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The Concurrent Prevalence of Modernism and Romanticism as seen in the Operas Performed between the World Wars and Exemplified in Ernst Krenek's Jonny Spielt Auf

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**THE CONCURRENT PREVALENCE OF
MODERNISM AND ROMANTICISM
AS SEEN IN THE OPERAS PERFORMED
BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS
AND EXEMPLIFIED IN
ERNST KRENEK'S JONNY SPIELT AUF**

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The College of Music and Dramatic Arts

by

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Abstract

Ernst Krenek's 1927 opera *Jonny Spielt Auf* represents *Zeitoper*, or "opera of the times". The opera's story line and characters symbolize Krenek's internal debate of a divided artistic world between all that is modern and innovative and the older mindset of romanticism, both of which he used in his compositions. This dissertation intends to peer into Krenek's world and influences of the 1920s to consider the symbols in the opera that represent Modernism and Romanticism.

The Golden Age of the Weimar Republic occurred from 1924 to 1929, between the World Wars. During this time, Austrian and German composers had the funds to publish their works and have their operas performed. Performers from America, including African American jazz bands, were making their first tours to Europe and had a large impact on European composers.

During the Third Reich, beginning in 1933, the Romanticists were honored and praised by the Nazi regime while the Modernists' music, along with jazz and the music of Jewish composers, was banned and labeled in an exhibit as *Entartete Musik* or *Degenerate Music*. The poster for *Jonny Spielt Auf* was used as the poster of this exhibit because of the character Jonny in the opera. Though Jonny was performed by a white man in blackface, he represents an African American jazz musician. Max Spilcker, the original singer to play Jonny, had relations to Hitler, creating a possible tie to the *Entartete Musik* poster.

The symbols found in an underlying story of *Jonny Spielt Auf* further reflect *Zeitoper*. The story centers around a composer, Max, who represents Krenek. Daniello, a virtuoso violinist, represents Romanticism, while Jonny, a jazz violinist, represents Modernism. Krenek uses both styles of music in his score. The first clue in the opera of Daniello and Jonny's contrasting ideals

is found in the violin solo from Act 1, Scene 3 labeled “Tango”. The solo intertwines with a saxophone solo as if to demonstrate an interplay between the two characters. Every moment of the opera has a double meaning related to Krenek’s world of the 1920s, with much of its symbolism yet to be analyzed.

Introduction

I cannot begin without first addressing the nature of Krenek's *Jonny Spielt Auf*. The opera came into my knowledge after taking one of the most influential classes in my career- the string literature class at Louisiana State University. The class focused a considerable portion on music leading to, and during, the Third Reich- *Entartete Musik*. It exposed me to unfamiliar composers due to their untimely deaths or exiles had been obscured by history. The opera was fascinating to me, particularly after listening to its finale that demonstrated modernism through Avant-guard elements like whistling and sirens, and its political undertones. After further listening I realized how much was centered around the violin and knew I needed to understand more about this unfamiliar opera.

Several hurdles occurred upon starting my research journey. First, I had only heard the audio recording from the 1993 Leipzig Opernchor cast and, to date, have not been able to view a staged opera performance. The only translation of the opera in English commonly available in the United States (to my knowledge) has come from the 1993 Leipzig recording CD. It features the German text next to an English translation as well as an introduction to *Entartete Musik*. Few renditions of the opera have been performed in the United States since the Metropolitan Opera in New York premiered the work in 1929. The opera was met to a cold reception, no doubt due to the racial nature of Jonny's character.¹ Respected music critic of the time Herbert Peyser wrote one of the first reviews of the premier saying, "I do not think that producing *Jonny Spielt Auf* in America is really an act of kindness to Ernst Krenek".²

Jonny's character is a jazz violinist and is featured in every poster of *Jonny Spielt Auf*. He is also a white man dressed in blackface imitating African American Jazz musicians and American minstrel shows popular in the 1920s, then considered very new and exotic in Germany. African American jazz bands and performers like Joséphine Baker began their first tours to Germany in the 1920s, specifically

¹ John L. Stewart, *Ernst Krenek The Man and His Music* (Berkley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1991), 185.

² Herbert Peyser, "Jonny over There," *Modern Music* VI, no. 2 (1929), 32.

during the Golden Era of the Weimar Republic beginning in 1924. Many composers were inspired by these performances and quickly tried to replicate and borrow many of their themes in their own music. It is important to understand that the intention of the character, Jonny, was to represent an uninhibited sense of freedom and modernism that contrasted with old ways of thinking- old music and old-world ideas. In this, Jonny also represents everything the Nazi Regime (which banned jazz music during the Third Reich) opposed, whether Krenek intentionally planned this or not. Explanation aside, I want to make clear before continuing that the use of blackface in modern performances is not appropriate and is offensive. Future performances of the opera should be completely aware of this, no matter the country of performance.

With that being said the focus of this dissertation will be on Jonny as a violinist and a symbol of Modernism. The racial implications will be discussed briefly but is not the primary focus.

Reader discretion is advised.

Chapter 1. An Introduction to Interwar Europe in the 1920s and its Operas

As the end of World War I drew near, the world adapted, feared, and in some parts grew bitter towards the changes and uncertainty. Through this change, a new taste for grittier opera and musical styles emerged to reflect this outlook. World War I ended on November 11, 1918 and in 1920 the creation of the League of Nations stood as a hope to unite the world. The idea was presented by Woodrow Wilson and, though well intentioned, was nothing more than a hopeful vision.³ The League of Nations slowly started to fall apart from its creation. Fascism in Italy began in 1925 and withdrew from the League of Nations in 1927. Germany was not a part of LON until 1926 and withdrew in 1933 with the rise of the Third Reich and the Nazi Regime.⁴

Many other countries around the world joined and withdrew through the 1930s, but the hardest hit country after World War I was Austria. The Treaty of Versailles, a peace treaty signed on June 28, 1919, changed Austria's name to the First Austrian Republic, though they considered themselves The Republic of German-Austria.⁵ Germany, which had now become the Weimar Republic and Austria were both economically in poor shape. Between 1919 and 1923 the recession hit, and the economy plummeted in the Weimar Republic. Composers (many of whom were Austrians living in Germany) struggled to find venues for opera performances. In 1923 the German currency was changed to the *Rentenmark*, and the old currency was destroyed, helping solve hyperinflation. A loan from the United States helped kickstart Germany's economy.⁶ The Golden Era of the Weimar Republic refers to the time between 1924 and 1929

³ John L. Stewart, *Ernst Krenek The Man and His Music* (Berkley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1991), 18.

⁴ Christian Tomuschat, *The United Nations at Age Fifty: A Legal Perspective* (The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1995), 77-79.

⁵ Barbara Jelavich, *Modern Austria: Empire and Republic, 1815-1986* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 156.

⁶ Editors at BBC, "Recovery of Weimar," BBC, 2020, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zwxnqhv/revision/1>.

where the economy picked back up again.⁷ New styles and technologies came into light like German talking film that tended to feature German Expressionism, Bauhaus (beginning 1919)- a new form of architecture that was based on a more minimalist design, and growing movements in art and literature.⁸ Composers finally had the opportunity and the funding to have their works performed on the stage that had been composed years earlier (for the older composers). Many composers' operas were so popular, productions began popping up all over Europe. This meant composers could learn from each other, borrow new styles of composition, and expand genres of music.

Modern styles were embraced by the general public as all things new and exciting in art, music, and dance. Some compositions divided audiences on whether new forms had gone too far. At the same time, other composers coped with an everchanging Europe by creating operas that were reminiscent of the past, drawing source material from history and mythology.⁹ These composers looked to the operas of Wagner and Verdi written in the late romantic style. German opera composer Richard Wagner changed the world of opera in the Romantic Era. Wagner was born in 1813, Leipzig, Germany and died in 1883, Venice, Italy. His operas were mostly based on German legends though many operas reflect his socialist ideas and anti-Semitic views. Wagner expanded the concept of *Leitmotifs* or musical themes carried throughout a work that represent ideas, characters, or scenes.¹⁰ One of his most important contributions was his coined term *Gesamtkunstwerk*, German for 'total work of art'. *Gesamtkunstwerk* referred to the combined art form of music, dance, and poetry in large, grand productions. The art and

⁷ Martin Kitchen, *Illustrated History of Germany* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 241.

⁸ Sefton Delmer, *Weimar Germany: Democracy on Trial* (London: London: Macdonald, 1972), 82-93.

⁹ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Romanticism," in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 2020).

¹⁰ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Richard Wagner," in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 2020).

architecture of sets also reflected this ideal. Wagner's operas featured large orchestras and casts, true to *Gesamtkunstwerk*.¹¹ Concert halls needed to be larger to accommodate such performances. Wagner designed his own concert hall for the sole purpose of performing his large-scale operas. The concert hall, Bayreuther Festspielhaus (more commonly known as Richard Wagner Festspielhaus), began construction in 1872 on Wagner's 59th birthday. The concert hall featured new innovations like a hood over the pit orchestra to make them not viewable to the audience and to balance the sound between orchestra and singers. The acoustics of the hall were improved and audience seating expanded and changing the layout of the seating gave every member of the audience a good view. The completion in 1876 premiered his largest work, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, a four-opera cycle (though three were performed in its first season).¹²

All composers of opera in the 1920s, especially in Germany, were to some degree influenced by Wagner. He became one of the most important symbols of German music. Also continuing and expanding on the romantic side was the operetta genre that grew in popularity in the late 1800s. Operettas were usually satirical farces like a light opera but have romantically sentimental plots with dancing, spoken dialog, songs, and orchestral music.¹³ Composers who paved the way in this genre included English duo Gilbert and Sullivan, and Viennese composer Johann Strauss. The most famous Austrian operetta, Franz Lehár's *The Merry Widow* (1904)

¹¹ Barry Millington, *Gesamtkunstwerk* (Oxford University Press, 2002), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-5000011027>.

¹² Ned A. Bowman, "Investing a Theatrical Ideal: Wagner's Bayreuth 'Festspielhaus,'" *Educational Theatre Journal* 18, no. 4 (1966): 429–38, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3205270>.

