

# The Twisted Muse

MUSICIANS AND THEIR MUSIC  
IN THE THIRD REICH

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MICHAEL H. KATER



# THE TWISTED MUSE

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## Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich

*Michael H. Kater*

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FOR BARBARA,

*who has shared much of the reading and knows  
most of the thoughts expressed in this book  
from endless conversations over the years,  
especially since she has contributed  
several important ideas of her own*

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# Preface

The themes of this study have only rarely been reflected in the existing literature. This book was written against the backdrop of four earlier ones that purported to tell the history of music in the Third Reich. The first of these, *Musik im Dritten Reich: Eine Dokumentation* (1963/1966), was an annotated collection of documents by Joseph Wulf which presented key materials from a few archives (then generally closed to many scholars) and music publications of the Nazi period. Valuable as these materials were, they were often published as mangled excerpts or otherwise distorted, and Wulf's running commentary was less than reliable. In 1982 the German musicologist Fred K. Prieberg published *Musik im NS-Staat*, which at the time looked like a monumental and all-encompassing history of music under the Nazi regime, and to this day has remained surprisingly current. But Prieberg had made even scarcer use of the archives than Wulf; he tended to draw his portraits in tones of black and white; his language was often shrill and accusatory; and he, too, made many mistakes, factual as well as interpretive. Compared to this work, *The Politics of Music in the Third Reich*, Michael Meyer's extended dissertation, published in 1991, took virtually no heed of almost twenty intervening years of research, paraphrased heavily from Prieberg's book without the benefit of any archival sources of substance, and contributed nothing that was new at the time. The latest of the four to arrive on the scene was *Music in the Third Reich*, a study by the British pianist Eric Levi. Though well intentioned, it too is but thinly documented with pri-



mary sources. Neither does the book properly weigh the importance of the various issues involved: for example, Levi pays equal attention to the place of opera and music publishing. It does not even resonate with music, nor does it seem to be populated by real people; the conductor Herbert von Karajan, for instance, is mentioned only once.

My own research was begun more than a decade ago, when I was still heavily engaged in my book on jazz. Unlike the four earlier authors, I attempted from the start to gain access to as many modern archives as possible, and surprisingly enough I sometimes succeeded where I thought I would never stand a chance. A case in point is the Richard Strauss family archive in Garmisch; another is the Pfitzner collection in the Austrian National Library at Vienna. Other depositories, such as the Rosbaud files in Pullman (Washington), the Schoenberg papers in Los Angeles, the Hindemith correspondence in Frankfurt, and the Kurt Weill collection in New York, were easier to gain access to, but not without the generous help of the archivists in charge. Altogether, I have visited and profited from twenty-five different archival collections from Los Angeles to Vienna.

My second source of information was contemporary music journals, of which *Die Musik*, *Zeitschrift für Musik*, and *Allgemeine Musikzeitung* were perhaps the most significant. Contemporary primary literature—many of these items odious propaganda pamphlets—was also important. In addition, I had the good fortune to interview and correspond with a number of witnesses from the Nazi era, whose insights often proved invaluable. If only I had been able to speak with a Karajan, a Schoenberg, or a Strauss! Significantly, one of the most accomplished artists of her time, the soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, whose art I much admire, for reasons that only she herself can know refused to receive or even correspond with me despite repeated entreaties.

The secondary literature on overall aspects of my topic is both scarce and questionable in quality, as are some of the better-known memoirs; but specialized critical studies of the postwar era did prove useful. By contrast, compendium handbooks such as the multivolume *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* or *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* turned out to be somewhat dated, rarely focusing on problems of interest to me. In addition, the latter work bore the stigma of having been edited by a former Nazi, who—typical of many of my leading characters—despite having compromised himself from 1933 to 1945, made a fabulous comeback after Zero Hour.

My thanks must go to all the witnesses who helped me solve my problems; they are identified individually in the notes. I also owe gratitude to all the archivists and their assistants in the United States, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland; I regret that they are too numerous to mention by name. A few, however, deserve special credit. Above all, I thank Richard and Gabriele Strauss for opening their family archive in Garmisch to me unreservedly; I had the entire run of the archive containing the correspon-

dence of their grandfather. I fondly remember my many visits to their gracious home in Grünwald and to their house in Garmisch, where Frau Gabriele Strauss herself made copies of every single document I asked for. Hans Jörg Jans, the director of the Carl-Orff-Zentrum in Munich, went out of his way to provide both documentary material and sound advice of various kinds. Although I spent much less time at his institution, Giselher Schubert of the Paul Hindemith-Institut in Frankfurt was equally magnanimous. Last but not least is Daniel Simon, who, while director of the Berlin Document Center, opened the files of what is left of the Reich Music Chamber records there and consistently welcomed me back, as did his successor, David Marwell.

The help that I received from Joan Evans, a musicologist at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, was of a different but hardly less important kind. Being not a musicologist by training but a social historian with a strong and ever-growing interest in cross-cultural history, I needed firm guidance in the exposition of many of my subthemes, help in understanding music (short of technical analysis, which I hope to have successfully avoided), and direction in the use of musicological terminology. During many hours of her precious time, she not only gave me all this but also shared with me ideas on writing style, frequently probing the logic of some of my arguments. In addition, she steered me to the Rosbaud archives in Pullman. I owe her a great debt. If mistakes have remained (and no doubt they have), this is of course not at all on her account, nor on anyone else's but my own.

Many other friends and colleagues helped me along the way: Hellmuth Auerbach, Tamara Bernstein, Gerhard Botz, Albrecht Dümmling, Saul Friedlander, Elke Fröhlich, Hans Otto and Ursula Jung, Lotte Klemperer, Gabriel and Joyce Kolko, Peter Loewenberg, Theresa Muir, Philip Olleson, Albrecht Riethmüller, Gerhard A. and Gisela Ritter, Adelheid von Saldern, Jürg Stenzl, Jill Stephenson, Joe Viera, Nike Wagner, William H. Wiley, and Warren Wilson.

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Finally, a word about the midwives, without whom no book can see the light of day. Mary Lehané, Gladys Fung, and Joan McConnell as always provided hard-to-get books and articles through York University's inter-

library loan system. I never fail to be impressed by their ingenuity, in spite of, or perhaps because of, the computer gadgetry that I would be incompetent to handle. At Oxford University Press, Nancy Lane and Thomas LeBien granted much-needed advice and at one time came through with editorial and moral support for me when it was most needed.

