunkt*); or in the melody as it emerged out of the *Urlinie* (from *Der Tonwille* onwards). In his "Elucidations" essay, for example, Schenker stressed the ability of the *Urlinie* to give birth to an "unlimited world of foreground and melody ready to be articulated through an unlimited world of genius."⁹⁸

Perhaps more compellingly, Schenker's diary entries and letters show a genuine interest in Dahms's thoughts on vocality and bel canto. On a few occasions Schenker inquired into the progress of Dahms's planned book on bel canto; and after completing his reading of *Musik des Südens* on 29 July 1924, he noted in his diary, "I praise some chapters, especially the one about the vocal principle."⁹⁹ Dahms's notions of the South and of vocality even found their way into an analysis Schenker had been working on in the very days he was reading *Musik des Südens*: his analysis of Mendelssohn's *Venetianisches Gondellied* in F-sharp minor,

⁹⁷ Dahms, "The 'Gallant' Style of Music," 364.

⁹⁸ Heinrich Schenker, *Der Tonwille*, 2:118.

⁹⁹ Schenker, diary entry dated 29 July 1924, *SDO*.

op. 30, no. 6.¹⁰⁰ In no other place in Schenker's writings do we find such strong overtones of the South and of the vocal principle; to the best of my knowledge, this is the only place he gave these issues any attention at all. Schenker's choice of Mendelssohn, too, is apt, given how Dahms's comment about the composer in his eruptive letter of September 1919 had hit a sensitive nerve for the theorist. As we will see, even a trace of bel canto practice can be extracted from Schenker's analysis.

Dahms had in fact written a biography of Mendelssohn in 1919, explaining his comment to Schenker. Among other things, Dahms took the opportunity in that book to promote Schenker's work, and he highlighted the Southern qualities of Mendelssohn's music through commentary on the three gondola songs from the *Lieder ohne Worte*. When referring to the G-minor song from the op. 19 collection, he writes:

Here is music of the most sublime expression, dreamy and completely dematerialized. The accompaniment gently undulates, there from a distance the call of the gondolier sounds, a greeting that reverberates off the facades of the celebratory palaces. And the song elevates, it is filled from an inwardness and enchanted sweetness, and quavers in the Italian night. Softly the thirds and sixths nestle with one another. Tears and sighs hang from them. It fades away, and the calls resonate dreamily from afar.¹⁰¹

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Turning to the gondola song in F-sharp minor (op. 30), he tells us: “[this] Venetian gondola song brings us back once again into the luxuriant colorfulness of the South. It is a memory, a night piece, more glowing than the first song, filled with visions, igniting from calls and convulsing from abrupt and irruptive trills.”¹⁰² Concluding with the gondola song in A minor from the op. 62 collection, Dahms notes: “It is a Venetian gondola song, the third one, a melancholic *Romance* from bygone days. Again the gondoliers call out, again the thirds and sixths sway to an undulating accompaniment. The memory awakens and the soul rediscovers a lost paradise.”¹⁰³

Dahms's comments surely have their origin in Nietzsche. The philosopher gave Venice, the South, and gondoliers particular attention in his autobiography *Ecce Homo*, writing, “When I seek another word for music, I always find only the word Venice. I do not know how to distinguish between tears and music—I do not know how to think of happiness, of the *south*, without shudders of timidity.”¹⁰⁴ Elsewhere Nietzsche expressed

¹⁰⁰ This is documented in Schenker's diary entries between 19 and 29 July 1924, *SDO*.