¹³ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Operetta," in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., January 7, 2015), <https://www.britannica.com/art/operetta>.

continued to be a cherished favorite throughout Europe and up until World War II. It still to this day remains one of the most popular operettas in the world.¹⁴

On the opposite spectrum, new genres were beginning to emerge like Jazz. In the early 1920s, jazz bands from America were making their first tours in Europe. Germany embraced Jazz and it was all the rage for dances and music. Germans created their own bands which usually consisted of piano, drums, and a violinist who would also double on saxophone.¹⁵ The violinist was called the *Stehgeiger* or ‘standing violinist’ who was the band leader of the café orchestra.¹⁶ *Stehgeiger* can also refer to a concertmaster role who conducts the orchestra from the first desk, usually to Viennese waltzes.¹⁷ One of the most famous *Stehgeiger* of the twenty-first century is André Rieu, who tours the world with his Johann Strauss Orchestra in flashy costumes. The ensemble is known for playing waltzes, but they also play Nationalistic music of each country and other crowd pleasing works. André Rieu leads with his violin standing in front of the orchestra.¹⁸

Another smaller stage genre, *Cabaret*, originated from France in the late 1800s as a small performance in a bar, or other small room. People ate and/or watched the performances on the smaller stage. Performances included dance, song, and/or poetry numbers, usually containing political satire. The concept spread throughout Europe from the Netherlands, to Germany, to Poland, to America, then to England and so on. In Germany it was called *Kabarett* and started appearing in 1901. By the time of the Weimar Republic in the 1920s, German *Kabarett* was

¹⁴ Bernard Grun, *Gold and Silver: The Life and Times of Franz Lehár* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1970), 44, 160.

¹⁵ Michael Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 5.

¹⁶ Horst Leuchtmann, *Dictionary of Terms in Music*, 4th Edition (München: K. G. Saur, 1992), 356.

¹⁷ Marilyn Fishcher and Isaiah Jackson, *Toward a Vision of Mutual Responsiveness: Remythologizing the Symphony Orchestra* (Symphony Orchestra Institute, 1997), 74.

¹⁸ “André Rieu and His Johann Strauss Orchestra,” André Rieu, 2020, <https://www.andrerieu.com/en>.

characteristically different from other countries' cabaret due to its type of political satire and gallows humor (dark humor).¹⁹ Avant-guard in music and art also became an important theme that tried to push boundaries of standard forms. Renowned intellectual and professor, Jochen Schulte-Sasse explained in his introduction *Theory of Modernism Vs. Theory of the Avant-Garde* "Modernism may be understandable as an attack on traditional writing techniques, but the avant-garde can only be understood as an attack meant to alter the institutionalized commerce with art".²⁰ The true definition of Avant-guard differs in interpretation and location. For this dissertation, Avant-guard elements will refer to elements in the music that were not traditionally found in music during this period. Modernist composers strived to incorporate new techniques like Jazz and Cabaret, but also experimented in Atonality. Many composers also looked for a balance between the old and new world, incorporating elements of late-romanticism (borrowing from romantic composer and late romantic composers like Mahler and Strauss) and modernism. Others looked to question the times fully, challenge them, and work as a political commentary. The Golden Era of the Weimar Republic was an era of creative freedom.

¹⁹ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Cabaret," in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 2014).

²⁰ Jochen Schulte-Sasse, "Theory of Modernism Vs. Theory of the Avant-Garde," in *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, vol. 4 (Min: Manchester University Press, 1984), xv.

Chapter 2. Music and Opera during the Weimar Republic: The Stark Contrast of Romanticism and Modernism

During the Weimar Republic, operas by Wagner and Johann Strauss II were still prevalent in the opera performance rotation in Germany.²¹ During the Golden Age, operas were being premiered, and their scores toured, all over Europe. To create a list of all operas created during the Golden Era of the Weimar Republic would be close to impossible as composers were living away from their home countries, studying in other countries, and traveling just to see performances. Other compositions were lost or destroyed during World War II or were not important or impactful enough to put in many history books. Notable operas were coming from Prague, Vienna, Paris, Germany, Russia (though some works premiered in France), and Italy. England was also producing their own operas, notable composers being Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst.

From the list mentioned above, Germany, Austria, and Prague, Czechoslovakia as well as Paris France nurtured composers who pushed the boundaries of music farther than Italy or England and are considered the modernists. Czechoslovakia at the time was made of 30 percent German population and most, if not all, Austrian opera composers spent at least some of their career in Germany. What one can gather from learning as many of the composers' relations is that the composers who leaned towards and paved the way of Modernism, were learning from and being influenced by each other.²²

Of composers that made a bountiful impact and influence on the music industry (though not necessarily a large impact upon Krenek's *Jonny Spielt Auf*) included German composer Paul

²¹ Douglas Jarman, *The Berg Companion* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990), 212.

²² Leon Botstein, "Modernism" (Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040625>.

Hindemith, a violinist/violist. He wrote works not only for opera, but for all types of small ensembles and violin and viola concertos. Hindemith wrote several operas in the 1920s, the first of the Golden Era being *Cardillac* in 1926. Many consider his style in the Neo-classical but feature many complexities that set his music apart. Kurt Weill and Hindemith both collaborated on works later in the 1920/30s.²³ Korngold, most known for his influences on Hollywood and film scores, wrote seven operas, though more inspired by the works of Puccini and Johann Strauss II. His opera during the Golden Era *Das Wunder der Heliane* (1927) premiered at the Hamburg State Opera where many operas were performed, though this was considered one of Korngold's failures.²⁴ Other notable works include Leoš Janáček *Příhody lišky Bystroušky* (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) (1924) and *Šárka* (1925), both in the Czechoslovakia,²⁵ and Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* premiering in Paris, France in 1927.²⁶

Beyond this list, there were several more operas being performed around Europe that should also qualify as influences, but due to the vast amount of operas at the time, the list is narrowed down to large hits and composers who were living in Germany or Austria at the time, even if it was not their country of origin. The following is a set of influences that potentially lead to the creation of *Jonny Spielt Auf*.

²³ Giseller Schubert, "Hindemith, Paul" (Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000013053>.

²⁴ Brendan G. Carroll, "Korngold, Erich Wolfgang" (Oxford University Press, 2020), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-3000000199>.

²⁵ John Tyrrell, "Janáček, Leoš" (Oxford University Press, 2019), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000014122>.

²⁶ Richard Taruskin, "Oedipus Rex" (Oxford University Press, 2002), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-5000903612>.

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) was born to a Jewish family (though he converted to Christianity later) in a lower-middle class ghetto of Vienna. Schoenberg's was encouraged in his early career by Richard Strauss (though Strauss didn't support the more atonal direction Schoenberg gravitated towards) and Gustav Mahler. Schoenberg was considered one of the leading Modernists and most controversial composers of his time. Most of his compositions include chamber works, many of which are not a typical ensemble formation. He went through several phases as a composer including a late romantic style, then atonality (music without a tonal center), until he finally developed his twelve-tone technique. With his last technique he had a following of students, most notably Webern and Berg. With this following of students, Schoenberg is considered the founding member of the Second Viennese School.²⁷ One of Schoenberg's opera *Erwartung* premiered on June 6, 1924 although it was written in 1909, well before World War I. The libretto was written by Austrian author Marie Pappenheim. It is hard to call the work an opera as it only features one female soprano with a large full orchestra, but it is an acted monologue. The opera is atonal and under the branch of Modernism but does not feature the twelve-tone technique for which Schoenberg is known for. *Erwartung* in many ways was one of the most important turning points for the Modernist movement.²⁸ The work spans half an hour or 426 measures, contrasting the four plus hours of Wagner operas. The concept of a one act opera became more popular among composers including Kurt Weill who wrote several one act

²⁷ O. W. Neighbour, "Schoenberg [Schönberg], Arnold" (Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000025024>.

²⁸ O. W. Neighbour, "Erwartung" (Oxford University Press, 2002), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-5000901462>.

operas in the 1920s. Notably Stravinsky was writing one act ballets like *Pulcinella* in 1920. In his memoirs, Krenek recalls how *Pulcinella* was also a trend setter in the field.²⁹

Alban Berg (1885-1935, Vienna) wrote songs, orchestral and chamber works, and two operas- *Wozzeck*, premiering in 1925 and *Lulu*, in 1937. He spent most of his life and musical training in Vienna, Austria.³⁰ Berg first had the idea to write *Wozzeck* in 1914 but did not start writing until after the first World War in 1918 as he enlisted for military services in 1915. At the same time, he completed his “*Pieces for orchestra op. 6, Marsch*” which he considered the most complicated score ever written.³¹ Berg based his opera on the play by Georg Büchner, *Woyzeck* (various spellings) but Berg reduced it from 26 to 15 scenes.³² At this time, Berg was dear friends with Webern and Schoenberg and confided in the two on the writing and publishing of *Wozzeck*. Berg and Webern were both students of Schoenberg and are all considered members of the Second Viennese School. Berg began his studies with Schoenberg in 1904. Schoenberg’s development of the twelve-tone technique was still considered wildly different and hard to understand in the 1920s.³³

Wozzeck is a dark story centered around a poor working man (Wozzeck) who murders his wife and commits suicide while their child plays not understanding the tragedy.³⁴ Berg in many ways saw himself as the main character Wozzeck as he confided to his wife during the first World War saying “I have been spending these war years just as dependent on people I hate,

²⁹ Ernst Krenek, *Horizons Circled: Reflections on My Music* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 22-23.

³⁰ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Alban Berg,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., December 20, 2019), <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alban-Berg>.

³¹ Patricia Hall, *Berg’s Wozzeck* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

³² Douglas Jarman, “Berg, Alban” (Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000002767>.

³³ Krenek, *Horizons Circled: Reflections on My Music*, 20.

