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Walter Leigh

NORTH SEA CROSSINGS. WALTER LEIGH, HINDEMITH AND ENGLISH MUSIC (2008)

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This was David Drew's last published article. Completed in December 2008, it appeared in May 2009 as a contribution to "… dass alles auch hätte anders kommen können*".* Beiträge zur Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts *edited by Susanne Schaal-Gotthardt, Luitgard Schader and Heinz-Jürgen Winkler, published as Band XII of* Frankfurter Studien, *a publication of the Hindemith-Institut (Frankfurt am Main: Schott ED 20571, 2009).*

David Drew had discussed with the present editor a projected follow-up article for Tempo, *to deal specifically with Walter Leigh's music for* A Midsummer Night's Dream *and the ideological and critical misunderstandings which he felt were beginning to envelop it as a result of its citation in Fred K. Prieberg's* Musik im NS-Staat. *This was presumably one of the 'several research-projects' ongoing to which he alludes in footnote 37. Sadly, little if any of that projected article was written down. But since the publication of 'North Sea Crossings' in an otherwise German-language source must inevitably have found it few English readers so far, it seemed a fitting tribute to its author to reprint it here, with profound thanks for co-operation to Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, to Sally Groves in particular, and the estate of David Drew.*

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During his short lifetime, the music of Walter Leigh seemed to give pleasure to many and offence to nobody. It fulfilled its various functions with due dispatch and won the loyalty and affection of the performers for whom it was written and the audiences to which it was addressed. Disclaiming the protection of aesthetic autonomy and the mixed blessings of the transcendental, it contented itself with being useful. Its ends were temporal and secular, its means consistently and scrupulously musical.

Young as he still was at the time of his death in the Libyan desert (on 12 June 1942) Leigh had quite recently spoken, with passion and concern, of his anxieties about the survival of Western classical music. His perceptions of the immediate dangers were firmly grounded in his understanding of that music's history and literature, up to and including the fourth decade of the 20th century.

The Leigh entries in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* begin with the Supplementary Volume to the Fourth Edition, which had been ready to go to press in September 1939 but was held in abeyance until 1945, when it was published without change or addition. (The editor, H.C. Colles, was therefore among the many whose deaths during the six years of war went unrecorded in that volume). The entry on Leigh was the work of the musicologist and critic Jack Westrup, who was also responsible for the updated but only slightly revised versions in *Grove 5* (1954) and *Grove 6* (1980). These versions followed the example of the 1939 original in identifying Leigh, very properly, as an 'English compos-

er'. The more extensively revised version in *Grove 7* (2001) was the first to note that Leigh's mother was a musician and of German origin.

Any picture of Leigh as an 'English' composer becomes questionable if it ignores or conceals his partly German background and the role it played in the various checks and balances of his musical education, his creative work, and his outlook in general. The listener, performer or commentator who becomes aware of a bias towards Leigh's self-evident Englishness (itself a volatile concept) may resort to a compensatory twist in what might seem to be the 'opposite' direction. But that is merely to compound the error. His musicianship recognizes no such oppositions (and neither did his Victorian and Wilhelminian forebears). A confluence of sources is his stylistic ideal. Pluralist by nature and multilingual in his art as in life, he appears to have been wholly at ease with his genetic inheritances from the Leighs of Devon and Somerset and the Lindemanns of East Prussia.

The debts to Germany's musicians, and above all to her composers, that had been accumulating in the British Isles during the two centuries between the arrival in England of Georg Friedrich Händel and the outbreak of World War I are inseparable from the history of the British Monarchy and the growth of the British Empire. The main flow of talent between German and British music had always been in one direction, at least until the time of Mendelssohn.

At a Royal Academy of Music concert in 1833, Mendelssohn heard the 17-year-old student William Sterndale Bennett playing the solo part in his D minor Piano Concerto. So impressed was he that he asked to be introduced to the young composer and invited him to visit him in Germany when his studies at the RAM were finished. In the spring of 1836 Bennett travelled to Düsseldorf to hear Mendelssohn conduct *St Paul* at the Lower Rhine Festival. Mendelssohn invited him to return to Germany in the autumn and be his guest in Leipzig for a much longer stay. On his arrival there in October, he was immediately admitted to Mendelssohn's circle and before long was being praised in the highest terms by Schumann in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. Schumann's friendship and advocacy counted for much, and certainly contributed to the enthusiastic reception for the Gewandhaus performance in January 1837 of Bennett's Third Piano Concerto, with the composer as soloist. It was to Bennett that Schumann dedicated his *Etudes Symphoniques*, op.13.

Bennett was never to fulfil the considerable promise of his youth. Despite the bonds of genuine friendship between him and Schumann he was in no sense a revolutionary and remained at heart a Mendelssohnian in his ideals and his actions. It was precisely in Mendelssohn's sense that he founded the English Bach Society in 1849, and five years later conducted the English première of the *Matthäuspassion*.

Limited though it was in duration, Bennett's early success in Germany was one of the emblems of that new confidence from which, in the later years of Queen Victoria's reign, the 'English' school associated at the start with the names of Hubert Parry and the Irish-born composer Charles Villiers Stanford began to define itself. Stanford was a passionate believer in the virtues and strengths of German music-education, having himself studied in Leipzig, Berlin, and Kiel during the years 1874–76.[1] From 1883 until his death in 1924 he was professor of composition at the Royal College of Music in London. Even more important for the future of British music was his subsequent and coterminous appointment as Professor of Music – i.e. Director (or Chair) of

[1] Stanford's principal teacher in Germany was Carl Reinecke.

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the music faculty – at Cambridge University. Aged 35 and at the height of his powers, he had immediately set in motion a radical reform of the faculty, its teaching methods, its curriculum, and its ultimate aims. For the first time, a meaningful partnership with the leading conservatories in Germany became achievable in the broader interests of music education in Europe and in the New World.

By training and inclination Stanford was a 'progressive' Brahmsian. Like many fine musicians of his generation in Europe – in Germany especially – he was perplexed and repelled by modernism in every form, from Debussy onwards. By 1918, the faculty in Cambridge over which he still presided had become a provider of well-trained musicians for the cathedrals and larger churches of the Anglican Communion. Its technical standards were rigorous but its perspectives narrow compared to that of Stanford's reform-years.

Stanford died in 1924. His successor as Professor of Music in Cambridge was his former pupil and fellow-Irishman Charles Wood, a fine composer and teacher but not one to promote the kind of modernization the younger Fellows and livelier students were calling for. Wood's sudden and untimely death during the summer of 1926 came as a shock for everyone but especially for the senior Fellows who had been more than content with the sequestered world of Stanford's last years. This time, however, the election of a new professor was not a foregone conclusion. Both nominees were former pupils of Stanford. The apparent favourite was a locally respected teacher, conductor and composer who would be sure to continue in Wood's direction. The contender was Professor Edward Dent, a scholar and musician of international stature, liberal in his sympathies, a born diplomat and a superb linguist. Friend and future biographer of Busoni, he had been a frequent visitor to Berlin in the last years before the outbreak of World War I and again throughout the 1920s.

Against the odds, Dent was elected Professor of Music in November 1926. Outstanding among the students he inherited from Wood was the young Walter Leigh, now in his fourth and last year at Cambridge. One of Leigh's first actions on returning to Cambridge at the start of the academic year in October 1926 had been to write a letter in support of Dent's candidacy. Countersigned by his confederates, the letter had been formally submitted to the University's electoral board.[2] Unlikely to have remained a secret for long, it was only a token of the understanding between Dent and the young musician who enjoyed his active and whole-hearted support for the remainder of his short life.

Towards the end of his final year at Cambridge Leigh decided to continue his studies in Berlin. In September 1927 Dent personally introduced him to Georg Schünemann, Deputy-Director (under Franz Schreker) at the Berlin Musikhochschule and administrator of the entire academic programme – including the new composition class led by Hindemith, to whom Dent had written a letter in support of Leigh's admission.[3] Exactly 30 years had passed since the young Vaughan Williams had travelled to Berlin to study with Max Bruch and 90 since Bennett had first visited Germany. History was not repeating itself. History – and music – had changed course irrevocably.