¹⁰¹ Dahms, *Mendelssohn*, 121.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁰⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 252 [emphasis in original].

his admiration for Mendelssohn, whom he considered an exception among the German romantics: “It is different with Felix Mendelssohn, that halcyon master who, on account of his lighter, purer, more enchanted soul, was honored quickly and just as quickly forgotten: as the beautiful *intermezzo* of German music.”¹⁰⁵

Schenker also spared a thought for the Music of the South in his analysis of the F-sharp minor gondola song. Yet as we already know, he was not as generous to the Venetians as Dahms and Nietzsche:

Nobody really believes that gondoliers in Venice—or anywhere else—sing like this. In their songs, nature remains distant from art. On the other hand, there are indeed gondola songs that are counted as artistic; but not until one hears Mendelssohn’s gondola song does one begin to realize how little art those others possess. They are too corrupted for nature, too raw to be art, like unhappy mongrels that belong neither to one category nor the other. A German master sings a Venetian gondola song, and look, even Italian nature pales by comparison.¹⁰⁶

Despite these condescending remarks, the vocal elements of Mendelssohn’s piano piece undoubtedly captivated Schenker, who even contemplated the composer’s affinity with Venice and the South. Indeed in his text Schenker imagines a boatman singer before musing on the use of coloratura in the piano, the calls of the gondolier, the physical act of breathing, and other vocal allusions.

While pointing the reader to a number of technical features using his *Urlinientafel* (fig. 1), Schenker dwells on an extended trill on C^{#3} in measure 32, which he includes in his graph. Example 1 reproduces measures 31–35, the moment of this “irruptive trill” (as Dahms refers to it). Schenker remarks: “C^{#3} appears in measure 32, an imposition that may be understood as nothing more than an artistic imitation of the naturalistic Italian singing style, and it is maintained in measures 33–34, until finally, on the first eighth of measure 35, E³ appears and resolves the tension.”¹⁰⁷ As Schenker’s graph implies, C^{#3} acts as a covering tone in the upper register for the remainder of the piece (note the dotted slurs on the bottom system of fig. 1), rejoining the tonic only at the very end. At the same time, Schenker places the E³ of measure 35 directly above C^{#3} in his graph (i.e., two measures earlier), as he sees this note taking part in an octave descent in the B section and thus having a dual significance as a foreground embellishment and as a member of a deeper linear progression.

¹⁰⁵ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 181.

¹⁰⁶ Schenker, *Der Tonwille*, 2:146.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 148.

FIGURE 1. Schenker's analysis of Mendelssohn's "Venetianisches Gondellied" in F-sharp minor (*Lieder ohne Worte* op. 30, no. 6). *Der Tonwille* 10, supplement

Mendelssohn: Venetianisches Gondellied, op. 30, Nr. 6.

Urbildtafel zu Tonwille Heft 10

Allegro tranquillo.

Poco meno mosso

EXAMPLE 1. Mendelssohn, "Venetianisches Gondellied," mm. 31–35

Schenker has more to say about this moment. In a footnote to the above quotation he makes clear that the sustained and trilled C#, combined with its upward leap to E followed by a stepwise resolution to D, represents a moment of sheer vocality. Schenker even invokes a similar effect in a passage from a song by Schubert, "Nacht und Träume" (ex. 2), and cites a performance of the piece by the Dutch baritone Johannes Messchaert (1857–1922). He writes: "In Schubert's 'Nacht und Träume,' we find an extremely expressive use of a similar *sospiro* across measures 22–23; one has to have heard it sung by the incomparable J. Messchaert in order to comprehend the gripping effect of what is basically a naturalistic compositional trait."¹⁰⁸

It is clear from these examples and the accompanying text that Schenker's *sospiro* in Mendelssohn concerns not just the accented E–D of measure 35, but something much more comprehensive and even performative: the act of holding the sustained note over a long period, the unfolding of the ascending third C#–E, the build-up of tension through an inserted diminished-seventh chord at the moment of the irruptive trill, the melodic resolution by descending second, and perhaps even the implicit breath taken between the C# and the E (which is made explicit in the Schubert song). In his performance commentary at the end of the essay Schenker notes a *portamento* that occurs in the ensuing descending melodic line of measures 35–36; he also refers to the re-emergence of C#³ at measure 39 as "like a flute." Mendelssohn's invocation of vocality, therefore, is as remarkable to Schenker as the various harmonic and contrapuntal elements of the work. To adopt the words of Joseph Lubben, it functions here as one of Schenker's "multiple independent parameters."¹⁰⁹ Moreover as Schenker recalled Messchaert's performance of "Nacht und Träume," he must have imagined how the Dutch baritone might also perform Mendelssohn's own *sospiro*. In terms of Clark's remark cited above, it is not only the direct chromaticism and

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 148n2.