³⁴ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Wozzeck,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., May 3, 2019), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Wozzeck>.

have been in chains, sick, captive, resigned, in fact, humiliated”.³⁵ Historians also draw a comparison to Berg and an illegitimate child he fathered named Marie.³⁶ *Wozzeck* features little use of the 12-tone technique but is mostly considered a modernist work with moments of romanticism and atonality. Berg takes musical influences from Wagner, Mahler, and Strauss, but it is his vocal writing that was so innovative, especially with the use of *leitmotifs* for each character. This includes how the orchestra is used in accordance with the words, especially exclamatory moments in the text.³⁷ The score was finished in 1921 and dedicated it to his friend Alma Mahler, Gustav Mahler’s widow who helped raise funds for the opera’s publication after its completion. Berg had a hard time finding someone to produce his opera as the Austria economy plummeted. Eventually the Berlin State Theater took on the challenge to perform the work under conductor Erich Kleiber. The score was musically difficult and cast members quit and changed, meaning the premier had to be postponed multiple times. *Wozzeck* took 137 rehearsals before its premier on December 14, 1925. A ‘scandal’ ensued during the final dress rehearsal two days before the premier, when the Director of the Opera House, Max von Schillings was dismissed without notice and without having a replacement. Many headlines included “Heated fight about the *Wozzeck* Rehearsal” and “Tumult during the general rehearsal”.³⁸ The premier had mixed reviews, one critic describing the work as “having been not in a public theatre but in an insane asylum” though another critic understood the music as “drawn from *Wozzeck*’s poor, worried, inarticulate, chaotic soul. It is a vision in sound”.³⁹ The opera itself gave Alban Berg respect from critiques as a composer of Modernist opera. Because of this

³⁵ George Perle, *The Operas of Alban Berg*, vol. Two: Lulu (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1985), 295.

³⁶ George Perle, 295.

³⁷ Jarman, “Berg, Alban.”

³⁸ Hall, *Berg’s Wozzeck*, 62.

³⁹ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Alban Berg.”

work he gained many new students eager to learn from him.⁴⁰ All of the listed modernist composers were to some degree influenced by the compositions of Berg, personally knew him, or knew his style of compositions.

Kurt Weill (1900-1950) was born to a Jewish family in the Dessau Jewish community. His father worked as a cantor and Kurt grew up playing the piano and having a love of theater which he carried with him through his life and studies. He eventually moved to Berlin and began his studies at the University of Berlin in 1918. Weill was politically active in school student council that worked to fight against antisemitism. In 1919 he worked at the Dessau Friedrich-Theater as a pianist and composer then moved to small theater that performed plays, operettas, and operas to a small audience. It was not a high-level position, as shows changed once a week, but this is how Weill learned his vast amount of theater and orchestral knowledge. In 1921 Weill began studying composition with Ferruccio Busoni, a respected Italian composer who began in a late Romantic composition style and eventually experimented a little in atonality. Busoni's style was very much inspired by Verdi and Wagner. Busoni wrote several operas, orchestral works, and was known for writing editions of J.S. Bach's piano works. Weill, at the same time, went through a period of writing one act operas. In 1924 he began collaborating with stage writer Georg Kaiser, who would write the librettos to three of his operas, one being *Der Protagonist*. Kurt Weill was the only composer with whom Kaiser worked. Kaiser wrote the play of the same name in 1920. While working on *Der Protagonist*, Weill also worked on his *Concerto for Violin and Wind orchestra Op. 12*. Both were complete by the summer of 1925, the same year he met his future wife Lotte Lenya.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Stewart, *Ernst Krenek The Man and His Music*, 79.

⁴¹ Jürgen Schebera, *Kurt Weill, An Illustrated Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 4, 15, 17, 29, 55, 56, 59.

Der Protagonist was originally set to be a ballet, much like the modernist style of Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du soldat* which is an avant-guard work to be played, spoken, and danced while accompanied by a septet of instruments. *L'Histoire du soldat* premiered in Lausanne, Switzerland on September 28, 1918 and later in 1924 had its German premier in Frankfurt and Wiesbaden.⁴² Eventually it was decided between Weill and Kaiser to make it a one act opera in the Modernist style. Like Stravinsky's work, the musicians were set as a chamber ensemble, but this time as an octet. Musically, Weill's score features linear polyphony atonal material, and penetrating chromaticism. Historians have also drawn parallels to Kurt Weill's *Concerto for Violin and Wind Orchestra Op. 12* to *L'Histoire du soldat* for a similar musical language.⁴³

At the time of writing *Der Protagonist*, nothing suggests that Weill knew Berg, but three months before its premier he wrote a letter to his parents that he and Kaiser were going to see the premier of the opera *Wozzeck* after hearing about the scandal at the public dress rehearsal. Weill described it as "a very modern opera" and wrote to his parents saying "In three months it will be my turn ---" almost anticipating a similar public outlook and scandal. The premier on March 27, 1926 was anything but; *Der Protagonist* was an instant success and launched his career as an opera composer.⁴⁴

Count Harry Kessler, who was a patron of modern art and music and sponsor of Weill went to the Berlin premier of *Jonny Spielt Auf* in February 1927 saying, "not very original musically, but talented".⁴⁵ It is important to note *Jonny Spielt Auf* premiered in February 1927 and Weill's opera *Mahagonny* premiered July 1927. Both use the concept of jazz in their operas.

⁴² Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works Through Mavra* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1996), 1295-1297, 1301.

⁴³ Schebera, *Kurt Weill, An Illustrated Life*, 58.

⁴⁴ Schebera, *Kurt Weill, An Illustrated Life*, 58, 66.

⁴⁵ Ronald Sanders, *The Days Grow Short- The Life and Music of Kurt Weill* (New York, New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1980), 103.

Kessler would agree that Weill takes elements of jazz but imbeds his unique style while Krenek uses jazz more as a surface idea to serve the character and story. It should also be mentioned that the productions of *Mahagonny* and *Jonny Spielt Auf* were both directed and staged by Walter Brüggemann and the sets designed by Caspar Neher.⁴⁶ *Mahagonny* didn't get the reception it deserved as it was overshadowed by the continued success of *Jonny Spielt Auf* that had premiered just months earlier and was touring in every possible theater in Germany.

Kurt Weill is most known for his opera *Die Dreigroschenoper* or *The Threepennie Opera*. He worked on it from April-September 1928 as an adaptation of John Gay's *The Beggars Opera* from 1728. It premiered on August 31, 1928 in Berlin and was a wild success. The operetta was most famous for its song *Mack the Knife* (*Moritat von Mackie Messer*) which became a hit popular song. The song and the operetta itself have cabaret style influences. His wife, Lotte, was an actress and cabaret singer to name one influence. Some critic at the time considered it the future of musical theater where opera and operetta are blending into one.⁴⁷ As Kurt Weill eventually emigrated to New York, his stage works guided the way to modern musical theater and Broadway.⁴⁸

Ernst Krenek (1900-1991) was born in Vienna to a Catholic family. His father was an officer and his mother taught piano but not at an advanced level. Krenek was drawn to music at an early age though his family never thought he would have a career in music. As a child, they found he had talent for music and soon outgrew his teachers. His parents supported his enthusiasm and studies and allowed him to attend symphony concerts and opera concerts. By the time he was twelve he was playing opera transcriptions and was analyzing them with the help of

⁴⁶ Ronald Sanders, 103, 104, 146.

⁴⁷ Schebera, 108.

⁴⁸ Schebera, 311.

his teacher Balluff.⁴⁹ In 1916 he began studying composition with Franz Schreker at the Vienna Music Academy. Schreker, at the time, was a very successful opera composer although his compositions became irrelevant and his name forgotten by the 1930s. Schreker's composition style was that of romanticism and expressionism all surrounded in a tonal center.⁵⁰ This made him less relevant with the younger forward-thinking composers who were experimenting in atonality. During World War I, Krenek was drafted shortly in 1918 though he was able to continue his studies with Schreker. Krenek eventually moved to Berlin to continue his musical studies in 1920, where he made many musical connections, one being conductor Hermann Scherchen who would later help promote his music. Schreker was appointed to a teaching position in Berlin where Krenek was still receiving lessons until they had a falling out and Krenek left the school. For a long period, Krenek even considered Schreker "my worst enemy".⁵¹ Krenek's first jobs included playing celesta in occasional opera orchestras in Berlin. He had a short-lived marriage with Anna Mahler, daughter to composer Gustav Mahler whose music he studied and had great respect for. In 1925 he took on the job as director Paul Bekker's assistant at the Kassel State Opera and eventually followed Bekker to Wiesbaden State Opera.

Krenek went through many compositional phases in his career. He was always trying to learn, even into his later years when he was living in California experimenting with electronic music. He started experimenting with atonality in 1921, studied the works of Stravinsky and Les Six in 1924, and studied Schubert in a romantic phase in 1925.⁵² His first compositions however included chamber music, piano pieces, and vocal works. His first symphony was written in 1921,

⁴⁹ Stewart, *Ernst Krenek The Man and His Music*, 8, 9.

⁵⁰ Aaron J. Johnson, "Franz Schreker," The OREL Foundation, 2020, http://oreloundation.org/composers/article/franz_schreker.

⁵¹ Stewart, *Ernst Krenek The Man and His Music*, 36, 25.

⁵² Universal Edition, "Ernst Krenek," Universal Edition, 2020, <https://www.universaledition.com/ernst-krenek-395>.

wrote his first violin concerto in 1924, and his first violin sonata in 1925.⁵³ In his career and studies, Krenek studied the compositions of Wagner, Mahler, Schubert, Ravel, Stravinsky, Berg, and later in his career Schoenberg, to name a few.

Krenek wrote several operas his first being *Zwindburg* in 1922 (not performed until 1924) and *Der Sprug über de Schatten* in 1923. His first big production on the stage was *Orpheus and Eurydike* after Kokoschka's play of the same name. Kokoschka had been looking for a composer to set his work and found a good partnership with Krenek for the opera. Kokoschka had previously been in trouble with the Ministry of Cultural and Instruction due to the poster of his previous play *Mörder*. The poster feature violence and explicit sexuality. The opera premiered on November 27, 1926 at Kassel State Opera under Paul Beckker. It was not successful with audiences and didn't receive many performances, but critics found it a successful first opera for Krenek and a turning point for twentieth century opera.⁵⁴ Parallels are found between Krenek's *Orpheus and Eurydike* and Berg's *Wozzek*, both having similar uses of atonality and voice leading. Krenek discusses later in his later autobiography that he did not use *Wozzek* as a model but did write to Berg after studying his piano vocal score to *Wozzek* to ask about the handling of voices.⁵⁵ Berg described his voicing as being influenced by Wagner, Mozart, and Bach. Berg wrote a lengthy letter with examples from his opera to Krenek demonstrating his influences. This began their acquaintances that later grew into a friendship. Due to his growing distaste for Germany and the rising Nazi party, Krenek moved back to Vienna, and became neighbors with Berg.⁵⁶

⁵³ Krenek, *Horizons Circled: Reflections on My Music*, 156, 164.