[2] It is referred to in a letter from Leigh to his family dated 20 October 1926. Leigh's copious and illuminating correspondence with his parents and with his sister Charlotte is held in the family's London and New York Archives (hereafter, WLA). His professional correspondence and holograph mss. are in the Walter Leigh Collection at the British Library (BL).

[3] In the *Jahresbericht der Hochschule für Musik* Leigh is listed at Nr. 373 as composition student with effect from 1 October 1927. His second subject was piano under Max Trapp. Leigh's second year at the Musikhochschule was effective from 4 October 1928 to the following September.

A month after his enrolment at the Musikhochschule, Leigh attended the Hauptprobe and the Uraufführung (on 3 November 1927) of Hindemith's *Kammermusik Nr. 5* op. 36 Nr. 4 for viola and large chamber orchestra. The soloist was the composer; the conductor, Otto Klemperer. Leigh's subsequent letter to his family testifies to the strong impression left on him not only by the piece itself but also by Hindemith's bravura as performer.[4] Though surely familiar with his high reputation as a chamber-music player, he had doubtless been unprepared for such virtuosity. Moreover, there had been no precedent in the modern repertory – indeed, none at all since Berlioz – for a concertante viola work of this order.

Within two years Darius Milhaud had completed a companion-piece (his op. 108) and dedicated it to Hindemith, while William Walton – Leigh's senior by three years – had written a full scale concerto for Lionel Tertis, Hindemith's senior by 20 years and generally regarded as the leading viola-player of his day. Tertis was due to give the première of the Walton at a Henry Wood Promenade Concert on 29 August 1929, but declined to do so on receiving the score some two months earlier. On the advice of Edward Clark – in his double capacity as a staff member of the BBC's Music Department and a colleague of Dent's in the ISCM – an approach was made to Hindemith, who agreed to undertake the première in place of Tertis – but not at such short notice. On that understanding, and with financial support from Siegfried Sassoon, Walton travelled to Germany in the last week of July and arrived in Baden-Baden on the evening of the 27th – the third day of that year's Deutsche Kammermusik Festival, and one day after the première of Walter Leigh's *Drei Stücke für Liebhaberorchester*. He and Leigh were already acquainted and had several mutual friends, including the composer and conductor Constant Lambert and the British jazz pioneer Spike Hughes, a former pupil of Egon Wellesz and latterly, of Max Butting in Berlin. On the 28th, Walton talked with Hindemith about the Concerto.[5] With Leigh he would surely have had other discussions.

Leigh returned to London very soon after the Baden-Baden events, and immediately began life as a freelance composer and musician. On 3 October Walton conducted the premiere of his concerto at the Queen's Hall, London with Hindemith as soloist. On the evening of the 2nd, Leigh took Hindemith to see the latest Cole Porter revue, *Wake Up and Dream*, and then on to a 'Theatre of mistery' (sic) which Hindemith found 'Großartig!' – in contrast to the revue, which had struck him as 'nichts besonderes'.[6] On the day after the premiere he and Leigh dined together in Soho.[7] The absence of Walton on both occasions requires no special explanation. It is clear from his later correspondence with Leigh that he understood and respected the relationship between Hindemith and his former pupil.

[4] Letter addressed 'Dear Folk' and dated 'Berlin, Armistice Day, 1927' – i.e. 11 November.

[5] Stephen Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2001), pp. 91–92.

[6] Friederike Becker und Giselher Schubert, eds., *Paul Hindemith 'Das private Logbuch'. Briefe an seine Frau Gertrud*. Schott Mainz, 1995 [hereafter, Becker-Schubert 1995], pp. 50–51, letters dated respectively 2 October and 4 October. *Wake Up and Dream* was Charles B Cochran's 1929 revue and a big hit since its opening at the London Pavilion on 27 March 1929 (it ran for 263 performances). The star cast included Jessie Matthews, Sonnie Hale, Tilly Losch, and Douglas Byng. Further research may reveal that Walton and/or Spike Hughes had a hand in the orchestrations. The 'Theatre of Mystery' had been a London institution since the 1870s, when the great stage illusionist J. N. Maskelyne established his own theatre. From 1905 until the end of 1933, the Maskelyne family's 'Home of Mystery' was St George's Hall in Langham Place. The Hall was only a few steps from Broadcasting House, the Queen's Hall, and the Langham Hotel (probably where Hindemith stayed during his London visits). Hindemith's enchantment with the 'Theatre of Mystery' is perhaps less surprising than his stamina during the evening before a dress rehearsal and première.

[7] Becker-Schubert 1995 [fn 6], p. 51.

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The première of Walton's Viola Concerto was a notable success. For the composer's reputation it marked a significant turning point. For Hindemith's standing in England it was a new start. In November 1930 Donald Francis Tovey partnered Hindemith at the piano in all-Hindemith sonata recitals for University audiences in Glasgow and Edinburgh.[8] Tovey was rightly respected as one of the finest musical minds in the British Isles. His continued advocacy of Hindemith was an enviable asset. As musician and thinker, Tovey approached Hindemith from a position close to that of his younger contemporary Furtwängler. Born in 1875 – the year of Sterndale Bennett's death – Tovey was rooted in the Austro-German tradition from Bach and Haydn through to Brahms, Wagner, and Reger. As a Bach scholar and active proponent of Bach's music, however, he had less in common with Furtwängler than with Hindemith. If he and Hindemith were in some sense predestined allies but hardly kinsmen, Hindemith and Leigh were examples of a rarer and deeper comradeship. The master-pupil relationship reached its formal end in July 1929. The friendship that supervened was to survive many vicissitudes, and was reaffirmed during the weeks prior to Leigh's death. Hindemith's last letter to him is not avuncular, but fraternal in the true sense.[9]

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At the Berliner Musikhochschule, Hindemith's main responsibility had been to form and direct a new composition class that would replace the one that had been directed for many years by Friedrich E. Koch (who had been unwell for some while and died in 1927). It was not in competition with Schreker's Masterclass at the same institution; it was complementary to it. The admission-tests were just as strict as those Schreker had introduced in 1921 – the year when his ministerial patron, Leo Kestenberg, published his seminal work, Musikerziehung und Musikpflege.

Leigh's musical education had begun at the age of four. His teacher for the next four years was his mother, Emmeline Leigh *née* Lindemann, who had completed her musical education at the Stern'sches Konservatorium in Berlin and was by profession a music teacher until her marriage. From his ninth to his sixteenth year Leigh had studied music privately with Harold Darke, a former pupil of Stanford, an internationally admired organist, and a proponent of England's church music tradition from Tallis and Byrd to Stanford and Wood. Leigh's subsequent studies at Cambridge under Wood and Dent were a consolidation of his lessons from Darke, but were by no means his exclusive preoccupation. Only weeks before his final examinations for an ordinary BA (Music), his friends in the University's long-established theatre company, the A.D.C., persuaded him (and he was easily persuaded) to write and direct the music for their next revue. First seen on 27 November 1926 and much acclaimed by the Cambridge audiences and the theatre critics in the national press, *The Xmas Revue* had a deliberately provocative title ('xmas' being a recent and controversial import from the commercial world) and an explanatory subtitle in parenthesis

[8] A reduced facsimile of the Edinburgh concert of 12 November 1930 is on p. 76 of Becker-Schubert 1995 [fn 6]. Tovey was pianist in the Op. 25 Nr. 2 Kleine Sonate for Viola d'amore, the E-flat Violin Sonata, and the Op. 11 Nr. 4 Viola Sonata.

[9] Hindemith (from 134 West Elm Street, New Haven) to Leigh, 3 November 1941: British Library Walter Leigh Collection Vol. XXVII, 65132; typewritten airmail letter addressed to Leigh c/o his wife's parents in Cambridge. Leigh had been serving with the British Forces in the Middle East since August.

– *with nothing at all about Christmas in it*. The cast was all-male (according to the A.D.C. tradition). The London critics were agreed that one of the highlights was the sequence of miniature ballets that began with *Art and Craft*, a tongue-in-the-cheek title evoking the late-Victorian Arts and Crafts movement but meaning something rather different. 'Art' is represented by four 'damsels' in smocks and black stockings, and 'Craft' by the amorous manoeuvres of two passing fauns. While the former pay their invincibly celibate tributes to the English Folk Dance Society and its revered founder, the folksong collector Cecil Sharp (1858–1924), the latter are heirs to Nijinsky and his reading of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d' un faune*. Needless to say, their attempted seduction of the folk-dancers ends in abject failure. Virtue is triumphant.