¹⁰⁹ Lubben, "Schenker the Progressive," 70.

EXAMPLE 2. Schubert, “Nacht und Träume” (D. 827), mm. 20–24

20
ru - fen, wenn der Tag er-wacht: keh - re wie - der, hol - de

22
Nacht! hol - de Träu - me, keh - ret

24
wie - der,

the “artful arpeggio” that Schenker found noteworthy, but also the way in which the vocal principle acts as a hidden force guiding the music’s inner impulses. Even the use of words like *portamento* and *sospirato* is remarkable, given Schenker’s general avoidance/rejection of non-German terms in his writings.¹¹⁰

Schenker’s footnote to Messchaert opens yet another window onto the issue of vocality and *bel canto* in Schenker’s thought. Schenker, who

¹¹⁰ For further discussion of Mendelssohn’s gondola song from a Schenkerian point of view, see William Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1989), 193–98; and Poundie Burstein, “Of Species Counterpoint, Gondola Songs, and Sordid Boons,” in *Structure and Meaning in Tonal Music: Festschrift in Honor of Carl Schachter*, ed. Poundie Burstein and David Gagné (New York: Pendragon Press, 2006), 33–40.

had written concert reviews of Messchaert's Viennese performances in 1896, also had occasion to accompany the baritone on a small concert tour of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in January–February 1899. As recorded in his diary entries and in correspondence with friends and colleagues, Schenker considered his collaboration with Messchaert to be one of the most influential musical experiences of his life.¹¹¹ Their concert program included songs by Löwe, Schubert, Grieg, Brahms, and Wolf, along with an assortment of “old Dutch folksongs.” Schubert's *Nacht und Träume* was also on this program.¹¹² The techniques of *portamento* and *flautato* were a trademark of the bel canto school of singing, and their use by Messchaert is well documented in a 1914 book by Messchaert's student, Franziska Martienssen.¹¹³

Therefore the issue of vocality, the art of bel canto, and the Music of the South all were at the forefront of Schenker's mind when analyzing Mendelssohn's gondola song in F-sharp minor. Although we cannot directly attribute Schenker's analysis to Dahms's *Musik des Südens*, we must strongly consider this possibility, especially given the temporal proximity of Schenker's analysis and his reading of Dahms's book. In its own way, *Musik des Südens* reveals a previously inaccessible layer of interpretation; Schenker's nostalgic reference to Messchaert further underscores the importance of vocality and bel canto in this analysis. We now see how Schenker managed to maintain his political high ground (the German triumphing over the Italian) while making subtle and largely concealed use of ideas that had alternate implications (the German and the Italian spirits coalescing into a greater “Southern” music). The essay on Mendelssohn's Gondola Song may very well represent Schenker's answer to Dahms's “limitless possibilities in which [the vocal] principle can operate as an artistic factor.”

¹¹¹ See Schenker, letter to Felix-Eberhard von Cube dated 29 April 1928, *SDO* OJ 5/7a, [14].

¹¹² Schenker's copy of the concert program and 1899 tour are located in the Oswald Jonas Memorial Collection, box 35, folder 5. Another Schubert song on the program, “Meeresstille,” is discussed by Schenker in the “Miscellanea” of issue 6 of *Der Tonwille*. Schenker, *Der Tonwille*, 2:41. See also Oswald Jonas, “Heinrich Schenker and Great Performers,” trans. Alan Dodson, *Theory and Practice* 28 (2003): 123–35; and Bent, ed., *Heinrich Schenker: Selected Correspondence*, 44–52.