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# Abbreviations

ADMV	Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein (General German Music Society)
AI	Arnold Schoenberg Institute, Los Angeles, Archive
AM	Amtsgericht München, Registratur S, Schwurgerichtsakten
AMR	<i>Amtliche Mitteilungen der Reichsmusikkammer</i>
AMZ	<i>Allgemeine Musikzeitung</i>
APA	Author's Private Archive
BA	Bundesarchiv, Koblenz
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BDC	Berlin Document Center
BDM	Bund Deutscher Mädel (League of German Girls, within HJ)
BH	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Munich
BMW	Bayerische Motorenwerke
BS	Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Handschriftenabteilung
CM	Carl-Orff-Zentrum, Munich
DAF	Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Labor Front)
DAZ	<i>Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung</i>
DDP	<i>Das Deutsche Podium</i>
DKW	<i>Deutsche Kultur-Wacht</i>
DM	<i>Die Musik</i>

EB	Elly-Ney-Nachlass, Staatsarchiv, Bonn
ETA	Ernst Toch Archive, Special Collections, Music Library, UCLA
GDT	Genossenschaft Deutscher Tonsetzer (League of German Composers)
GLM	<i>Das Grosse Lexikon der Musik: In acht Bänden</i> , 8 vols., ed. Marc Honegger/Günther Massenkeil (Freiburg, 1978–82)
HJ	Hitler-Jugend (Hitler Youth)
IBD	<i>International Biographical Dictionary of Central European Emigrés, 1933–1945</i> , ed. Herbert A. Strauss and Werner Röder (Munich, 1983)
IfZ	Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich
ISCM	International Society for Contemporary Music
JdM	<i>Jahrbuch der deutschen Musik, 1943/1944</i> , ed. Hellmuth von Hase (Leipzig and Berlin, [1943/1944])
KdF	Kraft durch Freude (“Strength-through-Joy,” part of the DAF)
KfdK	Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur (Combat League for German Culture)
KSM	Klinckerfuss-Nachlass, Schiller-Nationalmuseum/Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach am Neckar, Handschriftenabteilung
LBi	Leo Baeck Institute, New York
LI	<i>Lexikon der Interpreten klassischer Musik im 20. Jahrhundert</i> , ed. Alain Paris (Munich and Kassel, 1992)
LP	Library of Washington State University, Pullman
MGG	<i>Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik unter Mitarbeit zahlreicher Musikforscher des In- und Auslandes</i> , 17 vols., ed. Friedrich Blume (Kassel, 1949–86)
MGM	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
MJV	<i>Musik in Jugend und Volk</i>
MK	<i>Musik im Kriege</i>
MMP	Münchener Stadtbibliothek, Monacensia-Abteilung, Pfitzner-Briefe
NG	<i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> , 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (London, 1980)
NSBO	Nationalsozialistische Betriebszellenorganisation (National Socialist Shop Organization)
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers’ Party)
NSKG	NS-Kulturgemeinde (National Socialist Cultural Community)

NSV	Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt (National Socialist People's Charity)
NWH	Österreichische National-Bibliothek, Vienna (Wien), Handschriftenabteilung
NYA	New York Philharmonic Archives, Avery Fisher Hall, New York
OSW	Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Vienna (Wien), Archiv der Republik
OW	Österreichische National-Bibliothek, Vienna (Wien), Musiksammlung, F68 Pfitzner
PA	Private Archive
PF	Paul-Hindemith-Institut, Frankfurt am Main
Promi	Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (Reich Propaganda Ministry)
REM	Reichsministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung (Reich Education Ministry)
RG	Richard Strauss-Archiv, Garmisch
RKK	Reichskulturkammer (Reich Culture Chamber)
RMK	Reichsmusikkammer (Reich Music Chamber)
RRG	Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft (Reich Broadcasting Corporation)
RSK	Reichsschrifttumskammer (Reich Authors' Chamber)
RTK	Reichstheaterkammer (Reich Theater Chamber)
SA	Sturmabteilungen (Brownshirts; Storm Troopers)
SM	Stadtarchiv, Munich
SMK	Stadtarchiv, Munich, Kulturamt
SMM	Städtische Musikbibliothek, Munich, Pfitzner-Briefe
SS	Schutzstaffel (Security Squad)
Stagma	Staatlich genehmigte Gesellschaft zur Verwertung musikalischer Urheberrechte (State-approved Society for the Utilization of Musical Authorship Rights)
TG	<i>Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels: Sämtliche Fragmente</i> , 5 vols., ed. Elke Fröhlich (Munich, 1987)
TGII	<i>Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels, Teil II: Diktate, 1941–1945</i> , 16 vols., ed. Elke Fröhlich (Munich, 1993–96)
UCLA	University of California at Los Angeles
UE	Universal Edition
Ufa	Universum Film–Aktiengesellschaft
VB	<i>Völkischer Beobachter</i>
WC	Weill-Lenya Research Center, New York
ZM	<i>Zeitschrift für Musik</i>
ZNF	Zentralbibliothek, Zurich, Musikabteilung, Nachlass Furtwängler



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# THE TWISTED MUSE

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# Introduction

It is some time after the Nazi invasion of Poland. SS troopers brandishing machine guns are storming the Jewish ghetto of a small Polish town. Shots ring out; men, women, and children fall to the ground. Two of the Nazi soldiers race up a flight of stairs. Against the din of shots and screams, they hear the sounds of a sonata being played somewhere on a piano. They arrive in a room, empty save for an upright piano, at which sits a young SS trooper, playing beautifully and with total concentration. Dumbstruck, his two comrades lean in through the open doorway. “Was ist das, Bach? Ist das Bach?” exclaims one. “Nein, Mozart! Mozart!” replies the other. But it is indeed Bach: the prelude from the A-Minor English Suite, composed around 1720.

This stunning scene from Steven Spielberg’s celebrated film *Schindler’s List* constitutes one of the most disturbing moments in the entire picture.<sup>1</sup> It juxtaposes the beauty of Baroque music with the mayhem of genocidal slaughter, both perpetrated by what had been hitherto one of the most civilized nations in the world. The brilliance of this scene is in its evocation of abject criminality, the serene sovereignty of music, and the obvious confusion of two SS men about matters cultural and by extension about the larger world in which they live and act. Classical music, of course. But Mozart or Bach? They are not sure. And does it matter anyway? Does it matter especially in the context of the machine-gunning of hundreds of Jews?