None of Leigh's music for *Art and Craft* (or the two other ballets) seems to have survived, except perhaps as a memory in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* score he was to write ten years later for Hilmar Höckner and his school orchestra at the Herman-Lietz-Schule, Schloss Bieberstein (Rhön).[10] Höckner (1892–1968) had been a friend and disciple of the educationist and folksong proponent Fritz Jöde (1887–1970) ever since they both returned from war service and resumed their musical studies – Jöde at Leipzig University under Hermann Abert, Höckner at Freiburg. i. Br. under Wilibald Gurlitt.

In 1927 Höckner had persuaded Hindemith to write a piece for his student orchestra at Schoss Bieberstein. The result was the *Spielmusik*, op. 43 Nr. 1, for strings, flutes, and oboes – the first work in the *Spielmusik* cycle. Twenty years later, in his eloquent memoir of Walter Leigh, Höckner recalls Hindemith's visit to Bieberstein for the final rehearsals and first performance, and concludes: *Dieser Besuch Paul Hindemiths war für unsere Schule ein Höhepunkt ihres musikalischen Lebens*.[11] At the 1929 Deutsche Kammermusik Festival in Baden-Baden Hindemith introduced Höckner to Leigh. For the next ten years Höckner acted towards Leigh as if he secretly longed to make him composer-in-residence at Schloss Bieberstein. The result was a series of compositions that began on the basis of Leigh's *Drei Stücke für Liebhaberorchester* (Baden-Baden 1929), continued with a miniature string quartet in three movements and the *Musik für Streichorchester* in four, and culminated in the *Concertino* for harpsichord and strings, dedicated to Höckner and his harpsichordist wife. The *Sommernachtstraum* suite – composed as 'Spielmusik' in nine movements but with secondary use as theatre music for amateur performances – ends the cycle with a question mark to which Leigh had the best and perhaps the only answer.

Without a comprehensive and musically informed picture of Leigh's Bieberstein cycle and its Baden-Baden roots, the apartness of the *Sommernachtstraum* music seems disconcertingly 'English'. As in the burlesque operetta *The Pride of the Regiment* (1932) and its successor *Jolly Roger* (1933), the music is far removed from the dreaded 'Hindemith school'. It takes its first lessons (in figured bass for instance) from the age of Henry Purcell, its later ones from that of Sterndale Bennett. A hint of Elgar's *Wand of Youth* is as far as it ventures. There is, however, a double-edged musical joke which begins in D major with the *Eintritt der Handwerker* and ends in E minor with the *Rüpeltanz*.

[10] Influenced by Cecil Reddie's work at Abbotsholme (Staffordshire), the educational reformer and pedagogue Hermann Lietz founded his first Landerziehungsheim in 1898 and then, in 1901 and 1904 respectively, the two boarding schools in Haubinda (Thüringen) and Bieberstein (Hessen) which were named after him. He died at Haubinda in 1919. Höckner was in charge of music at Bieberstein from 1923 until his early retirement in 1947.

[11] Hilmar Höckner, 'Meine Begegnung mit Walter Leigh', *Musica*, Kassel, 1 (1947) [hereafter, Höckner 1947], pp. 291–296.

In his long and detailed 'Spielanweisung' Höckner characterises the entry-music as *nicht nur lustig, sondern zugleich behäbig (beinahe etwas dumm-komisch)*. In other words the 'art' of Leigh's *Art and Craft* without the 'craft' of Blut-und-Boden. But it is more than that. For Leigh is well aware that when Cecil Sharp and Vaughan Williams began their great folk-song project in 1910 they were consciously aiming to overcome what they saw as Germany's domination of English music.

In his frequently reprinted, widely quoted, and highly influential study *Musik im NS-Staat*, Fred K. Prieberg dedicated some 20 lines and an endnote to a single work by a solitary English composer: the *Sommernachtstraum* of Walter Leigh. Almost all Prieberg's information has been drawn – without acknowledgement – from Höckner's Foreword to the published score and from his 1947 memoir of Leigh.[12] Although a meticulous analysis and objective appraisal of Prieberg's methods and conclusions in this particular yet representative passage is long overdue – and increasingly urgent in view of recent developments in Leigh studies – they would be impracticable as well as unseemly in the present Festschrift. The same applies to the scrutiny of related phenomena on philosophical and musical levels to which Prieberg's brand of investigative journalism does not aspire. With regard to Hindemith's creative collaborations with Fritz Jöde and his colleagues in Die Musikantengilde, two famous essay-reviews in Adorno's *Dissonanzen* of 1958 immediately spring to mind.[13] In neither of them is Hindemith mentioned. Yet his is the dominating and almost palpable presence throughout. A 'guilty' one, naturally (see Prieberg – and his many followers).

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A fortnight after the Reichstag election of 4 March 1933 – the last (relatively) free election in Germany for twelve years – Hindemith arrived in London as a guest of the British Broadcasting Corporation. The tragedies and the accidents of history had in effect politicised a visit planned months before. The BBC Orchestra had begun the year and anticipated the March events by giving the British première (on 2 January) of Hindemith's *Philharmonic Concerto*, conducted by Sir Henry Wood. On 19 March Hindemith was the viola soloist in *Kammermusik Nr. 5*; on the 22nd Wood conducted the first British performance of the oratorio *Das Unaufhörliche* at the Queen's Hall in Langham Place (next to Broadcasting House). It was warmly received by the audience.

The series was to end on Thursday 24 March with the UK première of *Lehrstück*, conducted by Adrian Boult. On the Wednesday, Hindemith had lunch with Willy Strecker, Walter Leigh, and Arnold Cooke.[14] With or without them he then proceeded to the penultimate rehearsal of *Lehrstück*. At the end of it he had a half-hour break before his next engagement and devoted it to writing a letter to his wife informing her of all that has happened in the past two days and what lay ahead of him that evening: instead of the sleep he would have preferred, he is now obliged to go to the theatre, where he will see a (nameless) operetta by Leigh.

[12] Fred K. Prieberg, *Musik im NS-Staat* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982), p. 157.

[13] Theodor W. Adorno, ' Kritik des Musikanten' and 'Zur Musikpädagogik', *Dissonanzen. Musik in der verwalteten Welt*, 2. erweiterte Ausgabe (Göttingen 1958).

[14] Becker-Schubert 1995 [fn 6], pp. 96–97. Letter to Gertrud Hindemith conjecturally dated 20 March. Arnold Cooke (1906–2005) had been a friend of Leigh's since they were fellow students at Cambridge University in the year 1926/27. Cooke had continued his Cambridge studies for the next two years and then joined Hindemith's class in Berlin (1930–31).

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Leigh's *Jolly Roger* was then in the third week of its run at the Savoy Theatre. Leigh was a genial host and would surely have shown his appreciation of Hindemith's self-denial. Moreover, it was an opportunity for discussing in seclusion matters of mutual concern that could hardly have been aired at the pre-rehearsal lunch with Strecker and Cooke; such matters, for instance, as the current positions of Jöde and Höckner, or the prospects for the Berliner Musikhochschule under the new regime. (Georg Schünemann was soon to lose his post as deputy director; but Hindemith had at least one Jewish pupil in his class – Franz Reizenstein – during the following academic year).

The Savoy Theatre evening is not mentioned in the hurried letter Hindemith wrote to his wife on the next day, following the dress-rehearsal of *Lehrstück* and a meeting with the philanthropist and music-impresario Robert Mayer, who was interested in mounting a British performance of the *Plöner Musiktag*.[15] Hindemith had been encouraged by the dress-rehearsal of *Lehrstück* and seems already to have been reconciled to a piece whose Baden-Baden première had cost him dear. Designed for radio-listeners rather than for the invited audience, the production had no need of the visual elements that had caused such offence at Baden-Baden – the violent action in the Clown scene, the grimaces and contortions of Valeska Gert in the 'Totentanz' film. In his letter of the 24th, Hindemith declares: *ich finde das Stück ist schön und wirkt wie ein alter Klassiker*.

