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Response II

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Response II

I would like to open my remarks by expressing my admiration for the work I have witnessed at this conference overall, and for the larger project it represents; namely, an intense engagement with musicology's past. I believe this to be an extremely important undertaking, one in which colleagues in Germany have invested to a far greater extent than what I have observed elsewhere, including in the United States. I have been asked to respond to the presentations by Ulrich Konrad, Friedrich Geiger, Wolfgang Rathert, Dörte Schmidt, Wolfgang Auhagen, and Ralf Martin Jäger, although I will also refer to some points raised in earlier contributions as well. My comments will address the question of continuities and ruptures, a recurring theme of the symposium, and especially how that question provides depth to understanding the entire notion of the zero hour, or Stunde Null. Laurenz Lütteken suggested in his presentation on *MGG* that a Stunde Null never really existed, and the collective work of colleagues gathered here has demonstrated again and again that while postwar conditions were favorable for promoting the idea of a clean break and a new beginning, the world of music and the discipline of musicology were witnessing the continuities of careers, of institutions, and of approaches to music-making and music scholarship. Lütteken's remarks also bring to mind my first discovery of astounding continuities in the first edition of *MGG*: in the entry »Musikwissenschaft«, published in 1961, the bibliography includes a heading »Rassen- und Volkstumskunde« and lists works by Friedrich Blume, Albert Wellek, and Hans Engel published during the Third Reich and dealing with race theories, as well as a 1943 article by Fritz Bose (»Klangstile als Rassenmerkmale« from the *Zeitschrift für Rassenkunde*) and the latter's 1952 article »Meßbare Rassenunterschiede in der Musik«. The *MGG* entry »Deutschland«, which appeared in 1954, contains the bibliographic subheading »Bedingtheit, Wesen, und Organisation der deutschen Musik: Psychologische, stilistische, geistesgeschichtliche Aspekte«, which consists almost entirely of works that appeared between 1933 and 1945 and mentions attempts at defining Germanness that relied heavily on race theory, as well as a 1939 literature review by Walther Vetter that criticized the discipline for its lack of attention to the »Jewish question«.¹

Alongside so many continuities after 1945, however, were many changes, some of them substantive, some of them superficial, and some of them falling somewhere in between. Ulrich Konrad documented a new shift in postwar musicology toward the serious study of music of the nineteenth century that received its main impetus outside the academy, unearthing some fascinating documentation linking this new direction to the initiatives of the Thyssen Stiftung. To be sure, the greater majority of postwar musicologists distanced themselves from the intellectual traditions of the Nazi past by burying themselves in pre-classical periods and shifting their methods to the more objective and positivist realms of source studies and analysis. Yet such trends need to be contextualized both globally and locally. Generally speaking, the musicology discipline had tended to privilege earlier historical periods in their emphasis on pre-Romantic music, a trend that included the majority of American musicologists, who turned their attention to the nineteenth century only long after the end of World War II and got much of their inspiration from the English translations of Carl Dahlhaus's seminal works.

¹ Walther Vetter, »Zur Erforschung des Deutschen in der Musik«, in: *Deutsche Musikkultur* 4 (1939–40), S. 101–107.

It is also important to note that the seemingly new interest in nineteenth-century music after the war overshadowed a tendency within the musicology discipline to write extensively about nineteenth-century music especially in popular, non-scholarly writings. Taking part in a broader cultural imperative to serve the needs of the ›Volksgemeinschaft‹, musicologists in the 1930s and 1940s had dedicated much of their work to reaching out to a general readership in order to disseminate notions of the greatness of Germany's musical past, notably in their participation in producing dozens of popular biographies of nineteenth-century composers. In the years following 1933, the output of biographical studies doubled and engaged a higher participation from trained musicologists, who produced volumes primarily on German masters of the nineteenth century. Two new biographical series appeared, both from the Athenaeum Verlag in Potsdam: *Die großen Meister der Musik*, under the general editorship of Ernst Bücken, ran from 1932 to 1939, and *Unsterbliche Tonkunst*, also mentioned in Klaus Pietschmann's introductory remarks, was edited by Alfred Rosenberg's music expert Herbert Gerigk and ran from 1936 to 1942. Volumes penned by musicologists included biographies of Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, but also of Schubert, Weber, Wagner, Bruckner, Reger, Schumann, Brahms, Liszt, Lortzing, Johann Strauss, Richard Strauss, Wolf, and Pfitzner. Both series solicited significantly more contributions from musicologists than any older series had. Thus the new direction fueled with the support of the Thyssen Stiftung may not have been entirely new, but those embarking on nineteenth-century studies after the war may have felt the need to distance their projects from the nineteenth-century work of an earlier generation that directed its research and writing toward instilling pride in German music and, in that way, serving the greater good of the ›Volksgemeinschaft‹.