Writ large, does classical music matter in a Nazi cosmos of totalitari-

anism, fascism, dictatorship? If the pogrom scene from Spielberg's film encapsulates the greatest of extremes that characterized the Nazi regime, then aesthetically pleasing music had a logical place somewhere in this cosmos. But where was this place? Where and how did serious music fit into the pattern of culture in the Third Reich, and what kind of a culture was it? Most puzzling of all, who were the people that generated it? Were they SS troopers? Were they saints?

Maneuvering between these two polar opposites, this book attempts to answer some of those questions by examining serious, or "classical," music primarily through the men and women who created it during this period. If we return for a moment to the images from *Schindler's List*, it becomes obvious that aesthetics has no monopoly on morality, but yet the two are not mutually exclusive. Neither a negative nor a positive correlation exists between the two principles: egregiously fascist musicians may have made beautiful music, but they may also have played badly. Many shades of distinction existed in between.

There are additional perspectives from which this complicated subject can be approached. One involves the now decades-old dichotomy between "intentionalism" and "functionalism" in the interpretation of National Socialism.<sup>2</sup> If classical music existed in the Third Reich—and this is a given—by whose orders was it there, and whom did it benefit? This set of questions would posit the existence of an omnipotent source of power that utilized music for certain propagandistic ends. Indeed, much in the story that follows suggests that rational decision making was the well-spring for many of the policies that facilitated the playing and recording of and training in music during the period 1933–45. It is easy to imagine Joseph Goebbels as the president of the Reich Culture Chamber, which controlled the agenda of the Reich Music Chamber, dictating to conductors, composers, and musicians what music to compose and perform. One can envision Adolf Hitler as the ultimate Führer whose own tastes determined, in so many instances, what sort of music ought to be supported and what sort suppressed, perhaps even which musicians should be persecuted. Others also come to mind: Hermann Göring, who was head of the Preussische Staatsoper in Berlin; Alfred Rosenberg, who by 1933 had prescribed all manner of cultural tastes through his *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur*; Robert Ley, who arranged festive music for his "Strength-through-Joy" celebrations.<sup>3</sup>

To the extent that much of the music that was heard in Germany after 1933 unfolded along these lines, the proponents of intentionalism are vindicated.<sup>4</sup> But far more musical events occurred almost in spite of state regulations, against the grain of Hitler's, Rosenberg's, Goebbels's, or Göring's personal taste, in contradistinction to newly established sets of aesthetic values yet continuous with certain lines of development from an earlier period that was now officially blacklisted. These countercurrents, then, would substantiate the theory of the structuralists, who maintain that governance of all matters in the Third Reich was sustained and

propelled by virtue of dynamic radicalization, defaults, contradictions, forces colliding with those emanating from Nazi control towers, and, not least, pure happenstance.

Yet another vantage point from which to consider the topic is that of continuity versus discontinuity. Within a larger framework, historians have long been concerned with the question whether the Weimar Republic was merely a prelude to the Third Reich, or, conversely, whether the Third Reich simply manifested and cast into high relief tendencies first expressed during the republic. Whereas for some time after 1945 political historians tended to view 30 January 1933, the day of Hitler's assumption of power, as the end of the democratic, republican era and the beginning of the totalitarian, fascist one, in recent years much more structural overlap between the two eras has been detected. For example, if the presidential dictatorship of Chancellor Heinrich Brüning (1930–32) may be viewed as prefascist, then it becomes clear that Hitler's dictatorship was but a logical extension of this situation. And yet it may be argued that, despite appearances, Brüning's chronic extraparliamentarian sleight of hand, especially in economic matters, had as its objective the eventual salvation of the republic.<sup>5</sup> An authoritative study by Hans Mommsen manages to blend these seemingly irreconcilable views. Mommsen's characterization of the Weimar Republic as a "failed example of political modernization" implies the noble impulse toward progressive political change in the shape of a democratic republic (which became apparent especially during the early 1920s), but it also hints at the defeat of these modernizing forces by antidemocratic, authoritarian tendencies, some of them increasingly fascist, firmly lodged within the German body politic in the declining years of the Weimar experiment.<sup>6</sup>

In analogy to the earlier political-historical interpretation, cultural affairs were for a long time also viewed as having been progressive and democratic during the republic (as symbolized by the Bauhaus and Neue Sachlichkeit movements), in contrast to conservative, reactionary, and repressive developments after January 1933. At this level the classic interpretation of the Weimar Republic is Peter Gay's seminal *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*. By contrast, George L. Mosse, insofar as he dealt with culture, has painted a depressingly bleak picture of the Third Reich.<sup>7</sup> Younger historians, however, are now beginning to discover that matters were not so cut and dried but that there was a fair degree of confluence between the two cultural streams—between the republic on the one side and the Third Reich on the other. With respect to film, and notwithstanding wonderful surrealist experiments such as *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*, Gerald D. Feldman has spoken of the antidemocratic, potentially demagogic aspects of the largest film production company, Universum Film–Aktiengesellschaft (Ufa), which, as a ready tool of propaganda schemers, "owed its birth to initiatives taken by Germany's military leadership" during World War I, and toward the end of the republic was under the control of the antidemocratic Alfred Hugenberg.<sup>8</sup> What Propa-

ganda Minister Goebbels did with the aid of film in manipulating public opinion can now be gleaned from his largely published diaries. With respect to music, Pamela Potter has written that many of the elements of backwardness and oppression said to be hallmarks of the Nazi period were also, or already, present in the republic, and that it is also difficult to identify a systematic Nazi “music police” whose job was to condone or condemn individual compositions, musicians, or composers.<sup>9</sup>

On close examination we can find in the Third Reich elements we would not expect in the dictionary definition of a totalitarian regime: a lack of controlling mechanisms, creative movements expressive of freedom such as jazz and swing, an extended influence of Jewish culture and its champions, even avant-garde attempts at modernism that may not have conformed with the modernist conceptions of the early republic but were nonetheless novel and were in fact officially welcomed and even subsidized as such.<sup>10</sup> And yet older traditions hailing from the Second Empire were by and large carried on as well, the best example being Richard Strauss. Thus, in the end, there was a mixture of aesthetic styles and forms, some of them mere copies of the tried and true, and bad ones at that, some syncretic and more interesting, and others bold new moves in the world of art and culture. These endeavors were motivated and frequently accompanied by various political convictions on the part of their creators; more often than not, and understandably in a time of party and governmental strictures, political opportunism and careerist considerations prevailed over moral ones. Hence, the men and women who leap from the pages of this book are rarely either saints or sinners, black or white. As ordinary Germans under stress who often wished to avoid oppressive political obligations, they tried to circumvent them as best they could; others played the new game more deftly and ended up on top. One and all—musicians and singers, composers and conductors, all of whom had to make a living as artists in the Third Reich—emerged in May 1945 severely tainted, with their professional ethos violated and their music often compromised: gray people against a landscape of gray.