That was Wednesday's view. On the Friday, just before their separate departures for Germany, Willy Strecker showed Hindemith his file of press-cuttings. After a quick glance Hindemith handed it back. *Diese Zeitungsverhältnisse sind hier augenscheinlich noch schlimmer als anderswo*, he remarked in a letter to his wife, written that afternoon.[16] In the evening or early next morning he was heading for north Germany and a concert-engagement in Kiel on the Monday. That weekend, Britain's Sunday newspapers and their views of his BBC concerts were surely far from his thoughts. By Monday, however, his publishers in Mainz – not to mention higher authorities in Germany – would have taken due note of at least two of the Sunday reviews: one by Ernest Newman in the *Sunday Times*, the other by Constant Lambert in the outspokenly anti-Hitler *Sunday Referee*.

Newman was now in his mid-60s and working on the fourth and last volume of his great Wagner biography. A regular and honoured guest at the festivals in Bayreuth and Salzburg, a pillar of the musical establishment in England, and a trusted counsellor of the BBC at the highest levels, he was a major force in British music-politics during the inter-war period. As spokesman for the generation of music-listeners that had grown up with Strauss and Elgar – his own generation, indeed – he made no secret of his suspicions and fears about the 'new' music that had been arriving from mainland Europe since the early 1920s. In the Wagner-year that had begun in February 1933, the BBC's Hindemith concerts of March afforded him an ideal excuse for debunking a legendary reputation that he and others of his persuasion regarded as

[15] Becker-Schubert 1995 [fn 6], 97–98. [Sir] Robert Mayer was born in Mannheim in 1879 and studied music at the Mannheim Conservatory before going into business. He moved to London in 1896, and in 1923 – inspired by the example of Walter Damrosch in the USA – founded the Robert Mayer Concerts for Children. Interest in Hindemith's educational music had been growing in the UK since the staging of *Wir bauen eine Stadt* in Oxford at the ISCM Festival of June 1931.

[16] Becker-Schubert 1995 [fn 6], 98

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insidious. Lumping Hindemith together with his *Teutonic sham-profound librettists* – Tweedledum and Tweedledee addressed as 'Herr Benn' and 'Herr Brecht' – Newman is at once entertaining and merciless. On all three concerts his verdicts are damning.[17]

Newman had been in charge of the *Sunday Times* music column since 1920 and his views were by now predictable. Lambert, on the other hand, had only recently taken over the music column in the *Sunday Referee*, not, however, as a professional critic, but as a young and brilliantly gifted composer, conductor, and all-round musician, discovered by Diaghileff at the age of 18 and now, ten years later, at the forefront of his generation, together with his friend William Walton. He was two months younger than Leigh. For the Camargo Society – the forerunner of the Sadler's Wells and the Royal ballets – he had conducted Leigh's *Interlude for Theatre Orchestra* in 1932. That same year he had enabled Leigh to fulfil a commission for a three-piano work that he himself had been unable to accept. Their relations were cordial.

Lambert's views on contemporary music – British, European, and African-American – were heterodox and multi-disciplinary. A natural writer and a brilliant talker, he was equally at home in the 'bohemian' circles of Chelsea and Bloomsbury and the saloon bar of a famous public house close to the Queen's Hall and the BBC (where he was accustomed to hold court).

In a *Sunday Referee* review of *Jolly Roger* published on 5 March 1933 Lambert had praised Leigh's 'light music' – including *The Pride of the Regiment* – in preference to his 'serious music', in which he had detected the influence of Hindemith.[18] It was only the faintest warning of what was to come three weeks later, when Lambert turned to Hindemith himself and delivered the first of two critical onslaughts (without warning that a second would follow a week later).[19] Unlike Newman, Lambert writes in deadly earnest. His judgement is devastating.

Leigh's response was immediate. That same Sunday he had addressed a letter of protest to Lambert and posted it in time for the last collection. Lambert replied by return. Headed 'Monday' and written with a broad-nibbed pen in his arresting calligraphy, his letter covers seven pages of foolscap. The first begins:

> Dear Walter,
> Your extremely interesting outburst has not only caused me to suspend operations on my book but actually to break one of the most cherished rules of my life viz: not to cover more than a sheet of foolscap unless substantially remunerated.
>
> Your letter contains so many good points (together with a few red-herrings) that it would take several thousand words to deal with the various aesthetic problems raised. I hope indeed to deal with them fully in the book I am writing. Meanwhile I should like to answer some of your more sinister and far-reaching accusations.
>
> To start with[,] when I attack Hindemith I am not doing it from the point of view of obdurate Tories like Newman or frank buffoons like P.P. I need hardly point out that I was one of the very few critics who wrote sympathetically about Schönberg's Variations [Op. 31] for example, and that I am the last person to lump "Central European" music together as a thing to be either praised or blamed. […][20]

[17] Ernest Newman, 'The World of Music', *Sunday Times*, 26 March 1933, 7.
[18] Constant Lambert, 'Matters Musical: Walter Leigh's Burlesque', in the 'Literary and Entertainment Supplement' to the *Sunday Referee*, 5 March 1933, 7.
[19] Constant Lambert 'Matters Musical: Gershwin and Hindemith on Foreign Ground', in the 'Literary and Entertainment Supplement' to the *Sunday Referee*, 26 March 1935, 7.
[20] The pen-and-ink holograph of Lambert's letter (seven foolscap pages) from 15 Percy St. W.1 is in WLA.

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No copy or draft of Leigh's letter has yet been traced. Obviously, and with every justification, he had referred to Newman's review and likened it to Lambert's. (Newman too had a certain respect for the composer of the Gurrelieder and Verklärte Nacht). Much else can be inferred from Leigh's extant correspondence and writings.

The 'book' to which Lambert refers was *Music Ho! A Study of Music in Decline*. Finished in December 1933 and published in autumn 1934 by Faber and Faber – house and home for modernist literature from Pound and T.S. Eliot onwards – *Music Ho!* consolidated its author's growing reputation in literary and artistic circles and was to remain almost continuously in print for more than three decades. Lambert's two-stage campaign against Stravinsky – first as 'Time Traveller' in Diaghileff's compartment, then as *pasticheur* and couturier in the Paris salons – is the model and rehearsal for his subsequent assault on Hindemith. Whereas Stravinsky, to Lambert's ears, is merely the creature of cultural decline, Hindemith is one of its executive directors. His business-models are self-perpetuating: *For not only does Hindemith produce busy and colourless music without any distinguishing spiritual or national quality, but his followers and pupils, whether they write in Serbia or in Golders Green, produce precisely the same type of busy and colourless music.*[21]

From August 1929 (when he returned from his two years with Hindemith in Berlin) until August 1933, Leigh's London home and work-place (he had others in Cambridge) were at No.2 Golders Gardens, Golders Green. That was the address to which Lambert would have sent Leigh his return-post reply and the only one to which he was delivering a twice-coded message in *Music Ho!*. As he well knew, his signpost to Golders Green could mean only one thing to his general readership: the archetypal Jewish community that had been thriving there since the migrations from the East End that began in the prosperous years before World War I. Leigh's parents, who were not Jewish, had settled in Golders Green with their two small children in 1909 – and were to remain there for the rest of their long lives. Leigh left Golders Green in August 1933, after his marriage to the actress Marion Blandford (a ceremony not unconnected with the success of *Jolly Roger*).

None of the *many good points* Lambert claims to have discovered in Leigh's *extremely interesting outburst* of 26 March had left any discernible mark on the ferocious denunciation of *Lehrstück* and 'Gebrauchsmusik' which he was to publish in the next issue of the *Sunday Referee* under the title 'A Lesson to Us All'.[22] The fourth verse in his Sunday lesson had ended on a strictly topical note that was not to be repeated in *Music Ho!*. The subject is *Lehrstück*: *Like* [Das Unaufhörliche] *the work is founded on a libretto whose pseudo-profundities are of a type which one had hoped had found its last home in Hitler's speeches.* [...] *Apart from* [the clown scene] *it consists mostly of spurious Old Testament moralising interspersed with sadistic choruses in which the audience are expected to join with all the gusto of 100 per cent Aryans indulging in a little communal Jew-baiting and/or beating*.