The incentive for German musicology to demonstrate its commitment to serving to the ›Volksgemeinschaft‹ dated back to the early twentieth century but reached its full potential in the Third Reich, as Nazi officials reached out to the leaders of the discipline and created opportunities for the field to flourish, while the profession itself gravitated toward research that could serve the needs of the German nation. For this reason, too, postwar musicologists saw the need to distance themselves from any intellectual traditions bearing the slightest implications of upholding nationalist agendas. Dörte Schmidt reminded us of Reinhold Brinkmann's observation of postwar musicology's turn toward analysis and away from *Geistesgeschichte*, which was yet another response to the exaggerated sense of duty to the *Volksgemeinschaft* that reigned during the Nazi years and that required redirection in 1945. Yet here, again, this apparent rupture in methodologies played itself out within the framework of a much more fundamental continuity, namely in the uninterrupted production of critical editions of German music, where source studies, analysis, and other ostensibly positivist practices were applied to projects inherited from the past that had sustained a strong nationalist imperative: *Das Erbe deutscher Musik*, christened in the Third Reich, was just one of the more prominent legacies perpetuating the celebration German music, German composers, and German cultural greatness.

Yet another instance of an apparent rupture that masked its own continuities was the musicological treatment of Italian music. Friedrich Geiger documented a heightened postwar interest in Italian music that nevertheless harbored anti-Italian stereotypes. Here we can look to a brief phenomenon in musicological work that emerged during the war, when German scholars felt compelled to acknowledge the musical achievements of their Axis ally, albeit begrudgingly. In his 1944 book *Deutschland und Italien in ihren musikgeschichtlichen Beziehungen*, Hans Engel tried to highlight the mutual respect of the two nations (citing Italians' attraction to the German »Nordic depth« and Germany's attraction to Italian »euphony«) and even put forth claims about their racial affinities. But while Engel politely acknowledged the profound influences of Italian music on German composers throughout the centuries, his deep resentment smoldered beneath the surface, especially in his long digressions on the decadence and destructive

eroticism of Italian opera and the perverse emasculation of the castrati that went against German sensibilities. Engel had to acknowledge Italy's musical achievements for political reasons, but he could not dispense with his firm belief in German purity and superiority.²

Moving beyond historical musicology, we can observe the tensions between continuities and ruptures similarly pervading the revitalization of the fields of »systematische Musikwissenschaft« and »vergleichende Musikwissenschaft«, and in the new interest in popular music research. The difficulties in revitalizing these fields after the war are clearly due to the forced migration of their pioneers as a result of Nazi race policies. The forced migration of Robert Lachmann and other Jewish scholars taking the lead in »vergleichende Musikwissenschaft« left the area to historical musicologists who moved the field toward a more intense preoccupation with folk music research, and the exile of Curt Sachs, Erich von Hornbostel, and others left the continuation of their work in the hands of inexperienced students such as Marius Schneider, Fritz Bose, and Alfons Kreichgauer, and non-specialists such as Erich Schumann for the duration of the Third Reich. Wolfgang Aubagen noted how the first university offerings in »systematische Musikwissenschaft« after the war had to be undertaken by historical musicologists, and we can only imagine how »systematische Musikwissenschaft« may have prospered had Sachs and Hornbostel stayed on in Germany. Yet we also know that many of the same individuals who revived the field after 1945, such as Albert Wellek, had experimented with race theories in the psychological and acoustic research that they carried out within the parameters of »systematische Musikwissenschaft« in the 1930s and 1940s.