¹¹³ Franziska Martienssen, *Johannes Messchaert: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis echter Gesangskunst* (Berlin and Leipzig: B. Behr's Verlag, 1914). In addition to her monograph on Messchaert, Martienssen published Messchaert's performance analyses of select Schubert songs (“Meeresstille,” “Erlkönig,” and “An die Leier”). See Johannes Messchaert, *Eine Gesangsstunde: Allgemeine Ratschläge nebst gesangstechnischen Analysen von einigen Schubert-Liedern*, ed. Franziska Martienssen (Mainz and Leipzig: Schott, 1927). Schenker admired this book: diary entry dated 20 December 1927, *SDO*.

Conclusion: Interpreting the Experiences of the Interwar Period

In her 1988 book *Weimar Intellectuals and the Threat of Modernity*, historian Dagmar Barnouw characterizes the 1920s as a period of “ideological polarization and utopianist self-delusion.”¹¹⁴ Schenker and Dahms easily fit this characterization, especially when we consider their common struggle to rescue German genius from the bonds of modern culture: for them, this was the only battle still worth fighting. World War I and its fallout colored everything they wrote. Schenker sought refuge in the deepest realms of the *Uralinie* and ultimately in the *Ursatz*, and Dahms buried himself in the writings of Nietzsche and imagined greener pastures in the Music of the South. We have not only seen how Dahms adopted Schenker’s terminology to suit his own cultural and political agenda, but also how Dahms’s ideas can be read back into Schenker’s works.

Yet however enthusiastically Schenker may have lauded Dahms’s work, and however much he must have appreciated his unwavering support, many of Dahms’s ideas conflict in multiple ways with Schenker’s thoughts about history, genius, and the war. Without the direct knowledge that Dahms had such strong support from Schenker, the two might seem largely out of step with one another. On a purely aesthetic level, this is most evident in their respective opinions about Italian music. Dahms, who lived for many years in Italy, was certainly more judicious in his appraisal of Italian composers—what whole-hearted Nietzschean wouldn’t be? Schenker, by contrast, never retreated from his opinion that Italian music was but a preliminary step to German music.¹¹⁵

Despite the ubiquitous xenophobia that accompanied Schenker’s writings, Schenker’s personal documents reveal an occasional affection for opera and operetta, putting him, at least on a personal level, slightly more in touch with Dahms’s sentiments than we might otherwise imagine. Take, for instance, a comment he made about a 1925 radio performance of Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia*: “The work is thoroughly delightful: not high art, but nonetheless art—the connection between the motives is especially skillful.”¹¹⁶ Schenker even seems to have absorbed Dahms’s thoughts on the North-South dichotomy. On a visit to Salzburg in 1928 he recalled his feelings as he stood on the *Domplatz*: “The many window openings make the Salzburg Cathedral seem almost more like a residential palace than a Gothic church. Surely this is attributable to the Italian style!

¹¹⁴ Dagmar Darnouw, *Weimar Intellectuals and the Threat of Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 4.

¹¹⁵ Heinrich Schenker, “Vom Unterschied zwischen der italienischen und der deutschen Musik,” *Deutsche Zeitschrift* 11 (1934): 700–703. Schenker reproduced these thoughts in a section on diminution in *Der freie Satz*; Schenker, *Free Composition*, 93–95.

¹¹⁶ Schenker, diary entry dated 11 October 1925, *SDO*.