In the sixth and last verse Lambert had delivered the verdict which he was merely to reinforce and paraphrase in his book, under the heading 'Craft for Craft's Sake'. A slave to the twin 'fetishes' of the 'democratic' and the 'mechanical', Hindemith had in his view created a 'monstrous

[21] Constant Lambert, *Music Ho! A Study of Music in Decline*. With an introduction by Arthur Hutchings (London: Faber and Faber, 1966 [hereafter Lambert 1966]), pp. 161–162. [First edition, Faber, 1934. Second and slightly amended edition, with new Preface, of 1937 is the source of the 1966 edition.]

[22] Constant Lambert, 'Matters Musical: A Lesson to Us All', in *Sunday Referee*, Literary and Entertainment Supplement, 2 April 1933, 7.

chimera' in the shape of unwanted, unused and ultimately unusable 'Gebrauchsmusik', of which *Lehrstück* was a classic example. *It is clear from the preface*, he assured his readers in April 1933, *that even Hindemith himself does not claim that the music of* [Lehrstück] *has any aesthetic value*.

The proto-Adornoist 'fetish' motif does not recur in *Music Ho!* but the gist of it is retained:

> [Hindemith] seems to think that some mystic value resides in the mere performance of notes – that the scraping of horsehair over catgut is in itself a health-giving and praiseworthy action, comparable to having a cold bath in the morning or being a Storm Trooper. His view of music would appear to be almost excretory.[23]

This is Lambert's pretext for reminding his readers of the title of his book and its source in Shakespeare's tragedy *Antony and Cleopatra*, where the heroine chooses billiards in preference to music. In modern times, he observes, her counterparts can have the best of both worlds by playing billiards while listening to the radio – unless they prefer *to listen to composers like Hindemith, who reduce music to the spiritual level of billiards, ping-pong and clock golf.*[24]

In the second and final phase of his polemic, Lambert seeks a burial-place for Hindemith in the graveyard of 'Gebrauchsmusik'.[25] He finds it by equating his talents with those of a hack journalist vainly aspiring to be a leader-writer: *We need hardly worry ourselves about the verdict of the future, for the journalist who has failed cannot console himself, like the unsuccessful poet, with the possible adoration of posterity*.[26]

Posterity was not unkind to *Music Ho!* The 1939 paperback edition (published by Penguin under its Pelican imprint) remained in print for at least a decade after Lambert's death; and then, in 1966, Faber republished the book in a hardback edition containing an Introduction by Arthur Hutchings that remains indispensable for today's students of Lambert's writings (including his letter to Leigh). Recalling, with evident enjoyment, his discussions and disputes with Lambert about matters musical and musicological, Hutchings conveys a vivid impression of the musician he admired and the man whose rare qualities and human frailties he remembers with a measured yet friendly tolerance. While quietly dissociating himself from Lambert's view of Hindemith – scarcely a hero in the UK of the mid-1960s – he adds, in extenuation, that *at the time of writing* Lambert did not know *Mathis der Maler*.[27] True – but less than entirely true in October 1936, when Lambert began the preface to the second edition of *Music Ho!* by expressing his regret that nothing in the past three years had caused him to withdraw or even moderate his 'gloomy' view of music and its future.[28] To some minds, and certainly to Leigh's, one of the outstanding musical events in England during those three years had been Hindemith's return to the Queen's Hall on 21 December 1934 to conduct the UK première of the *Mathis der Maler* symphony. Like the previous year's performance of *Das Unaufhörliche*, the concert was part of the Contemporary Music series organised for the BBC by Edward Clark (it also included the *Konzertmusik* op.49, with Irene Kohler as solo pianist).

The BBC's annual and quarterly planning cycles would have enabled Clark and his colleagues to schedule the concert a year beforehand but to confirm the UK première of the symphony after Furtwängler and

[23] Lambert 1966 [fn 21], 217.
[24] Lambert 1966 [fn 21], 217.
[25] Lambert 1966 [fn 21], 229–232.
[26] Lambert 1966 [fn 21], 232.
[27] Lambert 1966 [fn 21], 25.
[28] Lambert 1966 [fn 21], 27.

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the Berlin Philharmonic had given the world première in March 1934. Heartening though its success on that occasion had been for Hindemith – and his publishers too – it had been a new provocation for his foes in the Rosenberg office and the NS Kulturgemeinschaft. Until then, Furtwängler's goal had been a production of *Mathis der Maler* itself at the Berlin Staatsoper. But such were the effects of Rosenberg's campaign that in November 1934 Furtwängler ill-advisedly entered the public forum on Hindemith's behalf. The consequences for him were immediate and drastic.[29] And yet, only four weeks later, Hindemith was conducting the *Mathis* symphony in the Queen's Hall, as guest of a public corporation bound by its charter to neutrality and impartiality in all political spheres.

Although it seems most unlikely that Hindemith returned to Berlin without an opportunity of speaking with Leigh, there is no known record of a meeting at the Queen's Hall or elsewhere. If there had been any such meeting, Hindemith would surely have been cheered by the news of Leigh's debut earlier that year as a composer for film – for documentary film specifically. Thanks in part to Leigh there was now in England a direct continuation from the 'Music and Film' experiments at the two Baden-Baden festivals which Leigh had attended – the first in 1928 (when the films were silent and the music live or mechanical) the second a year later, at the start of the sound-film era. Hindemith's friend Milhaud had been guest-of-honour at the 1928 festival and had promptly delivered a score for that week's newsreel. A year later he wrote a score for the sound-version of *La P'tite Lilie*, a classic short film made in 1927 by his Brazilian-born friend Alberto Cavalcanti. The première of the new sound-version – recorded in Berlin by Tobis – was one of the attractions in the film-matinee that opened the 1929 festival (Hindemith's and Hans Richter's *Vormittagsspuk* was another).[30]

Early in 1934 John Grierson, the founding-father of the British documentary film movement, brought Cavalcanti to London to direct, among other things, an experimental film for his GPO Film Unit (funded by the General Post Office and its powerful trade union). Ostensibly an advertisement for telephones, *Pett and Pott* is a 25-minute social satire in the manner of the early René Clair, with a markedly Francophile score by Walter Leigh and a starring role for Valesca Gert, one of the most prominent in the first wave of refugees from the 'aryanised' German theatre and previously notorious in reactionary Baden-Baden for her part in the Totentanz film in Hindemith and Brecht's *Lehrstück*.

In the spring of 1935 Leigh interrupted his film work in order to fulfil a commission from the BBC for an overture celebrating the Silver Jubilee of King George V. Its frankly Elgarian strain anticipates the Walton of *Crown Imperial*, while the contrasting treatment of the Agincourt-song might have been one of the models for Walton's *Henry V* film score of 1944. Once the overture had been successfully performed Leigh seems to have been quite content that it remained in manuscript – which was typical of him. Connexions with Hindemith were not as yet apparent; and they were, in any case, strictly extra-musical.

[29] Furtwängler's article 'Der Fall Hindemith' was published in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* on 25 November 1934. Although the ensuing furore was widely reported on both sides of the Atlantic, the echoes were loudest in London. Furtwängler's friendship and working partnership with Sir Thomas Beecham throughout the 1930s was an assurance that his position in Germany retained its news-value until as late as the 1938/39 Covent Garden opera season.

[30] Presumably it was Cavalcanti who encouraged Leigh to contact Milhaud in 1934 with a view to his collaborating with the GPO Film Unit (which happened two years later, with musically remarkable results).

In the third week of January 1936 Hindemith returned to the BBC for a broadcast recital on Monday the 20th, to be followed two days later by a Queen's Hall concert at which he was to be the soloist, with Boult and the BBC Orchestra, in the British première of *Der Schwanendreher*. The mid-morning recital – given before an invited audience – took place according to plan. One of the guests was Bartók, who lunched with Hindemith and Clark afterwards. Meanwhile, Buckingham Palace had announced the death of King George V and the BBC was revising its schedules accordingly. That afternoon, arrangements were made for the cancellation of the Queen's Hall concert and the substitution of a suitably solemn programme to be broadcast by the same artists and orchestra from the studio on the Wednesday evening.