# National Socialism, the Third Reich, and the Music Scene

## Music, Economics, and Political Opportunism

In March 1933 clarinetist Valentin Grimm found himself caught in a dilemma. Having learned of Hitler's victory in late January, he had returned to Germany after spending many years as a professional musician in New York City. Being a card-carrying Nazi Party member, he was now looking for a comfortable job in one of Germany's many well-known orchestras. No one offered to hire him, however, because there were no jobs. Grimm was facing a welfare existence unless things changed dramatically. They did not. In 1936 he finally landed a shaky part-time position with a Hamburg pops opera. The 185 marks he was paid every month was too little to live on and too much to starve. As late as 1938 Grimm was so poor that he could not even afford the dark suit he needed to play in the orchestra. Grimm seriously contemplated returning to New York.<sup>1</sup>

In Berlin the violinist Georg Kirchner did not fare much better. He had fallen victim to the tidal wave of unemployment sweeping across the waning Weimar Republic, and he also failed to make it back into the work force after Hitler's assumption of power. After several precarious years on the dole, he gave up all hope of a musical career and accepted work in a machine factory in 1938. The cellist Friedrich Walther was only slightly better off. Having served in the Bayreuth Festival orchestra from



1927 to 1933, he suddenly was discharged. Although Winifred Wagner, daughter-in-law of Richard Wagner and patron of the festival, offered to recommend him for a new job elsewhere, Walther was judged to be somewhat less than accomplished during auditions. Still, he managed to secure work as a backup cellist at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, earning a mere 360 marks a month plus expenses and subject to dismissal with only two weeks' notice. In 1933 conductor Otto Klein was holed up in the capital awaiting a suitable job offer. With no such prospect in sight, he begged the government for support money. Five years later Klein had still not found employment. To pass the time and sharpen his skills, he composed the opera *Atlantis*, which was immediately doomed to oblivion. By this time both Klein and his wife had been struck by illness. They were supported solely by Klein's two brothers, who sent him 230 marks a month. Hanns Rohr, another conductor, had a doctorate in music. Having gotten by as an itinerant guest conductor from 1928 to 1934, he now accompanied his wife, a violinist, at the piano. If not for generous hand-outs from music-loving friends and the odd guest conductor's job, the couple would have gone under. By 1937 Rohr was suffering from a heart condition; a year later his distraught wife entered a sanatorium.<sup>2</sup>

During the first years of the Nazi regime, the fate of these musicians was hardly atypical; in fact, their personal difficulties were symptomatic of the widespread economic confusion that characterized the cultural scene in Germany following the last years of the Weimar Republic. The root cause could be traced back to January 1933. At that time the new Hitler regime had inherited from the republic a stagnant economy marked by high unemployment and low wages. This unemployment subsided only gradually; it was not until 1936 that it fell below that of 1928–29, and full employment was not achieved until 1938–39. In 1933 real earnings were a mere 87 percent of those in 1925–29, a relatively stable phase for the republic, and only in 1938 did they begin to surpass those of the peak years of republican prosperity.<sup>3</sup>

As difficult as these conditions were for the average German wage earner, they were much more onerous for the country's hundred thousand or so musicians, fewer than half of whom were devoted to the so-called classics, or "serious music." Not until about 1938 were they finally on an economic par with the national standard. One reason for this lag was that in tough economic times, matters of culture usually took second place. This made itself felt even in Germany, a country with a tradition of staunch public support for its cultural institutions, including opera houses and symphony orchestras. Such support, which had been gradually withdrawn as a result of the depression during the later years of the republic, was only haltingly restored in the first years of the Third Reich, as overall conditions improved.<sup>4</sup> In the summer of 1933, for instance, some members of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, financially one of the best endowed of Germany's "culture orchestras" (those musical organizations dedicated exclusively to "serious music"), were still subjected to

salary cuts of 40 percent. In 1935 unemployed Munich musicians were performing recitals in nursing homes on a volunteer basis just to maintain their skills.<sup>5</sup> Even as circumstances were improving, by late 1936 four out of five of Germany's gainfully employed musicians were bringing home less than 200 marks a month—which was less than what most blue-collar workers earned. The jobless rate still hovered above the 20 percent mark, more than twice the national average.<sup>6</sup>

Matters improved more quickly between 1936 and 1939 against the backdrop of general economic progress. More specifically, musicians of all kinds were needed after the establishment of Hitler's Wehrmacht in 1935 and the expansion of various government and Nazi Party organizations, notably the SS and the compulsory Reich Labor Service, all of which were eager to have their own bands. Moreover, geographic expansion caused by the annexation of Austria and, eventually, the Sudetenland and Memel created additional demands.<sup>7</sup> In March 1938 an impending shortage of qualified musicians<sup>8</sup> prompted the music lover Joseph Goebbels, head of all organized musicians under the Nazi regime, to promulgate a basic wage decree guaranteeing the profession's attractiveness. By this order, "culture orchestras" were favored over mere dance and light-entertainment bands. Orchestras were divided into five competency classes, and musicians' salaries and pension payments were standardized by law.<sup>9</sup>

These developments were reflected in an ascending salary curve for orchestra musicians, soloists, and conductors alike, with variations in each category based on qualifications, experience, and national prominence. Throughout the Third Reich, those musicians at the lowest end of the professional scale who were contractually employed consistently earned more in wages than any freelance work might net them. But at the upper end of the scale, an eminent artist might make as much from frequent guest appearances as from a guaranteed salary. If a musician was so fortunate as to be securely employed in 1933, his monthly earnings as an orchestra member could be as high as 450 marks. In 1936 the same salary could be as low as 350 marks per month, but it might well have risen, as it did for first violinist Hans Ortleb of the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, to over 600 marks by early 1939.<sup>10</sup> Concertmasters and soloists could expect to make at least double those amounts, depending on their opportunities for independent concertizing. This income placed them very close to the category of physicians, who, topping lawyers and dentists, were the highest paid of the self-employed professional groups in the Nazi era.<sup>11</sup>