Below [i.e., in the South] everything is based on light and street [life], like coloratura in music; above, in the North, everything is based on soul, introspection, which rules out having too much light."¹¹⁷

Schenker also acknowledged the practice of *bel canto* in his diary. Criticizing a performance by Wilhelm Furtwängler of an unspecified Mozart symphony, he wrote: "The shading of cantilenas and diminutions can only be performed according to the laws of *bel canto*, which can be neither taught nor transcribed, and which in Mozart moreover are deeply connected with the composition [itself]."¹¹⁸ Even certain *bel canto* singers came to his attention, not just "Germanic" performers like Messchaert but also Italian masters like Mattia Battistini and Enrico Caruso.¹¹⁹ Despite his desire to distinguish his ideas from those of Nietzsche, Schenker still kept an eye out for the philosopher, as a quotation from *The Will to Power* in the first edition of *Der freie Satz* indicates. It highlights once again Nietzsche's concern for establishing laws in music:

We lack in music an aesthetic that would impose laws on musicians and give them a conscience; we lack, as a consequence, a genuine conflict over "principles"—for as musicians we laugh at Herbart's velleities in this realm as much as we do at Schopenhauer's. In fact, this results in a great difficulty: we no longer know on what basis to found the concepts "model," "mastery," "perfection"—we grope blindly in the realm of values with the instinct of old love and admiration; we come close to believing "what is good is what pleases us."¹²⁰

Schenker remarks on this: "With my teachings Nietzsche's wish is fulfilled."¹²¹

On a final note regarding Dahms's life, one might rightly ask to what extent his later self-remaking was an attempt to cleanse himself of his

¹¹⁷ Schenker, diary entry dated 31 August 1928, *SDO*.

¹¹⁸ Schenker, diary entry dated 15 March 1930. Quoted in William Rothstein, review of Federhofer, *Heinrich Schenker: Nach Tagebüchern und Briefen in der Oswald Jonas Memorial Collection*, University of California, Riverside, *Music Analysis* 7 (1988): 233–38, at 235.

¹¹⁹ See Schenker, diary entries dated 9 November 1926 and 17 February 1928, *SDO*. I would like to thank Kirstie Hewlett for drawing my attention to Schenker's diary entries concerning his radio listening. Dahms had also written articles on both Battistini and Caruso. Walter Dahms, "Mattia Battistini," *Die Musik* 18, no. 2 (November 1925): 128–31; and idem, "Carusos Kehle," *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* 49 (1922): 299.

¹²⁰ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 440–41. Quoted in Heinrich Schenker, *Der freie Satz* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1935), 27–28. This quotation, like many others, was omitted from the 1956 edition without explanation; it also never found its way back into the 1979 translation, not even in the infamous "Appendix 4," where some (but not all) of Schenker's most inflammatory comments were reinstated. While the cited passage may seem innocuous enough to modern readers, its removal by Jonas in 1956 reinforces the stigma attached to Nietzsche after WWII. See Steven E. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890–1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 272 ff.

¹²¹ Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, 28.

“sins of youth”—that is, his devotion to monarchism and his hatred of democracy, his nationalist ranting during the war, his ostracism from the journalistic world brought about by his radical conservative views, or even his half-hearted (and unsuccessful) appeal to the Nazi regime.¹²² Undoubtedly Dahms’s disillusionment with Germany after the war played its part, a disillusionment that only grew with the passing years. Above all, though, Dahms’s love for all things Southern was more than an exercise in nostalgia: he made his “Musik des Südens” a reality, carrying out a vision that Nietzsche had merely sketched a generation earlier. He must have seen the “South” as the solution to all his afflictions, problems, and feelings of guilt, as well as a place where he could escape modern German life and culture. He would even have to leave Schenker behind to make a full break with his former life. The last extant correspondence between them, dated 23 February 1931, gives no indication of a break though it is only shortly after this that Dahms finally married his second wife Margarete Ohmann and changed his name to Gualtério Armando.