During the afternoon of the 20th Boult and Clark had a long discussion with Hindemith about an appropriate replacement for *Der Schwanendreher*. *We debated for hours*, Hindemith recalled in a letter to Willy Strecker, *but no suitable piece could be found, so we decided that I should write some funeral music myself*.[31] Next morning, a studio was placed at his disposal, and a team of copyists was assembled. Between 11 am and 5 pm Hindemith composed the work for viola and strings that was performed on Wednesday the 22nd and subsequently published as *Trauermusik*. Hindemith's name was back in the British newspapers. According to Hindemith, Boult abandoned his customary British reserve and was 'beside himself' with gratitude.

Lambert was presumably unimpressed. Nevertheless, *Trauermusik* remains in the viola repertory to this day. In the letter he wrote to his wife on the 21st, Hindemith describes his achievements of that day with becoming modesty. He also mentions that he has seen Franz Reizenstein (*natürlich*).[32] On his next visit, nearly two years later, he gives her an amusing and touching account of an invitation from what he calls *meine Schülerschaft Leigh, Cooke and Reizenstein*.[33] On this occasion, however, he obviously had no time for socializing, and neither had Leigh, who was currently working in Cambridge on a major score for an original-language production, in March, of *The Frogs* by Aristophanes.

From Cambridge on 7 January 1936 – about ten days before Hindemith's arrival in London – Leigh had replied to Höckner's New Year's Day letter inviting him to compose a dual-purpose *Sommernachtstraum* 'suite' (as Spielmusik for his student orchestra at Schloss Bieberstein and theatre-music for an open-air student production at Schloss Ettersburg in the summer). Leigh thanked him for his 'schönen Plan' and also for a score by Wilhelm Maler which Höckner had enclosed, presumably as an example of the technical and stylistic requirements. Leigh was hoping to finish his score for *Die Frösche* by the end of January. Until then he would be remaining in Cambridge. Hindemith's imminent arrival is not mentioned.

At this juncture Leigh seems unworried by Höckner's 1 April deadline for the *Sommernachtstraum*. Unforeseen complications later in the month may have been explained by phone (he gives a Cambridge

[31] See Nicholas Kenyon, *The BBC Symphony Orchestra 1930–1980* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1981), p. 117. (No date or reference is given for the letter; the translation is presumably the author's.) See also Walter Leigh, 'The Music of Paul Hindemith', *The Listener*, London, 15 January 1936, pp. 141–142; and Leigh, 'Hindemith's "Meditation"', *The Listener*, London, 19 January 1936, p. 233.

[32] Becker-Schubert 1995 [fn 6], 128. See Hindemith to Leigh on the eve of Reizenstein's emigration to England (1934): *Lieber Herr Leigh, hier schicke ich Ihnen Herrn Reizenstein, können Sie ihm, falls er Rat braucht, ihn geben. Schönsten Dank für Ihren Brief, nächstens hören Sie von mir. Herr R. war einige Jahre Schüler bei mir. Schönste Grüße, Ihr PH.* (Undated handwritten message on Hindemith's visiting card, in British Library, Walter Leigh Collection Vol XXVIII, 65132).

[33] Becker-Schubert 1995 [fn 6], 205.

number) and certainly account for a two-month gap in the correspondence. His next letter is dated 14 March and acknowledges receipt of two letters (he was writing from his London home immediately after his return from the *Frogs* performance). He notes the revised deadline – 22 April – but seems doubtful whether he'll be able to supply all nine *Sommernachtstraum* numbers by then. In his follow-up of 19 March he mentions but does not define a proposal regarding Henry Purcell and his music for *The Fairy Queen*.[34] He also apologises for not having returned the Wilhelm Maler score. He has it beside him as he writes: *Ich finde sie sehr nett – etwas vom Hindemith'schen Einfluß ist doch auch darin zu spüren, nicht wahr?*.[35] The compliment rings true, the self-reflecting irony is imperceptible unless one can hear – as Höckner of course could not – *The Frogs* in the background and the entire *Sommernachtstraum* suite in the foreground. In none of the suite's nine numbers is there the faintest musical trace of Hindemith's much-derided and misunderstood 'influence'. If the score proclaims its adherence to any school, it is to that of Charles Wood and Edward Dent. That was not its only significance for Höckner's students at Schloss Bieberstein or for official emissaries to Schloss Ettersburg from nearby Weimar. Meanwhile, however, Leigh had produced for Cambridge University and its Greek Play Society an Anglo-German *Lehrstück* of his own making.

The Frogs of Aristophanes is a comedy about a world suddenly bereft of 'great poets' after the death of Euripides. The few respectable figures that remain are powerless to stem the tides of vulgar opportunists and faceless conformists. The god Dionysus (himself a diminished figure not least in the eyes of his disgruntled and exploited servant) resolves to visit Pluto's kingdom and resurrect Euripides. The god and his servant are ferried across the Styx. Euripides, boastful as ever, is soon discovered. Close by, however, is the ancient and long-forgotten Aeschylus, who regards Euripides as an intolerable upstart and considers Sophocles the rightful heir to his throne in Hades. Dionysus has to choose between the Old and the New, between Antiquity and Modernity. Weakly, he settles for the Familiar – and returns from the Underworld with Aeschylus instead of Euripides.

Comedy has come to the rescue of Tragedy. But Aristophanes has refused to accept that the decline of 'poetry' is irreversible. Unlike the discredited Dionysus, the Chorus can build on that hope.

In *The Frogs*, Aristophanes was examining the nature of the ephemeral and questioning the criteria of worldly success. Such a play would have been a timely warning for the composer of *Jolly Roger* had he been in any doubt about the nature and limitations of his achievement. But that episode in his freelance career was over.[36] From *Pett and Pott* in 1934 until the completion of his soundtrack for *The Song of Ceylon* a year later, his work for Grierson's film unit had absorbed much of his time and energy. *The Frogs* was no holiday, but a salutary break. It enabled him to compose a homily for himself and an object-lesson for others in the creation of a substantial choral and orchestral score for student and amateur forces.

[34] Höckner's meticulous edition of his 'Spielmusik' suite from *The Fairy Queen* was published in 1938 by Bärenreiter.

[35] Typewritten copies of the January and March letters to Höckner are in WLA. They date from 1949 and were part of a collection Höckner presented to Leigh's family.

[36] After the West End opening of *Jolly Roger* in March 1933 Rita John had encouraged the librettists to start work on an operetta set in the France of Robespierre and Danton. Before Leigh had written a note for it, the project was abandoned in favour of a revue – a form Leigh preferred. *Jolly Roger* was his last operetta.

The Baden-Baden precedents are clear from the initial 'Chorus of Frogs' (an Allegro in 12/8). Leigh's counterpart to Hindemith's clown-scene is the song-contest. Knowledge of Ancient Greek is not required (one has only to listen). Each contestant is given two chances. Caricatured as ridiculously old-fashioned in both the songs submitted by Euripides, Aeschylus retaliates by exposing his rival's claims to modernity in two grotesquely incompatible numbers – the first a night-club blues in the clipped manner of Noel Coward, the second a demented misreading of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* in which the lifelike *Sprechgesang* is battered and betrayed by the nursery-tunes, the neo-primitive bitonality, and the dissonant ostinati of its mock-Stravinskian accompaniment.

As Leigh hears it, the song-contest is not the culmination it had been in Aristophanes; it is a divertimento, a pause for breath and a bit of fun before the valedictory Chorus returns to the cyclic theme with which the score began. As Aeschylus leaves the realm of the dead and crosses the great river once again, the calm severity and guarded hopefulness of the choral and orchestral writing correspond to the critical thrust of the comedy.

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Cambridge's Greek Play Society had set great store by its commitment to British music ever since the 1883 production (in the original Greek) of Aristophanes' comedy The Birds, for which Sir Hubert Parry had written so-called 'incidental music' (not a term Leigh favoured). Before Parry's return in 1891 for The Frogs, Stanford had composed music for The Eumenides and Oedipus Tyrannus. In 1912 Vaughan Williams set the seal on the Society's pre-1914 music-policy with his score for Aristophanes' The Wasps.