⁵⁴ Stewart, *Ernst Krenek The Man and His Music*, 74, 75, 78.

⁵⁵ Stewart, *Ernst Krenek: The Man and His Music*, 79, 80.

⁵⁶ Stewart, 51, 65, 75, 79-80.

Krenek's next and most important work is *Jonny Spielt Auf* for which he composed the libretto himself. Krenek got the idea for the character Jonny after seeing the touring *Chocolate Kiddies*, an all African American jazz band group lead by Sam Wooding. The performance took place in January 1926. Krenek was inspired by the performance, writing to his parents calling the show "fabulous". Just after the performance he began writing the opera beginning with the opera's Finale which features real world symbolism discussed later in chapter three. Jonny, the character, is an African American jazz violinist performed by a man painted in black face. Krenek got this from popular culture posters and references to American minstrel shows that were beginning to surface in Europe. Krenek at the time did not understand the degrading nature of the portrayals of African Americans at the time. In Europe, African Americans were examples of American culture and considered new and exotic to them.⁵⁷ American jazz bands and performers like Josephine Baker (American-French performer, civil rights activist, and member of the French Résistance) were taking Europe by storm in the 1920s, especially in Paris, France.⁵⁸ From Krenek's autobiography he says, "America at the time entirely unknown to me, seemed to lend itself most convincingly for localizing the epitome of natural grace and uninhibited freedom that I had in mind".⁵⁹ Across from Jonny, a character portrayed as an Italian, womanizer, and virtuoso violinist named Daniello stands as his rival. In the middle is a character Max, a depressed composer that in every way is a representation of Ernst Krenek himself. This is known not only from Krenek's own autobiography but also on the knowledge that the first scene of the opera is set in the very Alps where Krenek loved to spend time.⁶⁰ At the end of the opera,

⁵⁷ Stewart, 81, 83.

⁵⁸ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Josephine Baker," in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., April 8, 2020).

⁵⁹ Krenek, *Horizons Circled: Reflections on My Music*, 38.

⁶⁰ Stewart, *Ernst Krenek The Man and His Music*, 10.

Max is inspired by Jonny to follow in his footsteps : “he (Max) is off to America where he too will live happily ever after- or so we hope”.⁶¹ The opera was an ode to the changing times, as seen in the finale of the opera. Trains, automobile horns, Avant-guard elements like odd percussive instruments and whistling doubling musical lines, and sirens are all featured in the score. The set design resembled Bauhaus architecture that was beginning to surface in Germany. Adding the jazz elements completes a picture of the modern 1920s. *Jonny Spielt Auf* is categorized as *Zeitoper*, German for “opera of the time” or contemporary opera of the 1920s; reflecting the modern life of the Weimar Republic.⁶² The score doesn’t feature many elements of jazz as Krenek had little exposure and knowledge of its forms, but a cabaret style takes over moments of the featured jazz band in the opera. Elements of romanticism, expressionism, impressionism, modernism, cabernet, a little jazz, and even moments of atonality are all present in this opera and its composition truly reflects all of Krenek’s influences as a composer.

Jonny Spielt Auf premiered February 10, 1927 at the Stadttheater in Leipzig under conductor Gustav Brecher. Director of the first performance was Walter Bruggemann.⁶³ It was a resounding success that would financially support Krenek throughout his career. In its first season alone, there were over 400 performances around Europe. With this acclaim though, Krenek still went through periods of depression largely due to not being taken seriously as an opera composer in comparison to composers writing at the same time as Kurt Weill and Paul Hindemith were. Writers tended not to include Krenek’s name in the list of contemporary opera composers.⁶⁴ Krenek was always learning and studying, trying to improve, to expand, and to

⁶¹ Krenek, 39.

⁶² Schebera, *Kurt Weill, An Illustrated Life*, 72, 105.

⁶³ Leipzig Opernchor, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, and Lothar Zagrosek, *Ernst Krenek Jonny Spielt Auf* (London: The Decca Record Company Limited, 1993), 24.

⁶⁴ Stewart, *Ernst Krenek: The Man and His Music*, 152.

understand, even later in his career. Critics, audiences, and composers of the time however were constantly comparing him to previous composers, present composers, questioning who did what better, and who was more innovatively moving music forward.

Lehár's *Paganini*

On the opposite spectrum, the late romanticists of the Weimar Republic include Richard Strauss (in his late career), Busoni (Italian composer who live, worked, and died in Berlin, Germany in 1924), and Lehár. Franz Lehár personally knew the popular Italian opera composer Giacomo Puccini, who had died in 1924 and left behind the unfinished score to *Turandot*. The score was later completed by Franco Alfano in 1926, premiering in Milan, Italy on April 25, 1926.⁶⁵ Busoni also scored the music to Carlo Gozzi's fairytale *Turandot* in 1917 and premiered at the Stadttheater in Germany.⁶⁶ Of the most successful and broadly toured around the world was Puccini's *Turandot* and has remained an opera favorite ever since. It was the epitome of Late Romantic Opera. Puccini and the other late romantic and expressionistic composers were all to some degree influenced by the operas of Romantic era Italian composer, Verdi. Interestingly Richard Strauss and Franz Lehár, along with Paul Hindemith all studied violin before venturing into composition. Busoni, noting he also experimented with atonality, did write a violin concerto and two violin sonatas at the turn of the century though of not of great significance or importance. Richard Strauss also wrote violin works but all dated before the turn of the century.

⁶⁵ Julian Budden, *Turandot (ii)* (Oxford University Press, 2002), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-5000905166>.

⁶⁶ Antony Beaumont, *Turandot (i)* (Oxford University Press, 2002), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-5000905165>.

Strauss did not like the music of Lehár and even claimed there was more music in a few bars of any of his operas “than in a whole Lehár opera”.⁶⁷

Franz Lehár (1870-1948), born in Hungary, spent most of his career in Austria although he did spend time studying in Germany and Prague, Czechoslovakia. His father was a horn player in the Theater an der Wien and was also a military bandmaster who composed dances and marches. Lehár primarily studied violin but also studied composition with Austrian composer Josef Forester who was known for his operas and operettas.⁶⁸ There he became acquainted with Antonín Dvořák who looked at some of his early compositions and encouraged him saying, “Know what, my lad? You should hang up your fiddle and write music”.⁶⁹ Lehár’s father had the opposite opinion and soon Lehár was playing in the 50th Austrian Infantry Regiment Band and eventually took over his father’s position as bandmaster. He never gave up on composition and produced successful waltzes including *Gold und Silber* in 1902. He had a few failures in the field of operettas but in 1905 he had his first major success in Vienna, *Die Lustige Wiwe* or *The Merry Widow*, which continues to be one of the most loved operettas in the world. Based on the comedy play *L’attaché d’ambassade* by Henri Meilhac, the operetta has been translated into several languages. It was turned into several silent movies and later American movies.⁷⁰

Lehár’s style of music is light in nature, explaining why the operetta genre suited him so well. He drew influences from Johann Straus for his waltzes and studied the works of Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, and Mahler as well as the German and Italian opera composers before

⁶⁷ Grun, *Gold and Silver: The Life and Times of Franz Lehár*, 152.

⁶⁸ Andrew Lamb, “Lehár, Franz” (Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000016318>.

⁶⁹ Grun, 37.

⁷⁰ Grun, 33, 34, 244.

him.⁷¹ One can hear the qualities of Hungarian, Persian, and Viennese music within his music. Puccini was also an acquaintance of Lehár and remained in touch until Puccini's death.

During the years 1925-1929, Lehár wrote six operettas. 1925 marked the most developed phase of his compositional skill and indulgence in the writing of operettas, the first of these being *Paganini*.⁷² It is a historical fiction opera based on the romantic era virtuoso violinist, Niccolò Paganini. Paganini lived until 1840 and wrote works like his 24 Caprices and violin concertos that challenged violin technique and pushed violinists' limitations farther than any of his predecessors.⁷³ One can see how Lehár was excited to bring back his violin technique in order to recreate the character Paganini. The score is filled with violin cadenzas much like Paganini's violin concertos, though still communicates the Viennese and Hungarian style to make it truly Lehár's. The story revolves around a love triangle between Niccolò, Élisabeth Bonaparte, and a theater loving sister of Napoleon, set in Lucca.⁷⁴ The story was written in German by Paul Knepler and Lehár later hired Béla Jenbach to complete the libretto. Lehár wrote the main character (Paganini) with the then famous tenor Richard Tauber in mind. Tauber was influenced by critics who thought it would be a backward step in the tenor's career, so he refused the part. This set off a chain of events that led the leading lady to quit and the production lost revenue. Ultimately the quality of sets and orchestra fell, and the new leads were not up to the demand of the roles that were installed. The Vienna Premier at Johann Strauss Theater on October 1925 was a failure. On the last showing, Tauber came to the performance and, realizing that the opera deserved more credit than it received, promised to play the role in the Berlin premier. The

⁷¹ Lamb, "Lehár, Franz."

⁷² Grun, 207-208.

⁷³ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Niccolò Paganini," in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., October 23, 2019), <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Niccolo-Paganini>.