Financially, conductors generally fared much better, with the world-famous Wilhelm Furtwängler the undisputed champion. In 1934 he received 1,000 marks per concert, contractually performing twenty-two of them in Berlin alone, in addition to touring, which fetched an equivalent amount per event. By 1937 Furtwängler was already getting 2,000 marks per appearance, and in 1938–39 this figure doubled again. For all of 1939

he earned well in excess of 200,000 marks, more than triple the 60,000 marks (including 20,000 marks in expenses) that his Austrian colleague Clemens Krauss was paid after assuming the directorship of the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich in 1937.<sup>12</sup> Somewhat lesser-known conductors were still comfortably well off. For example, Hans Rosbaud in 1934–35 was earning about 13,000 marks per annum at Radio Frankfurt.<sup>13</sup> Other conductors employed for radio programs or as assistants throughout the Reich could be paid as much as a well-placed concertmaster, but less qualified ones were dependent on touring, and received as little as 200 marks per engagement.<sup>14</sup>

It is almost impossible to gauge the earnings of composers, many of whom doubled as conductors, soloists, or conservatory teachers. At one end of the spectrum was Carl Orff, who always tried to be fiercely independent. He subsisted for years on his publisher's advances, which he did not begin to make good on until the war, when Orff's operas finally began to bring him wealth.<sup>15</sup> No other composer of serious music earned as much as Richard Strauss, who in 1936—not one of his banner years—earned over 80,000 marks from all sources—high for a composer but noticeably trailing Furtwängler. Hans Pfitzner, who ranked just after Strauss in national importance, was making about half that much.<sup>16</sup>

Because in general terms the economic situation of musicians was so bleak until 1938, Nazi Party and government agencies tried to do what they could to help. Special symphony and chamber orchestras were financially supported and filled with jobless Nazi musicians.<sup>17</sup> When the British jazz band leader Jack Hylton applied to tour Germany in 1934–35, he was allowed to do so only on condition that he contribute one quarter of his earnings to unemployed German colleagues.<sup>18</sup> The Reich made grants of thousands of marks to aid the unemployed and facilitate the dignified retirement of older musicians. At Carnival time in February 1935, a musicians' ball was organized in Munich's posh Four Seasons Hotel for the benefit of impoverished musicians,<sup>19</sup> and in 1936 Goebbels instituted *Künstlerdank*, a social-assistance program backed with millions of marks, from which the chronically indigent, such as involuntarily retired musicians and other artists, were to profit. From the fall of 1937 to the fall of 1938, *Künstlerdank* benefited more than three thousand musicians with up to 300 marks each.<sup>20</sup>

The program's work did not cease after economic conditions for musicians had improved. Even during World War II, when many musicians were in a position to exploit their unique talents, Goebbels called on musicians to entertain the troops and participate in various cultural schemes, to the extraordinary financial advantage of the musicians.<sup>21</sup> But the very fact that *Künstlerdank* was a creature of the regime raises the question of a possible interrelationship between economic performance and pro-Nazi political deportment, and specifically the question of opportunism. That is, did their financial straits motivate musicians to join the Nazi Party between 1933 and 1945? Given the insufficient evidence to

date, the answer can only be equivocal. From a largely north German sample of musicians of all stripes and qualifications between 1933 and 1938, most of whom joined the party in 1934, it may be concluded that about one fifth of the profession was in the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party [NSDAP], or Nazi Party) before the war. Moreover, those who were employed showed a stronger tendency to join the NSDAP than those who were idle.<sup>22</sup> Still, this does not rule out destitution as a possible motive for Nazi Party membership. In 1934, for instance, though about one third of all musicians were jobless, more than half of the employed ones had a monthly income of 100 marks or less.<sup>23</sup> It may have been only these who show up as NSDAP members in the statistics. But why, then, was the proportion of Vienna Philharmonic musicians (among the best paid in the Reich) who were Nazi Party members also equal to one third after the Anschluss of Austria in 1938, and why did this membership rise over the years, even with the economy on the upswing?<sup>24</sup> It is clear that in this case factors other than purely economic ones were causing many artists to jump on the Nazi bandwagon.

To be sure, interference in music professionals' lives by the Nazi regime was considerable, and not only in economic terms. Official dictates called for the nazification of music to the extent that art generally had to be "put to the service of an idea," which in this case meant the ideology of racist National Socialism.<sup>25</sup> At the height of the war Wolfgang Stumme, chief of music in the Hitler-Jugend (Hitler Youth), still described German music as an antidote to "dangerous poison threatening the blood," that is, stimuli from the "Jewish, materialistic, Bolshevik environment."<sup>26</sup> In theory, then, only narrowly defined "German music" was to be produced and listened to. In 1938 Hans Pfitzner, under the impression that creative freedom was being stifled, remarked sarcastically to Hermann Göring, the boss of the Preussische Staatsoper, that in present-day Germany "any criticism is forbidden, indeed abolished, so that you cannot write it if a soubrette sings badly, even when it is really so."<sup>27</sup> Of course, Pfitzner knew well that such policies represented merely the ideal condition called for by Nazi fanatics, and that they could not be enforced with any degree of consistency. Goebbels knew this also when he pronounced in February 1934 that however tightly a government might rule, it had to keep loose reins on artistic and intuitive activities.<sup>28</sup> Richard Strauss, as president of Goebbels's Reichsmusikkammer (Reich Music Chamber, or RMK), took his cue from Goebbels when in 1935 he listed the desirable qualities of a music director: he had to have good ears, he had to be able to play the piano well, he had to understand the art of singing, and he had to comprehend the dynamics of modern opera (especially Strauss's own). Significantly, in this catalog of virtues Strauss failed to mention anything about Nazism or the Hitler regime.<sup>29</sup>

These two conflicting tenets, censure and toleration, turned out to be the guidelines for music creation and administration in the Third Reich.