After Dent's election as Professor in 1926, some of the younger Fellows in the Cambridge Music Faculty had sought to broaden the Greek Play Committee's musical perspectives. Leigh's immediate predecessor was Georges Auric, an expedient substitute for the obvious favourites – the unattainable Stravinsky, the unavailable Honegger and Milhaud. Leigh was a substitute for no-one; least of all for Hindemith.

Beyond Cambridge, however, no market or audience was ever found for Leigh's *Frogs*. Whereas in Germany Leigh had the advantage of Höckner's voluntary services as advisor, promoter, editor, and even publisher, in England he had been depending on the intermittent advice of his friend Hubert Foss (1899–1953), the founder of the Oxford University Press music-publishing division and a well known educationist, author and musician. In 1937 an ill-considered and poorly presented selection of 13 from Leigh's total of 19 numbers for *The Frogs* was published by OUP in vocal score only, with a view to their use with piano accompaniment in amateur productions of the play (for which Winton Dean provided a singing translation). As a publication it compared unfavourably with the exactly contemporary full score of the *Sommernachtstraum* suite, which was seen through the press by Höckner and published in 1937 by Chr. Friedrich Vieweg (Berlin-Lichterfelde). Höckner had provided a helpful *Vorwort* and copious *Spielanweisungen*. At his suggestion and with his editorial assistance Vieweg had already published Leigh's Concertino for Harpsichord and Strings. The first performance of the Concertino, with Höckner's wife as soloist, had been given by his student orchestra at Schloss Ettersburg in the summer of 1935.

From the 20th to the 31st of January 1938, Höckner and his young players from Schloss Bieberstein were in England giving concerts at affiliated or musically related boarding-schools beginning with

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Abbotsholme (where Hermann Lietz's career as educationist had begun). Other schools included Canford, to which Höckner would return a year later, and Bryanston, where ten years later Hindemith would lead the composition class at the Summer School for Music directed by William Glock (who had studied with Schnabel in Berlin, 1930–33). Not surprisingly, perhaps, Höckner did not programme any Hindemith during his 1938 tour. Apart from Leigh's *Midsummer Night's Dream* suite and his own 'Spielmusik' from Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, his repertory was early classical court music (again in his own editions).

Hindemith returned to London in July of that year to conduct the world première of his ballet *Nobilissima Visione* at the Drury Lane Theatre. The international interest aroused by the successful world première of *Mathis der Maler* at the Stadttheater in Zürich in May had already enabled his supporters at the BBC to lay plans for a radio production at the earliest opportunity. Unfortunately it did not materialise before Hindemith's next tour of the USA. The BBC's live broadcast of the opera, conducted by Clarence Raybould, was on 15 March 1939. Hindemith was still on tour in the USA. He and Leigh were not to meet again.

In February, however, Höckner and his wife had arrived in England for a week's work with the music-students at Canford School, Dorset – an invitation extended during Höckner's visit the previous January. In Canford they rehearsed and performed Leigh's Concertino and his *Midsummer Night's Dream* suite. In London they were entertained by the Leigh family.[37]

Four years after the end of World War 2 the score and parts of Leigh's Concertino suddenly appeared from OUP, with the mystifying note *Re-published in England, 1949, by permission*. Vieweg's prior interest was nowhere mentioned, while Leigh's dedication to Höckner and his wife was quietly forgotten. A commercial recording released under the auspices of the British Council in the era of 78 rpm discs (and therefore without packaging or notes) helped confirm the popularity of what was soon accepted as a quintessentially 'English' piece. Not until 2001 was the existence of Höckner's 1947 memoir acknowledged in *Grove*'s Leigh bibliography.

We are now aboard, and quite reasonably comfortable – there is plenty of evidence of really efficient organization as far as the humble trooper can see it. I can't tell you where we are […] and letters are censored […]. Trooper Leigh of the Royal Armoured Corps was writing from a South Coast harbour to his parents in Golders Green. The year was 1941, the day, Wednesday 25 June, the time still quite early. At an 'ungodly hour' that morning – just three days after his 36th birthday – he and his regiment left the RAC barracks at Tidworth (Hampshire) where, back in January, his army career had begun. Almost a year had gone by since his wife and their two children – with a third on the way – had embarked for Canada, where they were to remain in safety for the rest of the war. The unannounced destination of his two-month voyage (via the Cape and the Gulf of Aden) was the Middle East. It was, as always, a volatile region. Vichy had just surrendered Syria to the Allies and the British had just quelled an insurgency in Iraq. Quite recently the fascists had peacefully surrendered Italian East Africa.

[37] All details from Höckner 1947 [fn 11], 295–296. These details and the background to Höckner's two UK tours are currently (2008) the subject of several research-projects.

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From late August 1941 until 27 May 1942 Leigh was stationed at a camp in or near the canal zone. In due course he was promoted to the still-humble rank of Lance-Corporal and was an instructor in wireless communications. On weekend leave, he would head straight for Cairo and the home of Dr and Mrs Bland, who were friends from England. John Bland played the recorder.[38] The 'Air' for treble recorder and piano, which Leigh wrote for him and performed with him in his home, was a *tranquillo* postscript to his Sonatina for the same instruments. It was also to be his last finished composition – pure 'drawing-room music', far from the desert warfare for which Leigh's tank regiment was kept in constant preparation.

After eleven months of relative quiet in the vicinity of Cairo, the regiment was called to the Western Desert. It left on 27 May 1942. On 4 June Maud Bland wrote from her Cairo home to Marion Leigh in Canada: [*Walter*] *is always so amazingly cheerful and terribly appreciative of everything one does, and does so enjoy meeting people and going places.* [...] *He looks incredibly fit and well and in such good spirits – the life of the open air must agree well with him.*

News of Leigh's death on 12 June would have been transmitted to the British Council office in Cairo by Leigh's brother-in-law Richard Seymour, who was based at the Council's headquarters in London. The response from the Cairo office was addressed to him personally: *Walter Leigh is a sad loss indeed.* [...] *I have seldom liked anyone so much on first acquaintance. He was diffident about his ability to undertake the course of lectures that we wanted him to do at Ankara, although, I expect you know, Professor Dent described him as one of the* <u>*most eminently outstanding*</u> *of the younger British musicians. When I met* [Leigh] *and we discussed plans, he said he did not wish to apply for leave of absence for some months to come as his unit were only beginning to get together as a team and he did not feel he should do anything to disrupt this tendency. So everything was postponed until the autumn. I saw him last at a garden party in Cairo shortly before the opening of the campaign in June. What a tragic loss.*[39]

Dent – now retired from his Cambridge Chair and working in London – was a member of the British Council's board but had apparently been unable to attend the meeting at which the Cairo office's plans for Leigh had been tabled and approved. Having read the report in the minutes, he sent an enthusiastic and helpful letter of support to the Council.[40] Leigh, he declared, *is obviously the right man; he was a pupil of Hindemith, who I believe organized the Conservatoire at Ankara; he speaks German fluently if necessary. But he was also a pupil of mine at Cambridge; and has both a very sound knowledge of musical history and a most expert knowledge of modern composition. He is also a delightful character (brother of that admirable comedian Charlotte Leigh) and a first rate lecturer. He gave a course on modern music at Cambridge while I was Professor. I hope the B.C. will keep a watchful eye on him and not let him be sent to dangerous places as he is one of the* <u>*most eminently outstanding*</u> *of all the younger British musicians; he might become a great serious composer or a new sort of Sullivan.*[41]

[38] Leigh's Sonatina for Treble Recorder and Piano of 1939 (Schott, London, 1944) was written for professional recorder players and (first ?) performed by Carl Dolmetsch.
[39] Copy of an undated letter or memorandum from 'C.G.H. Simon to R. Seymour, London' in WLA.
[40] Edward J Dent to Henn Collins, 28 April 1942. Copy in WLA.
[41] Typescript original in WLA.

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The great and lesser composers considered in the eight lectures which Leigh had delivered to the Faculty of Music at Cambridge during the Lent Term of 1939 were exclusively composers of what in those days was known to all as 'serious music'. Although Leigh does not mention the 'great' song-writers and jazz musicians whose work and techniques he had intensively studied during the early 1930s,[42] his admiration for them had been widely publicised, and the grounds for it were well known to his many admirers in the Faculty.