⁷⁴ Andrew Lamb, "Paganini," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 2002.

operetta was an incredible success to which even Lehár cried with joy at the curtain call.⁷⁵ The opera was later turned into a German movie in 1934 called *Gern hab' ich die Frau'n geküßt* or *I Liked Kissing Women* while still using Lehár's music.⁷⁶ In many ways *Paganini* might have been the best representation of Lehár himself. Historians have made comparisons to the characters in the operetta to the people in Lehár's personal life and Lehár himself. Bernard Grun, in his biography *Gold and Silver: The Life and Times of Franz Lehár*, makes a comparison of Lehár's transition from violinist to composer saying, "he became a living study of his own *Paganini*".⁷⁷ He later compares an affair Lehár had in his young military years in which the woman ended the affair on good terms with his family. Grun explains that it was perhaps like the parting words Marie Elisa had for Paganini in the operetta "Go out into the world, bless it with your art...Farwell!"⁷⁸ The historian and author of *Fortune's Favorite: The Life and Times of Franz Lehár* co-author Macqueen-Pope wrote on his title page a quote from *Paganini*, "But, What is more than women and wine, The happy land of music is mine, And all is always well Where the music-makers dwell...".⁷⁹

***Entartete Musik* and the Meaning Behind its Symbolic Poster**

Nowhere is the contrast of Modernism and Romanticism displayed more clearly than during the Third Reich and the rise of the Nazi regime. Even before the Nazi regime took over in 1933, sympathizers were expressing their distaste for modernism and operas by Jewish composers by rioting at opera performances. During Kurt Weill's premier *Die Silbersee* in

⁷⁵ Grun, *Gold and Silver: The Life and Times of Franz Lehár*, 213-215.

⁷⁶ Charles P. Mitchell, *The Great Composers Portrayed on Film, 1913 through 2002* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2004), 170.

⁷⁷ Grun, 37.

⁷⁸ Grun, 38.

⁷⁹ W. Macqueen-Pope and D. L. Murray, *Fortune's Favourite: The Life and Times of Franz Lehár* (London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd., 1953), title page.

Leipzig on February 18, 1933 Nazis attempted to barricade the theater entrance and even pressured the theater to cancel the performance. The theater nevertheless continued on with the premier and Hans Rothe, a German author in attendance for the premier wrote :“Everyone who counted in the German theater met together for the last time. And everyone knew this. The atmosphere there can hardly be described. It was the last day of the greatest decade of German culture in the twentieth century...”.⁸⁰ Many theaters were burned down and hundreds of musicians, composers, directors, and even leading opera singers so popular in their premiers during the Weimar Republic were sent to ghettos and perished in concentration camps like Theresienstadt.⁸¹

The persecution of Jews began on April 1, 1933. Schoenberg was dismissed from his position at the Prussian Academy of Arts in May of 1933 and moved to Paris before moving to the United States. Kurt Weill first moved to Paris in 1933, but when things slowly got worse in Europe he emigrated to New York the following October where would stay until his death in 1950.⁸² Alban Berg, though not Jewish himself had most works canceled due to his association with Schoenberg as well as for his demonstration of Modernist composition styles. He and his wife moved to an isolated lodge where he worked on his final two compositions: *Lulu* and the *Violin Concerto*. He died of medical reasons in 1935.⁸³ Hindemith had a more complicated relationship with Nazis as he grew in and out of favor with them. In the end his music was still banned as his wife was of Jewish decent. Joseph Goebbels, minister of propaganda called his music an “atonal noisemaker”. Hindemith was pressured to leave his position at Berlin

⁸⁰ Schebera, *Kurt Weill, An Illustrated Life*, 200.

⁸¹ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Theresienstadt” (Washington D.C.), accessed May 20, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/theresienstadt>.

⁸² Stewart, *Ernst Krenek The Man and His Music*, 185.

⁸³ Jarman, “Berg, Alban.”

Academy. He emigrated to Turkey for a professor position, later to Switzerland, and finally the United States, teaching for many years at Yale University, among others. He moved back to Switzerland in 1953.⁸⁴ Among Ernst Krenek's closest relations, Schreker had the hard time, having had to resign from position as director of the Hochschule. He became impoverished and died of a stroke.⁸⁵ Krenek's own music was for the most part banned, especially *Jonny* because of its display of an African American jazz musician (as well as the modernist ideals). Jazz music was strictly *verböten* (forbidden) during the Nazi regime. Though Krenek had a hard time finding anyone to play his music, as the only international recognition for Krenek was *Jonny*, he still was able to have a short career in Germany. By chance he was offered the opportunity to create an abridged version of Monteverdi's *Coronation of Poppea* for a tour in the United States. He naturally accepted the offer and traveled to the U.S. for the first time in 1937. He fell in love with the culture and wound up accepting several academic positions in New York, Minnesota, and Canada. He died in Palm Springs, California in 1991. He visited home from time to time, but always felt a sense of detachment as his music had been mostly forgotten on the old continent. In 1937 however, Krenek wrote in his diary about his time in Los Angeles and his meetings with Schoenberg and Kurt Weill.⁸⁶ All the works of the Modernist composers, as well as composers who were or had relation to Jewish ancestry were considered 'degenerate' during the Nazi regime.

The Romanticists had a far different treatment during the war. Both Richard Strauss and Franz Lehár were not involved in politics but received high esteem from the Nazi party. Richard Strauss was always trying to stay in good graces with the Nazi party but was not a Nazi-

⁸⁴ Schubert, "Hindemith, Paul."

⁸⁵ Stewart, 185.

⁸⁶ Stewart, 205-206.

sympathizer. He was promoted to *Reichsmusikkammer*, or State music Bureau, in 1933. The position intended to promote “good German music” in opposition to Degenerate Music. Strauss eventually lost his position for a letter to colleague and librettist Stefan Zweig that was intercepted by the Nazi Regime in 1935.⁸⁷ It is unclear if Strauss might have used his position to help his Jewish colleagues or to promote himself. Franz Lehár held the dubious honor of having written Adolf Hitler’s favorite opera, *The Merry Widow*. Lehár gave Adolf Hitler a signed copy of the original premier program for his birthday. The program featured the Jewish leading tenor Louis Treumann who, unrelatedly, was killed in a concentration camp. Lehár wrote on the matter “...How inexperienced I was then, is shown by the fact that on the cover there was a picture of Mizzi Gunther and Louis Treumann (a Jew!)...”.⁸⁸ Lehár stayed out of politics, largely in part to his wife being Jewish, though they never left Austria during World War II. She was granted *Ehrenarierin* or Arian by marriage.⁸⁹ Lehár financially benefited from this time with the continued performances of *The Merry Widow* as well as his previous works appearance in films, including *Paganini*. He did however defy an order from the Nazis by sending royalties to his librettists who were in exile for being non-Arian.⁹⁰

In 1937, the Nazi regime confiscated art work of many Jewish artists and displayed these works in an exhibition entitled *Entartete Kunst* or Degenerate Art. Arranged by Adolf Ziegler, the display was held from July 19 to November 30th and was attended by over one million people. Artists featured at the exhibition included Pablo Picasso, Wassily Kandinsky, and Ernst

⁸⁷ Bryan Gilliam and Charles Youmans, “Strauss, Richard” (Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040117>.

⁸⁸ Grun, *Gold and Silver: The Life and Times of Franz Lehár*, 260.

⁸⁹ Grun, 265.

⁹⁰ W. Macqueen-Pope and D. L. Murray, *Fortune’s Favourite: The Life and Times of Franz Lehár*, 219.

Ludwig Kirchner among many others.⁹¹ After its success a similar formula followed for that of Jewish composers with an exhibition titled *Entartete Musik*. The exhibit was developed and executed by Hans Severus Ziegler, the director of the Weimar National Theatre. The exhibit featured listening booths where people could hear the music. This included all modernist composers that either had relations to Jewish composers, but also composers that were added to exhibition just for being modernists like Stravinsky, thus making the exhibit even more controversial. The exhibit opened in May 1939 and closed in June the following month due to its controversial nature. Many musicians and composers boycotted the exhibit, even as members of the Nazi party.⁹² For the *Entartete Musik* exhibit the striking symbol of the event and for the entire genre of degenerate music came from its poster which featured the character Jonny from *Jonny Spielt Auf*. It is much like the original poster from the opera, with a man dressed in a suit with black face playing the saxophone, but the man now resembles more a monkey to further degrade the image. The poster also replaced a carnation on Jonny's jacket with the Star of David. It is interesting that Jonny was used instead of someone like Kurt Weill who was German, Jewish, had more successes, and produced more operas than Krenek. First, Jonny as portraying an African American was the opposite of the ideal image of the Arian race Nazi Regime.⁹³ Jazz music was also banned during the Third Reich. A second clue may lie in the original actor who played Jonny. Max Spilcker played Jonny in the original Leipzig premiere in 1927.⁹⁴ The Spilcker family was in close relations to Adolf Hitler. Max Spilcker's daughter, Inge Lay (wife

⁹¹ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Degenerate Art," in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., October 7, 2019).

⁹² Erik Levi, *Entartete Musik* (Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000045065>.

⁹³ Albrecht Dümmling, "Entartete Musik," Dr. Albrecht Dümmling, Berlin, 2011, <https://www.duemling.de/en/entartete-musik-2/>.

⁹⁴ Margaret Ross Griffel, *Operas in German: A Dictionary* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 245.

of the head of the German Labor Front, Robert Lay) was especially close to Adolf Hitler. Inge later committed suicide and Hitler sent a sympathy card to her parents.⁹⁵ Spilcker was given the title of Nazi Intendent of opera which begs the question if he had any influence or knowledge of the propaganda poster.⁹⁶ Spilcker could have used this as an opportunity to purge himself of his previous ties in a public manner, or as a way to save his reputation with the Nazi regime.

⁹⁵ Richard J. Evens, *The Third Reich in Power* (New York, New York: Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 2005), 425.

⁹⁶ David Monod, *Settling Scores. German Music, Denazification, and the Americans, 1945-1953*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, c2005., 2005), 106.