While they expressed opposite intentions, neither one in its pure and unadulterated form dominated the musical life of the nation. Typically representing compromise in combination, they tempered each other, ensuring that some degree of artistic freedom would always obtain. Such a fluctuating system of balances, as we know today, was characteristic of the overall policy structure of Hitler's Third Reich and served to keep it going.<sup>30</sup>

Germane to the question of artistic opportunism, or the premeditated blending of art and politics in the first years of the regime, the principle of compromise found its practical embodiment in a three-stage process of policy making: first, if a musician proved to possess artistic talent and loyalty to the regime in more or less equal measure, then professional success could be virtually guaranteed; second, if a lack of musical competence was painfully obvious, then no amount of political dedication could warrant artistic survival; third, even if a musician's ties to the regime were minimal or nonexistent, he could still forge an impressive career for himself if the quality and quantity of his musical output were high by any standards, unless he went out of his way to insult the regime. The third stage explains the relative success of conductors such as Rosbaud and Furtwängler, of composers such as Strauss, and of performers such as the bass-baritone Hans Hotter.

Officially, then, as with many occupations in the Third Reich, Nazi affiliation of one kind or another was held to be a prerequisite for career advancement in the serious-music business, and prospective employers often applied pressure to individual musicians to join the Nazi Party.<sup>31</sup> This prompted many artists of solid but not outstanding ability to find jobs or improve their situation on the basis of existing or newly earned Nazi credentials. The conductor Gerhart Stiebler was out of work and judged to be merely competent as a musician, but because he had joined the NSDAP in 1932 and been very active as a party speaker, he was hired as musical director of the Görlitz theater in June 1933. Regime officials as highly placed as Prussian Minister of Education Bernhard Rust had seen fit to intervene on his behalf.<sup>32</sup> Although in 1936 the consensus was that Wilhelmine Holzinger, a freelance pianist always in search of a job, was but a mediocre musician, she had befriended Gauleiter Julius Streicher of Nuremberg and other party leaders and finally was deemed worthy of further support in the form of a job at Radio Nuremberg.<sup>33</sup> And in Berlin in 1936 there was Walter Lutze, a repertory conductor at the city's Deutsche Oper, which was within not Göring's but Goebbels's own jurisdiction. Lutze, too, was able but not brilliant and, like Stiebler, had joined the party in 1932. In addition, he was an old friend of Heinrich Hoffmann, Hitler's personal photographer, and father-in-law of Hitler Youth leader Baldur von Schirach. When Lutze was served notice on artistic grounds, Goebbels personally intervened and prevented his dismissal; although the conductor was slated for removal during the war,

when musicians were scarce, the propaganda minister protected him up to the end of the regime.<sup>34</sup>

The entire Schirach family exemplifies Nazi patronage in the arts. Baldur's father, Karl von Schirach, long retired as Generalintendant of the Weimar stage but an old follower of Hitler since the 1920s, was made intendant of the Wiesbaden theater in 1933.<sup>35</sup> Rosalind, Karl's daughter, was a run-of-the-mill soprano at the Berlin Deutsche Oper. Together with her lover Gerhard Hüsch, the well-known baritone, she organized a powerful Nazi cell there that wielded much influence. One trade journal hailed her as the "ideal image of a Nordic-Aryan singer."<sup>36</sup>

Baldur himself wrote melodramatic poems, many of which venerated the Führer and were set to music, giving cantatas such as those by the unexceptional Hans Ferdinand Schaub timely and very convenient content.<sup>37</sup> In fact, gearing the thematic content of a musical composition to the spirit of the times could bring rich rewards to its creator; Schaub found himself elevated to the position of "state composer" by the Gauleiter of Hamburg and was granted an unconditional sinecure.<sup>38</sup> Friedrich Leiboldt of Naumburg composed his *Horst Wessel Cycle* in part on verses by von Schirach; it was scheduled to be premiered by a mixed choir in 1934. Rudolf Bockelmann, another famous baritone, acted as soloist in the song "For the Führer," written by the little-known Hans Gansser and marketed by Electrola Records in 1935. Paul Winter, who perhaps deservedly was to rise to the rank of general during World War II, crafted a hymn-fanfare and had it performed at Vienna Radio in April 1938, after Hitler had marched his troops into Austria; it was inspired by his profound joy over the "magnificent consummation of the union of Greater Germany."<sup>39</sup> Frequently, such politically inspired compositions were generated because venal regime leaders—Göring, Goebbels, or Alfred Rosenberg—had commissioned them.<sup>40</sup>

But even though in the twelve years of Hitler's rule some twenty thousand compositions with political applications were produced, the large majority, written by crass dilettantes of undoubtedly sterling party reputation, were never recognized.<sup>41</sup> Hitler himself, while admitting to only moderately sophisticated musical tastes, at least was shrewd enough to see through the most blatant cases of opportunism. Hence, he "disliked the newly composed party rally music," and by 1935 he had forbidden the inflationary practice of personal dedications to the Führer.<sup>42</sup>

Not only career-conscious composers but also instrumentalists and conductors who, for lack of talent, had been failures in the pre-Nazi period now attempted to use the party badge or other regime paraphernalia to pursue their goal. They still failed because of incompetence. Doris Kaehler, at thirty-eight not the youngest contralto in the business, traveled from Berlin to Berchtesgaden, where she beleaguered Hitler at his Berghof, hoping that a chance to sing for him might lead to a spot at state radio. Kaehler was a Nazi "Old Fighter"—one of those who had joined

the party before January 1933—and the daughter of a minor party functionary, but her artistic credentials were wanting.<sup>43</sup> Paul de Nève, who in the “Marxist-Jewish Reich” had directed musical events for the party for free, was hoping for restitution; yet he remained merely a candidate for *Künstlerdank*, for in 1938 he was already fifty-seven and had no particular artistic merits.<sup>44</sup> Party comrade Otto Wartisch, a conductor, failed dismally to land a contractual post at the Munich Philharmonic in 1936, as did party comrade Fritz Müller-Rehrmann, hoping for a post as conductor, composer, or music professor anywhere in Germany, in 1937.<sup>45</sup> Typically, artists such as Wartisch and Müller-Rehrmann overestimated their chances and, on the basis of their Nazi pedigrees, aspired to positions they could never do justice to, even at the pleasure of benevolently minded dictators, as Goebbels himself correctly observed in late 1936. The composer Paul Hindemith at the start of the Nazis’ regime declared that “bad works can’t be pushed indefinitely, and the people they are now digging out are all complete mediocrities.”<sup>46</sup>