What implications does this self-remaking have for our understanding of nationalist discourse during this time and its connection to Schenker’s theories? Schenker certainly viewed his political and cultural viewpoints as inseparable from his musical theories and indeed from musical development in general; note the reservations he expressed about Dahms’s “artistic development” in light of his shifting political views. Today there is also a temptation to view Schenker’s musical and non-musical ideas as a single, undifferentiated package, which potentially risks dismissing his musical ideas wholesale because of the abominable political diatribes that often accompany them. However vital historical and cultural criticism of Schenker (and his followers) may be, we should keep in mind two things: first, that every great thinker is prone to contradictions that may seem fatal in retrospect; and second, that divergent political and cultural ideologies can often adapt themselves to the same musical theory. Dahms’s conflicting commitments to Schenker, to Nietzsche, to German nationalism, and to the “South” are an example of this. It could very well be that Schenker himself did not see the full ramifications of Dahms’s thought *vis-à-vis* his own political or musical standpoints. Alternatively, perhaps he was fully aware of Dahms’s

¹²² On 17 September 1933, eight months after the Nazis came to power, Dahms wrote a letter under his own name to Hans Hinkel, the newly appointed president of the Prussian theatre in Berlin. In this letter Dahms drew on his past as a conservative music critic who had always worked (as he wrote) in the service of “folkish ideas,” hoping to win favor with Hinkel and gain employment as a freelance translator of opera libretti for the German stage. It is not known if Hinkel ever acknowledged Dahms’s letter, nor whether Schenker knew about Dahms’s plans. I would like to thank Timothy Jackson for sharing this letter with me.

inconsistencies but valued his role as a propagandist so much that he simply ignored the things he did not like. Either way, it behooves us not only to scrutinize such conflicts and contradictions, but also to remain sensitive to the subtle (if sometimes blurry) divergence between musical and political discourse.

Dahms occupied a unique position: he never studied with Schenker and he remained physically distant from him. He could take what he wanted from Schenker without feeling pressured to embrace everything. Moreover, having experienced the horrors of war firsthand, he felt justified in reprimanding Schenker for not seeing the atrocities that the Prussian army committed against its own soldiers. That Schenker and Dahms remained on such good terms shows that they must have felt a certain kinship: both had careers at one point as freelance music critics; both were antagonistic toward trends in modern society; both strongly advocated a return to the aesthetic precepts of eighteenth-century composition; and both devoted their lives to what they saw as the immutable laws of musical genius, German or otherwise. The case of Walter Dahms affords us another way to view a musical-intellectual culture of tremendous complexity and to come to grips with a fascinating relationship between two all-too-human figures.

ABSTRACT

In recent years scholars have made great strides in contextualizing the theories of Heinrich Schenker (1868–1935) within the politics and culture of the interwar period. Many of Schenker’s closest pupils and disciples have now also come under investigation. Few present as bewildering a story as Walter Dahms (1887–1973), a music critic and one of Schenker’s fiercest advocates in the German press. Though they met on just one occasion, Dahms and Schenker corresponded extensively over a period of eighteen years (1913–31), revealing a mutual concern for the social and political climate of interwar Germany. In some cases their correspondence served as a springboard for many of the extra-musical ideas Schenker published in his analytical pamphlets of the 1920s, *Der Tonwille* and *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*. In other cases it demonstrated Dahms’s and Schenker’s bitter disagreements about the Great War and its main perpetrators.

Along with an array of articles he wrote on Schenker, Dahms published two books that brought Friedrich Nietzsche’s notion of the “Music of the South” into contact with Schenker’s developing theories of musical structure. Dahms further proposed a concept of “vocality” that

he saw as the key to restoring the notion of musical genius in Western music. Schenker's analysis of Mendelssohn's *Venetianisches Gondellied* in F-sharp minor, op. 30, no. 6, published in issue 10 of *Der Tonwille*, unearths Schenker's own take on the South and on Dahms's vocal principle. In the end, this case study exemplifies the intermingling of aesthetic, performative, and analytical concerns within Schenker's work at this time, and it exposes the many ideological tensions between Schenker's and Dahms's outlooks on music, culture, and politics.

Keywords: Heinrich Schenker, Walter Dahms, Friedrich Nietzsche, Felix Mendelssohn, Venetian Gondola Song, op. 30, no. 6, *Der Tonwille*, Interwar Germany