Chapter 3. *Jonny Spielt Auf*

Krenek, His Music and Inspirations

Between Krenek's jobs working as an assistant at Kassel State Opera and Wiesbaden State Opera, and his work as an opera pit musician, his opera knowledge was substantial. Both he and Kurt Weill had the most exposure to opera and were present to attest to which operas were successes and failures. Krenek zealously studied and analyzed other composers, both past and present, perhaps more than any other composer of his time. In the early to mid-1920s he was also taken by the works of Béla Bartók and Stravinsky but knew little of Schoenberg's music. Krenek was, at this time, experimenting in neoclassicism and atonality all while remembering his late-romantic roots.⁹⁷

As mentioned in chapter two, Krenek went through many phases as a composer. By 1926, when he began writing *Jonny Spielt Auf*, he had already experimented in the styles of late romanticism, atonality, modernism, and for the sake of this opera- jazz. To make up for Krenek's lack of jazz knowledge, he adds cabaret like qualities to the jazz band sections of the opera. This gives the effect of a small theater or café band common for the jazz genre in the 1920s. Both cabaret and jazz drew similar, more modern audiences. *The Chocolate Kiddies*, the group which inspired Krenek, did not have a violin player in band. This could explain why the original poster of *Jonny Spielt Auf* features Jonny playing the saxophone. As mentioned earlier, emerging German versions of jazz bands featured a *Stehgeiger*, or standing violinist to lead the band and double on saxophone. As the plot of *Jonny Spielt Auf* revolves around two different styles of violin playing (displayed through the characters Jonny and Daniello, an Italian violinist) it is important to understand how Krenek came up with the idea of the story line. This can be

⁹⁷ Krenek, *Horizons Circled: Reflections on My Music*, 21-22.

understood by the operas that featured violin as well as the violin works being performed just before Krenek began his work on the opera.

Table 3.1. Influential Violin Works from the 1920s

Composer	Composition	Premier Date	Premier Location	Composer origin
Igor Stravinsky	<i>L'Histoire du soldat</i>	September 28, 1918	Lausanne, Switzerland (1924 Frankfurt and Wiesbaden, Germany)	Russia
Ernst Krenek	Violin Concerto Op. 29	1924		Austria
Maurice Ravel	<i>Tzigane</i>	October 19, 1924	Amsterdam, Netherlands (October 3, 1924 Paris, France)	France
Ernst Krenek	Violin Sonata No. 1	1925		Austria
Kurt Weill	Concerto for Violin and Wind Orchestra Op. 12	June 11, 1925	Paris, France (October 29, 1925 Dessau, Germany)	Germany
Franz Lehár	<i>Paganini</i>	October 30, 1925	Vienna, Austria (Jan. 30, 1926 Berlin Germany)	Hungary
Maurice Ravel	Violin Sonata No. 2	1928	United States and Canada	France

Sources: Andrew Lamb, “Paganini,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 2002; Barbara L. Kelly, “Ravel, (Joseph) Maurice” (Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000052145>; Ernst Krenek, *Horizons Circled: Reflections on My Music*, 156, 164; John Canarina, *Pierre Monteux, Maître* (New Jersey: Amadeus Press, 2003), 341; Jürgen Schebera, *Kurt Weill, An Illustrated Life*, 58-59; Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works Through Mavra*, 1295.

Stravinsky’s opera, *L’Histoire du Soldat*, is about a soldier, his fiddle, and a deal with the devil.⁹⁸ Kurt Weill borrows themes from this opera for his *Concerto for violin and wind orchestra Op. 12*.⁹⁹ Krenek had his opportunity to practice violin composition through his first violin concerto.¹⁰⁰ On the romantic side, Ravel’s *Tzigane* encompasses romanticism and impressionism,¹⁰¹ and Lehár’s *Paganini* resembles all that is romantic.¹⁰² Interestingly Ravel’s *Violin Sonata No. 2* was inspired by American jazz and blues. The second movement of the sonata is titled *Blues, Moderato*.¹⁰³ The sonata was written between 1923-1927 and was first

⁹⁸ Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works Through Mavra*, 1295.

⁹⁹ Schebera, *Kurt Weill, An Illustrated Life*, 58, 59.

¹⁰⁰ Krenek, *Horizons Circled: Reflections on My Music*, 156, 164.

¹⁰¹ Barbara L. Kelly, “Ravel, (Joseph) Maurice” (Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000052145>.

¹⁰² Lamb, “Paganini.”

¹⁰³ John Canarina, *Pierre Monteux, Maître* (New Jersey: Amadeus Press, 2003), 341.

performed on a tour to North America (United States and Canada).¹⁰⁴ Beyond these violin works, Krenek took most of his career to understand as many different composers from history and composers of the present to find his style within the different genres during all his compositional phases.¹⁰⁵ Krenek borrows so many ideas because his opera is intended to be all that encompasses *Zeitoper*, the modern times.

An Underlying Plot

To fully understand the symbolic nature of *Zeitoper* that Krenek intended within his opera, one must peer into the story line and characters. *Jonny Spielt Auf* translates to *Jonny Strikes Up*, or *Jonny Plays On*.¹⁰⁶ In Krenek's memoirs *Horizon Circled*, he refers to the opera as *Jonny Strikes Up the Band*.¹⁰⁷

The story revolves around five characters (along with other minor characters and chorus)- Max, the composer (as discussed, a representation of Ernst Krenek), Anita, an opera singer, and Max's love interest Jonny, a jazz violinist Daniello, a virtuoso Italian violinist and womanizer Yvonne, a hotel chambermaid who has relations with Jonny (they play around with each other in the first act of the opera. Sexual relations are implied though they are not a formal couple)

In summary, the opera begins with Max, in a depressed state looking out at a glacier in the Alps that he wishes to conquer. He meets Anita who is fearful of the glacier and Max takes her back to the safety of the resort, abandoning his quest to conquer the glacier. They start a romance and Max gives Anita the score to his latest opera which she will sing in Paris. Before she leaves, she almost forgets her banjo, an important prop.

¹⁰⁴ Kelly, "Ravel, (Joseph) Maurice."

¹⁰⁵ Krenek, *Horizons Circled*, 20, 21.

¹⁰⁶ Stewart, *Ernst Krenek The Man and His Music*, 1.

¹⁰⁷ Krenek, *Horizons Circled*, 38.

In Paris, Yvonne cleans Daniello's hotel room while Jonny comes in from rehearsal. They flirt and banter with each other. Jonny notices Daniello's Amati violin and is overtaken by the idea of stealing the violin. Daniello is introduced to Anita and seduces her into his bedroom for a one-night stand. Jonny takes this opportunity and hides the violin in the banjo case which Anita takes with her when she leaves Daniello's room. She tells Daniello that she was confused, but being with Daniello for one night helped her see more clearly and she was now ready to take on the 'intensity' of Max in a relationship.¹⁰⁸ As a parting gift, she gives Daniello her ring. As she leaves, she gets a telegram from her manager that she has been offered a contract to tour in America which she accepts. Daniello discovers he is missing his violin and spends the rest of the opera trying to get it back. Yvonne is fired for theft as an accomplice, but Anita hires her as her personal maid. Before Yvonne leaves Daniello asks her to deliver the ring to Max, as payment for a bet he lost.

Max, who was in Anita's home the entire time, received a telegram that she would not be coming home that night (the night she was sleeping with Daniello). "Her failure to arrive as promised prompts a tortured psychological monologue, which parodies the expressionism of Schoenberg's *Erwartung*".¹⁰⁹ Yvonne brings Max the ring which confirms his suspicions and he now runs off to visit the glaciers from the first scene. Jonny is reunited with the violin and also runs to the Alps resort from the first scene as does Anita to get Max back. Daniello follows.

Max again sings to the glaciers contemplating suicide. The glacier replies back to him singing that he can't come and that he must turn to life.¹¹⁰ The glacier is sung by a backstage

¹⁰⁸ Leipzig Opernchor, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, and Lothar Zagrosek, *Ernst Krenek Jonny Spielt Auf*, 75.

¹⁰⁹ Charlotte Purkis, "Jonny Spielt Auf | Grove Music," accessed September 28, 2018, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/om-o-9781561592630-e-5000003163>.

¹¹⁰ Leipzig Opernchor, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, and Lothar Zagrosek, *Ernst Krenek: Jonny Spielt Auf* (London: The Decca Record Company Limited, 1993), 98.

female chorus, reminding one of a Puccini chorus, much like the finale of *Suor Angelica* featuring a backstage female chorus. Max comes to the realization that nature can no longer be of inspiration for music, but life can. Just then, Anita sings a verse from his opera through a megaphone and he goes to her, choosing life that the glaciers sang of. At the resort where she and Yvonne are, Jonny is playing in a band featuring the stolen violin. Daniello recognizes the violin and chases him down. It is in this scene that the clash of Romanticism and Modernism is most evident in the score marking clear stylistic distinctions between Jonny and Daniello.

Jonny gets away by streetcar but loses his train ticket in the process. The train ticket is to a port in Amsterdam (though in the score is left optional to use other ports in Europe) that will take him to America.¹¹¹ Jonny tries to get on the train and puts the violin (in the banjo case) among with Max's belongings as Max, Anita, and Yvonne are about to depart for America. The banjo case is discovered by police and Max is arrested. Jonny helps Max escape and board the train with Yvonne and Anita. Daniello attempts to stop them but is run over by an oncoming train. In the end Max, Anita, and Yvonne get away on the train to Amsterdam (with the final destination being America) while Jonny stays behind. Jonny has the violin and straddles a globe set atop the clock tower of the train station. In the score, the chorus is instructed to dance in a circle and sing a theme melody featured throughout the opera (though each appearance of the theme throughout the opera has different lyrics).¹¹²

Interestingly, in the 1993 Leipzig recording that features a translation, before Jonny plays his cadenza the stage notes have a slightly different ending. Just after Max, Anita, and Yvonne head out on the train, the curtains close to show the theater symbols, the masks of comedy and

¹¹¹ Leipzig Opernchor, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, and Lothar Zagrosek, *Ernst Krenek: Jonny Spielt Auf* (London: The Decca Record Company Limited, 1993), 123.

¹¹² Leipzig Opernchor, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, and Lothar Zagrosek, *Ernst Krenek: Jonny Spielt Auf*, 125.

drama. Max, Daniello, Anita, Yvonne, and three of the smaller roles in the opera come in front of the curtain breaking the third wall. They sing:

Thus Jonny played for us to dance.
If his playing pleased you, show your gratitude!
And bear in mind that all of life is but a game.
May the sound of his violin accompany you
Listen to the sound of his violin wherever you go!
Behold, he comes among you, and
Jonny strikes up.¹¹³

The curtains are then opened to reveal Jonny who then plays his cadenza. It also says that Jonny steps forward from the curtain to the footlights and then plays the cadenza.¹¹⁴ Through a simple overview, one can begin to see the cracks of an underlying plot. Without the symbolism, the opera becomes more of an oddity, where subjects like the glacier come into play. Revising the symbolism in simpler terms by renaming the main characters clarifies the answers.