## Nazi Agencies of Music Administration

One reason why the compromise between suppression and toleration was workable was the relative impotence of, and the lack of cooperation between, the agencies set up to administer music in the regime. The first of these agencies was the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur* (Combat League for German Culture). The Kfdk, founded by the Nazi Party ideologue Alfred Rosenberg in February 1929, was a political lobby aimed at rescuing German culture from what the National Socialists considered pornography, Bolshevism, international Jewry, and the “gutter press”—all symbolized by Bauhaus art, critical writings in the left-wing *Weltbühne*, and modernist (or “atonal”) music.<sup>47</sup> It was aimed at Germany’s educated elite during Hitler’s rise to power, at a time when he was eager to court the upper strata of society. Until January 1933 conservative, nationalistic, and race-conscious Germans, most of them from academic circles but also performing artists, had joined its various regional cells. In the realm of music, the local *Kampfbund* leaders would stage recitals and concerts, frequently with the help of unemployed musicians (such as a *Kampfbund* choir), and Nazi sympathizers with an interest in high culture would attend, as well as contribute money.<sup>48</sup>

For administrative purposes the *Kampfbund* leadership created elaborate subdivisions, including sections for serious and for light music, for opera, for instrumental and vocal music, for composition, and, not least, for music education.<sup>49</sup> After January 1933 the *Kampfbund*’s ambition to be the sole regulator of music in the Third Reich became stronger, fueled by Rosenberg’s own sense of mission as the party’s official philosopher and warden of all things cultural. As job-creation schemes became ever more important, local music events featuring unemployed or under-

employed instrumentalists, vocalists, even entire orchestras or choirs took precedence in all the German provinces, such as in Halle, where an evening of Brahms sonatas and Wagner's *Wesendonk Lieder* was organized in March 1933. The inclusion of Wagner signaled the Kampfbund's uppermost purpose, that of sweeping "the last bits of Jewish rot out of our German house, quickly and thoroughly."<sup>50</sup> This belligerent agency acquired some official currency when it managed to put on a celebration in honor of Hitler's birthday on 20 April 1933 in Berlin, on which occasion Rosalind von Schirach's paramour Gerhard Hüsch presented songs by Bach and Schubert. Similarly unadulterated German fare was offered a month later in Leipzig, when Kampfbund organizers penetrated the famous Gewandhaus Orchestra hall to stage works by Brahms—supposedly in honor of the centenary of Brahms's birth. And in early summer a special arts festival in Berlin afforded Gustav Havemann's national Kampfbund Orchestra the chance to present selections from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* and *Der Fliegende Holländer*.<sup>51</sup> To emphasize the Nazi Party backing, at a Kampfbund festival in Stettin in the fall the pianist Annemarie Heyne, a niece of Deputy Führer Rudolf Hess, participated, and in Plauen so did Heinrich Bienert, a reciter of poetry as well as a Standartenführer in the SA.<sup>52</sup>

The Kampfbund was weak, however, and its domination over German music was tenuous and short-lived for two reasons. First, it was an unofficial, unauthorized party organization, founded on impulse by one Nazi leader ambitious for overall cultural control, and without Hitler's committed backing. Throughout its existence the Kfdk had its organizational and financial base only in the Nazi Party and was never grounded in government. Soon after the regime had been installed, Rosenberg's reign was challenged by Goebbels, Göring, and Prussian (later Reich) Culture and Education Minister Bernhard Rust, because of his jurisdiction over music education. Second, despite Rosenberg's historic role as founder and spiritual figurehead, the Kampfbund never enjoyed strong central leadership, either from Berlin or from Munich, the seat of party headquarters. Instead, it was directed locally and regionally by mid-level party bosses, not all of whom were musicians, and who were likely to be engaged in internecine feuding. Every provincial hamlet seems to have had a Kampfbund dictator "who issued directives capriciously," as Hindemith's frustrated music publisher wrote him in April 1933.<sup>53</sup> And so, as a consequence of the Kampfbund's shaky beginnings and lack of authority, centralization, and coordination, Rosenberg eventually was surpassed by stronger contenders for cultural control, the most persistent of whom turned out to be Goebbels.

During 1933 and early 1934 the Kampfbund sought to fortify its influence with the aid of local delegates who held key positions in municipal music circles. In Rhenish Krefeld it was conductor Walther Meyer-Giesow who lorded it over the municipal orchestra, a collegium musicum, and a madrigal choir, and who throughout 1933 planned virtually all the



musical activities in town.<sup>54</sup> In Munich, Kampfbund dictator Paul Ehlers so usurped the traditional Bach-Verein and its choir and orchestra that Carl Orff, who before the Third Reich had played a key role in it, withdrew in early 1934.<sup>55</sup> And in Marburg the Kfdk chief used his power to organize as many musical events as possible, for the greatest number of party faithful, at preferential ticket prices.<sup>56</sup>

The undoing of Rosenberg's combative organization began as early as spring 1933, for it was taking liberties in music policy and administration for which it had no mandate, thus embarrassing not only civil but party authorities as well. In April a Rhenish Kampfbund cell, allegedly with Rosenberg's authorization, offered Munich composer and conductor Hans Pfitzner the directorship of the Düsseldorf Opera. But when Pfitzner checked with the lord mayor of Düsseldorf, who was ultimately responsible, he received no commitment. The Kampfbund then explained that it had merely tried to act on a suggestion from Rosenberg, but that, naturally, Pfitzner would have to deal with the mayor himself. The Kampfbund had lost face, and Pfitzner was chagrined.<sup>57</sup>

In north German Schwerin, meanwhile, concertmaster Karl Krämer was summarily dismissed from the Mecklenburg state theater for displeasing one of his superiors. Krämer had the Kampfbund intercede with the Gauleiter, but since it was without authority, nothing came of the action.<sup>58</sup> In Hamburg, Kapellmeister and Kampfbund member Willi Hammer set down a definition of art meant to serve as a general directive for the Reich, but no sooner had it been promulgated than it sank into oblivion.<sup>59</sup> By spreading lies, a Berlin Kampfbund functionary in February 1934 tried to discredit the noted music critic Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, but was forced to apologize after Stuckenschmidt's vigorous protest.<sup>60</sup>