Turning to Ralf Martin Jäger's discussion, the postwar revitalization of »vergleichende Musikwissenschaft« harbored some of the same ambivalences that we have observed in many historical approaches discussed here, prompting some to distance themselves from its earlier tendencies and to embrace the foreign yet neutral nomenclature of »Ethnomusikologie«. In this case, the intellectual pursuit of »vergleichende Musikwissenschaft« as it was first conceived was not restricted to equal comparisons of musical cultures but also incorporated an agenda of creating hierarchies, examining the music of other cultures in order to find the common elements of music but also in order to demonstrate the superiority of European music. In the introduction to the first issue of the *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Musikwissenschaft*, established in 1933, co-founder Johannes Wolf framed the study of non-western music as a key to understanding the primitive stages of the Occident.³ As for the study of popular music, here we find one of the few instances of a completely new research interest emerging long after the war, but as was the case with the new interest in nineteenth-century music, the serious study of urban popular music was a late phenomenon worldwide. The legacy of Nazi-era »musikalische Volkskunde« that focused its attention on seeking the true essence of Germanness in the disappearing folk cultures of rural populations within and beyond Germany – much of it supported with research funds from the SS-Ahnenerbe – had clearly become tainted and fell into oblivion after 1945. Nevertheless, a serious study of urban popular music would have been as foreign to German musicologists as to musicologists elsewhere. Even the Weiße Rose martyr and folk music scholar Kurt Huber had warned against extending the study of German folk culture to include urban practices,⁴ and popular music as we now understand it would have

² Hans Engel, *Deutschland und Italien in ihren musikgeschichtlichen Beziehungen*, Regensburg 1944.

³ Johannes Wolf, »Zum Geleit«, in: *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Musikwissenschaft* 1 (1933), S. 1.

⁴ »Die vordringlichste dieser Aufgaben heißt: Reinerhaltung des echten deutschen Volksgutes! Es läuft beispielloser Schund in unseren Volksliedsammlungen und Volksliedarchiven mit unter. Natürlich Lied, das im Volke lebt oder einmal lebte. Als ob im Volke nicht gänzlich Unvölkisches leben, ja das schönste Parasitenleben leben und die Wurzeln echten Volkstums anfressen könnte! Hinaus mit den bänkelsängerischen Schauerballaden und Moritaten einer Volkshefe, die nicht mehr völkisch fühlen konnte, aus unserer Volksliedpflege! Fort mit den elenden »Mutterl-« und »Waisenliedern«, den faulen Zoten (man läßt sich recht derbe Volkskost gerne gefallen, wenn sie echt ist!), sinnlosen Schlagern, die das Volk, das natürlich keine Stilkritik treibt, auch singt, wenn man sie ihm hunderte- und tausendemale vorsetzt!« Kurt Huber, »Aufbau deutscher Volksliedforschung und Volksliedpflege«, in: *Deutsche Musikkultur* 1 (1936), S. 69.

included jazz, film music, and other foreign-tinged products that were ubiquitous in Germany of the 1930s and 1940s despite the ideological objections from Nazi zealots. Yet this was music that would have been considered unworthy of serious study by musicologists anywhere, not only in Germany, until the 1980s at the earliest.

What, then, do we do with the concept of the Stunde Null in musicological research? Wolfgang Rathert made reference to Amy Beal's book, *New Music, New Allies: American Experimental Music in West Germany from the Zero Hour to Reunification*. While Beal makes an important contribution to shedding light on the American influence on German musical life during the Cold War, she does not come to terms with the complex phenomenon of the Stunde Null, despite its inclusion in her title, but instead works on the premise that a rupture in musical activity clearly demarcated German music before and after 1945. Beal is not alone in working on this presumption, as we have seen a rapidly increasing interest in music of the Cold War, particularly among a group of younger American musicologists who have started their own study group in the American Musicological Society. Much of this work, however, simply starts its investigation in 1945 and assumes that no continuities from the Third Reich could have existed. These researchers see no need to scrutinize the musical realities of the Third Reich because they assume it to have been repressive, backward, and completely different from the promising musical directions nurtured in a Stunde Null society.