Max: Ernst Krenek

Jonny: Representation of Modernism

Daniello: Representation of Romanticism

Anita: General mindset of the people in the 1920s (critics/audience/arts community) indecisive about modernism, drawn to the comfort of romanticism

Yvonne: Mindset of the people in the 1920s open to and embracing all that is modern

Through Max's character as Krenek and his relation between Jonny and Daniello, one can see his internal conflict between the two art forms. When Max receives the ring from Daniello (delivered by Yvonne), it serves as a token of remembering romanticism (much in the way Anita gives Daniello the ring as a parting gift). In the same way, Daniello is killed in the end to signify that the old music must be left in the past. By Jonny helping Max escape to America by train, the path Jonny intended to take; Max is embracing Jonny's influence and all of modernism, giving

¹¹³ Leipzig Opernchor, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, and Lothar Zagrosek, 126-127.

¹¹⁴ Purkis, "Jonny Spielt Auf | Grove Music."

Max his own sense of freedom. *Jonny Strikes Up* as a title works not only for him as a band leader, but in the way that Jonny strikes up as inspiration and freedom.

Sexual freedom also presents itself as a theme throughout the opera, especially seen in the characters Jonny, Yvonne, Anita, and Daniello. Daniello uses his freedom as a way to control, thus his label as a womanizer. Anita may have slept with Daniello but does not receive any backlash for her one-night stand; nor did she show remorse for it. Max forgives and follows Anita by the end of the opera. Jonny has the freedom say and do as he wishes. It is how he makes lustful comments towards Anita and have implied sexual relations with Yvonne. Yvonne makes lustful comments to Daniello, but what makes her stand out is her open relationship with a man of color (maybe another reason the American premier was not well received). Women's rights in the 1920s were changing. In 1918 women gained the right to vote in Germany.¹¹⁵ Many of the women mentioned in the earlier chapters above had several affairs during their marriages. Alma Mahler had many affairs during her marriage with Gustav Mahler (and after his death). One of the relationships being Oskar Kokoschka. She married three times in her life.¹¹⁶ Her daughter, Anna Mahler, to whom Krenek was married for less than a year, also had many love interests and was married to five men in her life. Krenek was married three times in his life but always stayed in touch with Anna.¹¹⁷ Kurt Weill and his wife Lotte Lenya also had an interesting relationship. They divorced in 1933 as Lotte and Kurt both were having several affairs during their marriage. After both emigrated to America, they reconciled in 1935 and remarried in 1935

¹¹⁵ Patricia Grimshaw and Charles Sowerwine, "Women's Suffrage," in *The Edinburgh Companion to the History of Democracy*, ed. Benjamin Isakhan and Stephen Stockwell, From Pre-History to Future Possibilities (Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 342, www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1g0b6rb.33.

¹¹⁶ Peter Franklin, *Mahler(-Werfel) [Née Schindler], Alma Maria* (Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000043383>.

¹¹⁷ Stewart, *Ernst Krenek The Man and His Music*, 51, 264, 271.

with the understanding that it would be an open relationship. They stayed married until Kurt's death in 1950.¹¹⁸ Many of these relationships from this group were from the artistic community including musicians, composers, publishers, artists, and architects. The modernists were not the only ones to have extramarital affairs. Composers like Strauss II and his first wife Jetty (who had illegitimate children herself before marrying Strauss) had their share of relationships outside of the marriage.¹¹⁹ There seems to be a sense of more acceptance and openness between the Modernists' relationships. The 1920s was a new era with less stigmas on women and men having open and extramarital affairs.

Author John L. Stewart, who wrote a biography of Ernst Krenek, explains there are three symbols that represent freedom: the glacier which represents intellectualism, the violin that represents sensuality, and the train which represents liberation.¹²⁰ Stewart's interpretation is debatable. The train as liberation is accurate, and the glacier as intellectualism provides a perfect description for Max's representation of Krenek as a composer. As Krenek was constantly learning, adapting, and finding his voice as a composer, his battle with intellectualism is fitting. Violin as the symbol of sensuality is fitting in some ways but does not represent all of the violin solos. Four interesting violin solos come to mind- Daniello as he seduces Anita (concertmaster of pit orchestra plays)(Act I, Scene 3, '*Sie ist sehr spirituel*'), Jonny stealing Daniello's violin while Daniello sleeps with Anita (concertmaster)(Act 1, Scene 3, '*Sie ist sehr spirituel*', *Tango*), Jonny playing violin at the resort by the glacier(Act 2, scene 7, '*Gott sei Dank! Dass ist Jonnys Jazz-band!*'), and Finale (Act 2, scene 11) with Jonny playing cadenza as the final moments of the

¹¹⁸ Terry Teachout, "The Composer and His Muse," The Washington Post, May 26, 1996, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/entertainment/books/1996/05/26/the-composer-and-his-muse/444a5384-9d30-45a6-8a5e-7d7543b7071b/>.

¹¹⁹ H. E. Jacob, *Johann Strauss, Father and Son: A Century of Light Music* (Read Books Ltd., 2013), Chapter 10: Path to the "Zigeunerbaron".

¹²⁰ Stewart, *Ernst Krenek The Man and His Music*, 83.

show.¹²¹ All solos of Jonny playing are, of course, with the singer pretending and the concertmaster in the pit orchestra performing the solo.

Jonny verses Daniello, Themes and Character Study

Daniello:

Daniello in many ways is a carbon copy of the womanizing, Italian, virtuoso lead from Lehar's *Paganini*. As a representation of romanticism (or late-romanticism), this character is not only reflected in the music, but through his words. His first aria from Act I scene 3: '*Sie ist sehr spirituell*', where he seduces Anita, has the floral language of an Italian opera like that of Verdi or Puccini:

When I heard you sing earlier on,
I beheld an image:
Your voice was like a plant,
Maybe a flower,
A flower from my own country,
Sweetly scented, potent,
Full of the sun,
And a thirst for the sun which-
Tossed by an unkind fate
Into the desert of a huge glacier- is struggling to pierce the cover
Of the perpetual ice;
Sometimes it is exhausted, sad,
And longing for a bit of warmth;
Am I right?¹²²

The musical language is in the romantic and neo-romantic idiom, showing a taste of Puccinian lyricism.¹²³ but as the aria transitions to the line of "a huge glacier" the music transforms,

¹²¹ Leipzig Opernchor, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, and Lothar Zagrosek, *Ernst Krenek Jonny Spielt Auf*, 48, 201, 202, 213, 54.

¹²² Leipzig Opernchor, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, and Lothar Zagrosek, *Ernst Krenek Jonny Spielt Auf*, 58.

¹²³ Purkis, "Jonny Spielt Auf | Grove Music."

resembling the musical theme of Max and the glacier, only to be returned back to the romantic qualities as it comes back to the word ‘warmth’.

Figure 3.2. Act 1, Scene 3, “Sie ist sehr spiritual”, mm. 1020-1025. Daniello’s seduction aria that is sung to Anita. Short violin solo performed by pit orchestra concertmaster highlighted in the box (soprano line).

This aria is also the first moment of a violin solo played by the pit concertmaster spanning three measures. The musical lines refer to the chromatic step wise motion which is in contrast to Jonny’s musical lines that feature larger playful leaps (larger intervals).¹²⁴

Jonny:

Jonny’s playful and joking demeanor is that of resembling Papageno from *Die Zauberflöte*.¹²⁵ Jonny’s language is playful, direct, simple, but does have some racial implications (intentional or not). Jonny is from Alabama and Krenek has Jonny use Southern phrases in English like “O ma Bell”.¹²⁶ Krenek’s lack of American knowledge is apparent with grammar mistakes like “Oh, you forget the banjo!” instead of “Oh, you forgot your banjo!”.¹²⁷ As notated in the score, Jonny’s musical styles include minstrel, spiritual, and jazz. Jonny has two major violin solos in act II. In Act I he is playing saxophone and banjo in his band as he does not have Daniello’s violin yet. The first is in Act II scene 7: ‘*Gott sei Dank! Dass ist Jonnys Jazz-band!*’

¹²⁴ Ernst Krenek, *Jonny Spielt Auf: Klavierauszug* (Universal Edition, 1954), 48.

¹²⁵ Stewart, *Ernst Krenek The Man and His Music*, 82.

¹²⁶ Leipzig Opernchor, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, and Lothar Zagrosek, *Ernst Krenek Jonny Spielt Auf*, 48.

¹²⁷ Leipzig Opernchor, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, and Lothar Zagrosek, 77.

which he plays in the resort. More importantly, the last cadenza in Act II scene 11 demonstrates how the chorus of the opera has embraced Jonny as a symbol throughout the opera. One of the main themes sung by the opera has different words and contexts throughout. The first time we hear the melody clearly, it is sung by Yvonne and Jonny, who had just gotten in a fight for Jonny lusting after Antia and Yvonne lusting after Daniello (though neither acts upon their lustful comments and is presented more as playful banter) and decide to part ways. It is then repeated by the chorus:

Farwell, my pet, farewell,
I'm taking myself off.
You can get on without me,
I'll try to get on without you
And I'll never come back again.¹²⁸

In the last scene of the opera, Act II, scene 11, '*Die Stunde schlägt der alten Zeit*', Jonny straddles the globe and the chorus dances around him to the same melody now singing:

The journey begins
And Jonny is playing for us to dance.
The glittering New World comes
across the sea
And conquers old Europe through dance.¹²⁹

In the first set of lyrics, the chorus implies they will abandon modernism, possibly for its crudeness as Jonny lusts at another woman, but in the last chorus, they embrace him. Another connecting factor is both use a human whistling sound that doubles the melody. The whistle gives not only an Avant-guard element to the opera, but a playfulness to resemble Jonny. The final violin cadenza does not have the same melody, but a few elements of the solo imply Jonny's cadenza directly responds to the chorus.¹³⁰ Both melodies begin with a perfect fourth

¹²⁸ Leipzig Opernchor, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, and Lothar Zagrosek, 57.