By this time Goebbels, who not only was in charge of propaganda for the party but also since March 1933 held a ministerial position authorizing him to oversee matters of culture almost everywhere, had put his Reichsmusikkammer (Reich Music Chamber), or RMK, firmly into place, and it was now applying heavy pressure on Rosenberg's disparaged Kampfbund cells. Although Rosenberg was given an "Office for the Supervision of the Total Spiritual and Philosophical Education and Development of the NSDAP," his remained a marginal party agency, in contrast to Goebbels's dual functions in the party and the state. Within this new office Rosenberg created yet another music control post, hoping to redouble the efforts of his lackluster Kampfbund on the strength of party legitimacy while coupling the impotent Kfdk with the Kraft durch Freude (Strength-through-Joy) organization, or KdF, of Robert Ley. The new control post, known as the Main Office for Music, was handed over to Herbert Gerigk, an ambitious musicologist and music critic with impressive Nazi credentials.<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile, the Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur in its new guise became known as the NSKG, or NS-Kulturgemeinde (National Socialist Cultural Community); henceforth, it would perform

merely as a music (and theater) lobby, purchasing cheap blocks of tickets for its many, now entirely passive, members throughout the Reich. It also organized concerts of its own.<sup>62</sup> The NS-Kulturgemeinde was totally absorbed by Strength-through-Joy in 1937 and thereupon ceased to exist as one of Rosenberg's cultural platforms.<sup>63</sup> During the war especially, the KdF organized mass events for the sake of armaments production and troop entertainment; in its service German musicians performed for BMW workers as well as for Waffen-SS soldiers and civilians on the home front. Here music's new calling as an instrument of politics and war had been fully realized.<sup>64</sup>

Significant defections from the Kampfbund had occurred in the spring of 1933, when four leading functionaries left to organize a Nazi cartel of musicians in Berlin under violinist Gustav Havemann.<sup>65</sup> Their Reichskartell der Deutschen Musikerschaft was organized along neocorporatist lines, using notions borrowed in part from Italian Fascism, ideally thought to serve the collective interests of a professional group and popular long before Hitler with spokesmen for other occupations, such as lawyers and physicians.<sup>66</sup> In the fall this Reichskartell became the nucleus for the Reich Music Chamber.<sup>67</sup>

In March 1933 Goebbels was still indicating his support for Rosenberg's Kampfbund, but by then it was already clear that he intended to take over the reins of culture in the Reich himself.<sup>68</sup> Goebbels fully realized this claim when, in late June, he was officially authorized to set up the machinery for such control, utilizing his new Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (Promi, or Reich propaganda ministry), and hence endangering any and all of Rosenberg's preexisting party institutions.<sup>69</sup> Former Rosenberg sycophants such as Havemann were beginning to drift into Goebbels's camp, and Hans Hinkel, once a Kampfbund secretary, was already in his employ.<sup>70</sup>

The founding of the RMK was formally announced on 1 November 1933 as part of an umbrella organization, the Reichskulturkammer (Reich Culture Chamber, or RKK) presided over by Goebbels. There were similar subchambers for visual arts, theater, literature, journalism, radio, and later also for film. Membership in the RMK, as in the other chambers, was compulsory for all professionals in their respective categories.<sup>71</sup> Havemann and other cronies from the Kampfbund—such as Heinz Ihler, a Berlin businessman, occasional piano player, and Nazi Old Fighter since 1927—commenced to staff the various sections, Havemann himself taking charge of musicians after merging his Reichskartell, and Ihler becoming the executive secretary. Hans Hinkel became responsible for the RMK in 1935, when he was appointed secretary-general of the Reich Culture Chamber. This much larger culture chamber was ceremoniously inaugurated on 15 November 1933, with Richard Strauss conducting his own *Festliches Präludium*. This was no accident, for at Goebbels's behest Strauss had agreed to serve as president of the subordinate RMK.<sup>72</sup>

Since 1945, and even before, there has been much speculation as to

why the world-famous composer consented to take on this—to say the least—questionable job. Strauss certainly did not have to do so for financial reasons, for he was a wealthy man; he was in no need of additional publicity; and in 1933 he was not yet under any sort of political pressure. The answer is not, as one German musicologist has contended,<sup>73</sup> that he was a power-hungry, dyed-in-the-wool National Socialist, but that he saw in the dictatorship of Hitler a convenient if somewhat distasteful tool to realize goals he himself had been anticipating for decades. Admittedly no friend of the democracy of Weimar,<sup>74</sup> Strauss believed that a dictatorial regime could finally implement the changes toward neocorporatism that would benefit the German musical profession, and in particular composers, on behalf of which he had been toiling since the beginning of the century. As newly available documents from the Strauss family archive in Garmisch reveal, three goals were foremost in his mind. First, he wanted to upgrade musical culture in the country by instituting throughout the highest level of training and performance. Second, he wished to increase the profit share of serious composers vis-à-vis light-music composers, among whom he most detested the creators of operettas such as Franz Lehár, a constant object of his vilification. Third, he aimed to extend the period of copyright for serious-music compositions, for the sake of composers and their heirs.<sup>75</sup>

His was a specialized agenda, sharply skewed toward the immediate concerns of people like himself. Significantly, Strauss chose to head the RMK section for composers personally. It is doubtful whether Goebbels recognized the potential for conflict when he appointed the maestro—a conflict that inexorably developed over time. But for now, in the fall of 1933, he merely wished to exploit Strauss's immense prestige nationally and especially internationally, for Hitler's regime craved recognition abroad, just as Strauss intended to exploit the powers of a dictatorship.<sup>76</sup> In any event, because of Strauss's professional self-interest in the RMK and his reluctance to exchange the comfortable life of a composer in Garmisch for a functionary's presence in Berlin, he delegated most RMK affairs to underlings, in particular to his business manager Ihler, becoming personally involved only in matters dear to his heart. Strauss's letters to the few men in Berlin whom he trusted and regularly corresponded with, notably Ihler, Hugo Rasch, and Julius Kopsch, demonstrate contempt for their daily routines, which he deemed far beneath him.<sup>77</sup>

One immediate result of this absentee presidency was a lack of direction in the upper ranks of the Berlin RMK, leading to confusion, corruption, and infighting. At Berlin headquarters Ihler and Havemann especially were soon feuding with their colleagues; Ihler himself was accused of protectionism and inefficiency, others of tardiness and sexual misconduct.<sup>78</sup> A second result was a conspicuous absence of firm RMK controls throughout the Reich, normally manifested in the fascist strictures and repression that even then typified Nazi policy in other areas.

It is true that under Strauss's arm's-length presidency the RMK initi-