But having witnessed a preponderance of evidence of continuities before and after 1945 in musical practices, personnel, and projects, should we summarily reject the entire notion of a Stunde Null? In the 1970s, the field of Germanistik was the first to call into question whether a Stunde Null had ever occurred, insisting that many writers who claimed to represent a new beginning had enjoyed successful careers in the Third Reich. With the exception of the »Gruppe 47«, German writers had, in their view, existed in a state of »apolitical existentialism« from 1930 to 1960 instead of heroically departing from the evils of the past.⁵ But the difference between the community of postwar German writers and German musicians/musicologists were vast. Writers had exposed themselves to public scrutiny by debating their role in postwar German society in essays and journalism, coming to terms with the Nazi past and searching for a path forward, whereas the music community chose to stay out of the spotlight and avoided any such public debate. Christoph Wolff and Albrecht Riethmüller reminded us of the »Kartell des Schweigens« that inhibited musicologists from dealing with the Nazi past until the 1980s. We also know that any such inquiries had to be carried out by investigators such as Fred Prieberg, who worked outside of the academy and had little to lose professionally by alienating himself from the »Zunft«. Even then, the prevailing method for dealing with the Nazi past in the bulk of musicological research has been to avoid what had gone on in Nazi Germany and to focus instead on the activities of exiles. Large research projects and even basic textbooks on the history of music still portray German music as existing only in exile throughout the 1930s and 1940s, reinforcing assumptions that nothing of any value came out of Nazi Germany. This emphasis on exile composers went one step further by trying to impose upon these figures a one-size-fits-all profile: that they were all leftists, that they were all writing progressive music, and that they were all antifascist. Amaury du Closel has been one of the few to challenge these generalizations in any depth, looking at the compositions of exiles and »inner emigrants« and uncovering conservative stylistic tendencies in much of their work, stressing that their vilification by Nazi rivals had little, if anything, to do with their musical style.⁶ More crucially, this narrative that true German music could survive only in exile seriously delayed any scholarly consideration of the music that was produced in the Third Reich, and much work remains to be done in this area.

⁵ Stephen Brockmann, *German Literary Culture at the Zero Hour*, Rochester, N.Y. 2004, S. 3–12.

⁶ Amaury du Closel, *Erstickte Stimmen: »Entartete Musik« im Dritten Reich*, trans. Ulrike Kolb, Wien 2010; originally published as *Les voix étouffées du IIIe Reich*, Arles 2005.

Two decades after the Germanisten had discredited the Stunde Null, a reexamination of the concept surfaced in publications commemorating the 50-year anniversary of the end of the war, also taking the opportunity to compare and contrast that pivotal turn in German history with the more recent event of German reunification.⁷ These reflections suggested that the notion of the Stunde Null needed to be reexamined, since a historical rupture undeniably existed in Germany on several levels: in the hunger, death, and physical destruction of major cities, in the complete dismantling of German administrative infrastructure, and in the new rules and ethics imposed by the Allies in their pervasive programs of denazification, reeducation, and democratization. Germans living under these conditions had little choice but to accept the idea of a Stunde Null; they knew that things could not be as they were before 1945 for a variety of reasons, and they accepted this idea of a new beginning not so much as a reality but as a survival strategy (they knew full well that the same people were occupying the same positions, that the same organizations such as the GfM were headed by the same leadership, and that projects such as the *Denkmäler* were continuing as before).