¹²⁹ Leipzig Opernchor, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, and Lothar Zagrosek, 125.

¹³⁰ Krenek, *Jonny Spielt Auf: Klavierauszug*, 201-202.

leap down with the phrase ending on their Tonic. The phrase length, however, is different.

Jonny's has two-eight bar phrases while the Chorus has one fourteen bar phrase. The Finale was the first aspect Krenek wrote of the opera after viewing *The Chocolate Kiddies* concert. One can imagine the violin cadenza being the first if not one of the first pieces he wrote attempting to replicate the style. There is an attempt at blues harmonies with moments of swing in the sixth and seventh bar of the phrase (though not notated and strictly in a duple notation).¹³¹ To most historians the jazz elements come across as more of a novelty than actual jazz technique.¹³²

¹³¹ Krenek, 213.

¹³² Stewart, *Ernst Krenek The Man and His Music*, 85.

(Die große Uhr zeigt 12 Uhr. In diesem Augenblick verschwinden die Zeiger, und die Uhr beginnt sich zu senken. Sowie sie an dem Signalarm vorbeikommt, wo Jonny mit der Geige sitzt, steigt er auf die Uhr und fährt mit ihr langsam herab.)

CHOR

Sopr. 2225

Alt

Ten.

Baß

Die Stun - de schlägt der

U. E. 8C21

2230

al - ten Zeit die neu-

2230

2235

Zeit bricht jetzt an.

Figure 3.3. Act 2, Scene 11, “Die Stunde schlägt der alten Zeit”, mm. 2225-2237. First phrase of the final chorus of the opera as they sing about Jonny. Highlighted box shows the perfect fourth interval from note A to E reflected in Jonny’s violin solo.



Figure 3.4. Act 2, Scene 11, “Die Stunde schlägt der alten Zeit”, mm. 2419-2427 (end of phrase). Jonny’s last violin solo and final moments of the opera (first phrase). Violin solo reflects the chorus featured in figure 3:3. First box shows the perfect fourth interval from A to E that is reflected in the chorus. Second box show the imitation of swing. The T marks the end of the first phrase.

Tango

Act I scene 3: '*Sie ist sehr spirituell*', offers the perfect source of commentary between romanticism and modernism as displayed through Daniello and Jonny. It is the first scene the two are in the same room together (though Daniello does not know Jonny is there, about to steal his violin). Daniello is in the process of seducing Anita. The next section titled 'Tango' in the score would appear to be implying a tango between Anita and Daniello as a romance. Everyone sings in French, the love language, however, musically the score tells a different story. Jonny begins an interplay between Daniello as he sneaks over to the violin reflecting each other's musical lines, Jonny sings in step wise motion at times (like that of Daniello's earlier lines) where now Daniello repeats Jonny's leaping phrases. More interestingly, a violin and saxophone from the pit orchestra have intertwining solos (in the score says "the jazz band is playing again"). Have an interchanging solo themselves. As Jonny does not have the violin by this stage of the opera, one can presume the solo lines represent an interchange between Jonny (saxophone) and Daniello (violin). This implies the tango is between Jonny and Daniello, foreshadowing their future quarrel. The passage ends on a I6 chord (first inversion Tonic) played by the solo violin, giving an incomplete resolution to the Tango as if to hint at the violin change of ownership.¹³³

¹³³ Krenek, *Jonny Spielt Auf: Klavierauszug*, 213.

[1140]

(lange Umarmungen drängt Anita langsam gegen ihre Zimmertür)
Tango (*lento, molto espressivo*)

Daniello (ganz leise)
 É - cou - te

Jonny (hinter der Szene)
 du — re — tou-jours!

(hinter der Szene)
 Sop.
 Alt
 Ten.
 Bass

ô rê - ve - rie, dou - ce - ment in - fi - ni - e,

(Die Jazzband spielt wieder)
Tango (*lento, molto espressivo*)
 Klav. VI.
 Jazzband hinter der Szene Saxoph.

[1140]

[1145]

D. cet - te chanson et fer - me les y - eux!

J. Ne fi - nis ja - mais!

me - lo - di - e sé - du - i - san - te,
 me - lo - di - e sé - du - i - san - te,

[1145]

U. F. 84234

Figure 3.5. Act 1, Scene 3, “Sie ist sehr spirituell”, mm. 1138-1147. Section from the Tango that resembles Daniello and Jonny’s characters. Violin is featured on the top line of the piano staff with saxophone in the alto line underneath (beginning at measure 1141). Solo continues on page 55 of score.

Conclusion

The underlying plot of *Jonny Spielt Auf* demonstrates two different stances between Modernism and Romanticism through the violin. Daniello's character in many ways reflects the Italian, virtuoso, womanizer of Lehar's *Paganini*. Jonny has the freedom and forward mindset of the real Modernists of the 1920s. Krenek takes inspiration of the different styles of music present during the Golden Age of the Weimar Republic in his musical writing.

Every note, place, sentence, and action have a double meaning in *Jonny Spielt Auf*. Beyond the symbolism discussed in this paper, more sections of this opera have yet to be explored as to what the true meaning of each moment of the opera meant to Krenek in his underling story. One will notice in this dissertation that no parts of the underling story had political innuendos to any movement happening in Europe or Germany at the time. In Krenek's memoirs, written later in his life in 1974, he speaks on the subject about his work on *Jonny Spielt Auf* saying:

Political overtones were entirely absent from this opera, which may have been caused by two circumstances. In those years I was living abroad, in Germany and later in Switzerland, and I felt that it was not correct for a foreigner to become engaged in the political problems of the guest country...I always had been vehemently opposed to the Anschluss ideology and had emphasized that I was a foreigner in Germany.¹³⁴

It was not until later in his 1933 opera *Charles V* that he began to imbed his political position into his work.¹³⁵ This is not to say that there are not questionable moments throughout the opera that suggest a sense of uncertainty. For example, during the chorus's last sentence of the opera (while they dance around the globe Jonny plays on), "The glittering New World comes across the sea and conquers old Europe through dance" a loud siren plays over the words "and conquers

¹³⁴ Krenek, *Horizons Circled: Reflections on My Music*, 39.

¹³⁵ Krenek, 43.

old Europe through dance” the phrase is repeated twice as if to reinforce the statement.¹³⁶ Krenek writes once more in his memoirs on the subject of “message work” in his operas (discussed in his compositions of 1933) that truly reflect, not only his work on *Jonny Spielt Auf*, but in his position as a composer and the frustrations he had for his works being forgotten:

The question as to whether a composer should engage in any kind of “message work” probably cannot be answered in a general way. It will depend on his inclinations and his feeling of urgency in regard to communicating his philosophical and political ideas. He ought to benefit from realizing that his musical-dramatic communication will not accomplish any noticeable results in the outside world. Operas, no matter how successful or popular, are patronized only by a small minority of the population, and, if the composer couches his message in the so-called progressive musical idiom, it will be perceived and appreciated only by a still smaller minority within the first one.¹³⁷

Krenek’s opera *Jonny Spielt Auf* has symbolism yet to be discovered, but in all ways is a true representation of *Zeitoper*.

¹³⁶ Leipzig Opernchor, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, and Lothar Zagrosek, *Ernst Krenek Jonny Spielt Auf*, 125.

¹³⁷ Krenek, *Horizons Circled: Reflections on My Music*, 54.

Appendix. Permission Information

use of examples in my dissertation on Jonny Spielt Auf



Nicole Fassold

Thu 6/4/2020 7:52 AM

To: customer-relations@universaledition.com



To whom it may concern at Universal Edition,

Hello, my name is Nicole Fassold and I am a Doctoral candidate at Louisiana State University. I am writing a dissertation on Ernst Krenek's Jonny Spielt Auf and was hoping to use 4 examples (scans) from the 1954 piano vocal score. Please let me know if this was the correct email to send the request to or, if not, can you point me in the right direction of who to talk to? The examples are listed as follows-

3.2
Daniello's seduction aria that is sung to Anita. Short violin solo performed by pit orchestra concertmaster highlighted in the box (soprano line), measures 1020-1025. Ernst Krenek, *Jonny Spielt Auf: Klavierauszug* (Universal Edition, 1954), 48.

3.3
First phrase of the final chorus of the opera singing about Jonny, measure 2225-2237. Highlighted box shows the perfect fourth interval from note A to E reflected in Jonny's violin solo. Ernst Krenek, *Jonny Spielt Auf: Klavierauszug* (Universal Edition, 1954), 201-202.

3.4
Jonny's last violin solo and final moments of the opera (first phrase). Violin solo reflects the chorus featured in figure 3:3. Measures include pick up to 2419-2427 (end of phrase). First box shows the perfect fourth interval from A to E reflected in chorus. Second box show the imitation of swing. The T marks the end of the first phrase. Ernst Krenek, *Jonny Spielt Auf: Klavierauszug* (Universal Edition, 1954), 213.

3.5
Section from the Tango featured in Act 1 Scene 3 that resembles Daniello and Jonny. Section is from measure 1138-1147. Violin is featured on the top line of the piano staff with saxophone in the alto line underneath (beginning at measure 1141. Solo continues on page 55 of score. Ernst Krenek, *Jonny Spielt Auf: Klavierauszug* (Universal Edition, 1954), 54.

Please let me know if this is possible and if not I will remove them from my paper.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nicole Fassold

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Vita

Nicole Fassold completed her Master of Music degree at the University of Delaware and her Bachelor of Music degree at Colorado State University. Nicole's major violin professors include Dr. Lin He, Professor Xiang Gao, Dr. Ron Francois, and her viola professors include Espen Lilleslatten and Elias Goldstein. Her previous violin teachers (before attending college) include Benjamin Tomkins and Janelle Wu. Upon completion of Nicole Fassold's Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Louisiana State University, she will continue to pursue her career and passion for opera and pit orchestra performance.