For musicology, a confrontation with the year 1945 requires both an examination of the concept of the Stunde Null and a consideration of the continuities that might have breached it. The notion of a musical Stunde Null had been inspired by early reactions like the ones of American music officers, who reported in 1945 that Hitler »succeeded in transforming the lush field of musical creativity into a barren waste«, that Germany's most talented musicians had gone abroad, and that composers in the Third Reich had produced only works deemed »psychologically effective to the Nazi cause«. ⁸ By painting the bleakest picture possible of the Nazi past, musicians, music critics, and administrators could freely justify virtually any postwar undertaking as new and untainted, even if it continued a trend that may have existed under Hitler. There were West German composers who sailed through the denazification process even though they were hardly victims of Nazi oppression, yet they embraced the Stunde Null in an attempt to reinvent themselves. Wolfgang Fortner, for example, had managed to pursue a musical career in the Nazi years, but after the war he allied himself with Wolfgang Steinecke to establish the Darmstädter Ferienkurse. Fortner withdrew half of the major works he had written during the Nazi years from public view, including one that premiered under the sponsorship of Alfred Rosenberg. He managed to reinvent himself with the help of music critic Heinrich Strobel as an internationalist with ties especially to French compositional trends before adopting serialism, and he became the director of Musica Viva in Munich in 1964, the same year that the Darmstadt course added the word »international« to its name. Fortner's case is revealed in the 2002 dissertation by J. Alexander Colpa, which also does an excellent job of analyzing what he calls the »Zero Hour Myth«, tracing in detail how Fortner managed to build a new career out of reconfiguring his own past. Colpa also calls out the various surveys of music in the Third Reich and post-war music histories for unwittingly perpetuating the myth by respectively ending or beginning their investigations with the year 1945.⁹ The 2003 GfM symposium »Stunde Null« – *Zur Musik um 1945* also raised some very important observations about how we need to reconsider the Stunde Null as it impacted musicians, pointing to the necessity of taking into account what people were experiencing and how important it was for them to accept the hope that there could be a new beginning.¹⁰ But, as

⁷ *Nachkriegszeiten – Die Stunde Null als Realität und Mythos in der deutschen Geschichte: Acta Hobenschwangau 1995*, ed. Stefan Krimm and Wieland Zirbs, München 1996; *Revisiting Zero Hour 1945: The Emergence of Postwar German Culture*, ed. Stephen Brockmann and Frank Trommler (= *Humanities Program Series*, 1), Washington, D.C. 1996; *Stunde Null: The End and the Beginning Fifty Years Ago*, ed. Geoffrey Giles (= *GHI-Occasional Papers*, 20), Washington, D.C. 1997.

⁸ Quoted in David Monod, *Settling Scores: German Music, Denazification, and the Americans, 1945-1953*, Chapel Hill, N.C. 2005, S. 116.

⁹ Johannes Alexander Colpa, *Germany's »Zero-Hour Myth« as a Context for the Stylistic Evolution in the Orchestral Music of Wolfgang Fortner (1907-1987)*, Diss., New York 2002.

¹⁰ »Stunde Null« – *Zur Musik um 1945. Bericht über das Symposium der Gesellschaft für Musikforschung an der Musikbochschule Lübeck 24.-27. September 2003*, ed. Volker Scherliess, Kassel 2014.

Colpa emphasizes, a thorough understanding of the postwar period cannot simply use the Stunde Null as a point of departure or the year 1945 as the starting date for its investigations.

When the Germanisten came to the conclusion that no Zero Hour ever existed, they did so to show that the writers who claimed to have set the restart button in 1945 were the same people who had prospered under Hitler. Their critique could be heard among the voices of those critics claiming that West Germany had been renazified rather than denazified. But we are now at the point where we can reassess the Stunde Null in a more sophisticated manner and can apply the same scrutiny to the idea of »renazification«. The Allies' goals to remove Nazism and »denazify« German society would prove to be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. How was one to isolate »Nazism« as a self-contained behavior pattern or set of beliefs without underestimating the forces in German history that led to Hitler's victory and the complex workings of German society from 1933 to 1945? The Allies also quickly realized that it was completely unrealistic to remove all Nazis from positions of power while needing their expertise to rebuild Germany. In the performing arts in particular, the need to provide entertainment for a restless and hungry German populace pressured the denazification tribunals to speed up the exoneration of music and theater personnel, yielding a cultural life that was virtually indistinguishable from that of the Nazi years. German culture had never been truly nazified, rather it continued much that was going on before 1933. Despite the hyperbolic displays of nationalism and intolerance in such high-profile venues as the *Entartete Musik* exhibition, and the intricate bureaucratic web that gave the impression of a tightly organized cultural administration, even the Nazis had to acquiesce to the forces of popular trends that were cultivated internationally, since Germans were just as hungry for jazz, Hollywood, and other forms of diversion as were the citizens of other countries. The end of the war and the revelations of Germany's crimes against humanity made it imperative to insist upon a historical break, but we have now reached the stage where we can go beyond the mindset of 1945 and assess the tangible ruptures in German society alongside the underlying cultural continuities.