The notion of Leigh delivering the same or similar lectures, in English or German, to audiences in Ankara during (say) the winter of 1942/43 becomes a useful scrap of counterfactual music-history when coupled with its logical continuation: a German edition of the identical lectures, published under the auspices of the British Council in the late 1940s, in the same publishing-season that saw the first edition of Adorno's *Philosophie der Neuen Musik* (Göttingen, 1948). Verisimilitude is enhanced by the real-world possibility that Adorno had at least glanced at *Music Ho!* during his mid-1930s sojourn at Merton College, Oxford. Lambert's closing message of redemption-through-Sibelius lends colour to Adorno's famous footnote about the incomprehensible Sibelius-cult in England – a cult from which Leigh quietly but resolutely distances himself in his Cambridge lectures.

In his short preface to the lectures Leigh cites *Music Ho!* as one of the precedents that helped overcome his worries about the propriety of accepting the Faculty's invitation, given that he was a composer not a musicologist.[43] Lambert too was a composer; and so was Cecil Gray, Lambert's direct predecessor and mentor in the music-critical field. Careful as always to disclaim any special status, Leigh remarks that composers as a breed are 'notoriously' unreliable judges of music. On that understanding he can justly describe *Music Ho!* as an 'excellent book' and suggest in Lecture II (Debussy) that anyone who has not yet read it should do so at once and save themselves the trouble of attending his remaining lectures. The joke is nicely timed: the next compliment to Lambert is at the start of Lecture IV (Nationalism) but the dethronement of Sibelius follows almost immediately. In the new republic of Leigh's lectures this is not a clash between Leigh and Lambert nor between Sibelius and rival claimants; it is a fundamental disagreement about '*Untergang* theory', as Leigh had called it 18 months earlier, in a severely admonitory letter to the composer Christian Darnton, a close friend since their Cambridge years in the mid-1920s and now known in contemporary-music circles as a hard-line modernist.[44]

As Leigh saw it, the 'decline' was not in music as such but in the quality of the relationship between composers and their audiences – not every composer, of course, but a privileged few including most particularly those of Darnton's age and background (his own age but a different background) whose sole concerns seemed to be technical experiment

[42] See Christian Darnton, 'Walter Leigh. A New British Composer' in *The Music Lover*, London, 2 January 1932, 7. Darnton writes of Leigh's 'self-imposed exercises' in blues and other idioms.

[43] Leigh's preface is appended to the complete holograph text of the lectures: Cambridge Lectures on 'Modern music', Walter Leigh Collection, British Library, Vol. XX1X, 65133 (ff. 1–201) [hereafter Cambridge Lectures]. (The preface is on folio 194 verso.) The manuscript – in fine pencil calligraphy, with few corrections – includes many holograph music examples on two staves, copied or arranged, together with titles of complete pieces to be played on piano from published scores of various kinds, plus notifications of playbacks from gramophone recordings of orchestral pieces (e.g. Debussy, Scriabin, Berg, Varèse, Hindemith, Milhaud, Vaughan Williams).

[44] Leigh to Darnton (23 June 1937), Letter 153 in Christian Darnton Collection Vol. XLVII, British Library, Add. 62763

and innovation in the name of music-historical 'progress', irrespective of the negative or bewildered response of the 'general public' – the despised 'Normalverbraucher'.

Leigh's 'philosophy of new music' stands at the furthest conceivable remove from Adorno's. Its roots were not in Hegel and Marx but in Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham. *Laissez-faire* economics and Benthamite utilitarianism loom large in the theoretical precursor of the lectures, the *Dialogue about Music* of ca. 1937.[45] They are less conspicuous but still influential in the lectures.

Reading Leigh's holograph text some 70 years after the lectures were delivered is a test of musical imagination and historical memory. Not only has each lecture to be 'heard-through' as if in performance but the cycle of eight needs to be kept in its rightful position at the end of an epoch and face-to-face with Leigh's music for theatre and revue, film and radio, school and university, house and home. Even today the contrast is breath-taking. Yet there is no dichotomy. On both sides of the apparent divide, the same musician is at work.

Leigh opens the pivotal and paired Lectures V–VI (Scriabin, Schoenberg/ Stravinsky, Hindemith) by noting that Scriabin's previously admired music had been under attack by Cecil Gray in 1924 and was *completely discredited* by the end of the decade. This was still true in 1939 (and would remain true for years to come) but Leigh is adamant, and makes a strong case for Scriabin in strictly musical terms, using the Sixth Piano Sonata as his principal text.

The altruistic musicianship of the Cambridge Lectures culminates in the positioning of Schoenberg, a more recent victim of changing fashion than Scriabin. *There is no doubt whatever*, Leigh declares, *that Schoenberg is the most extraordinary phenomenon that has so far appeared in the history of music*. Avoiding the relatively familiar path through the op. 11 and op. 19 piano pieces, he takes his first examples from the op. 23 pieces and then analyses and plays the Gavotte from the op. 25 Suite. Complexity, he suggests, is the innate condition of Schoenberg's musical thinking, indeed, of his very being. It therefore has nothing in common with the wilful 'difficulty' and musically unmotivated complication cultivated by one vociferous composer on the outer fringe of British musical life (the name Leigh mentions clearly stands for several others). Schoenberg at 65 is *the Grand Old Man of modern music*.[46]

While Schoenberg is in that sense crucial to Leigh's long-term strategy for the lectures, Stravinsky has a pivotal role in the tactical approach to Hindemith. Whereas in his June 1937 'homily' (his own word) for Christian Darnton, Leigh had been forthright and positive about the Stravinsky whom Lambert had pilloried, in the lectures he now steps back from the controversies of the time, plays an excerpt from the *Piano Rag-Music* to illustrate a general point about jazz-influences, and then

[45] The dialogue is between Sackbut and Halfwit, the former as proponent of Leigh's radical pragmatism, the latter as voice of progressive tradition and the sanctity of artistic creation. *The Sackbut* was a campaigning music-journal founded in 1920 by Lambert's friends Peter Heseltine aka Peter Warlock, and Cecil Gray. Leigh's Sackbut plays a different tune: *The serious composers today* […] *must sink their pride, forget their great personalities and get in touch with the world once more. And the world must for its part realise that a musician is really only a normal person like an electrical engineer, an architect, a writer of stories, a decorator or a hairdresser. They must strip him of his aura.* […] *And if he himself is willing to buckle to, he will soon see that it is not just any "great music" that the public requires, but great film-music, great gramophone-music, great radio-music, great theatre-music, great drawing-room music, great school-music, great choral-society-music, and so on.* Walter Leigh, 'An Argumentative Dialogue about Music', undated typescript in WLA, pages 11–12. No publication or broadcast has yet been traced. The intended readership or audience was obviously broad – neither style nor content suggest an academic context.

[46] Leigh, Cambridge Lectures [fn 43], 128.

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selects the Octet for Wind Instruments as grounds for a flattering if questionable comparison with one of the great figures in English neo-classicism, Alexander Pope. Stravinsky as supremely style-conscious arbiter of taste must then give way to the Milhaud of the *Concertino de Printemps* and finally to Paul Hindemith.

Leigh has now reached lecture VII and, it seems, the first week of March 1939; for he has interpolated the information that later *this month* – it was in fact on the 15th – *Mathis der Maler* would be heard for the first time in the UK. In contrast to the 18th-century 'wit' of Stravinskian neo-classicism he plays unidentified excerpts from Hindemith's *Reihe kleiner Stücke* of 1926 and proceeds from there to the British Columbia recording of a movement from the Second String Trio of 1933. The lecture ends with an unspecified movement from Hindemith's recording with the Berlin Philharmonic of the *Mathis der Maler* Symphony. Politically as well as musically that music is heard in the context of Leigh's foregoing repudiation of all totalising ideologies, whether of the Right or the Left.[47]

Lecture VIII is a brave attempt at a synoptic view. It begins with the Netherlanders and an analysis, at the keyboard, of harmonic and contrapuntal licence in a 15th-century chanson – from which he proceeds via a keyboard reading from Hindemith's *Lieder für Singkreise*, op.45 to a Bach fugue.

At this juncture there is a pause for breath – a musical breath – before the goal is revealed. Throughout the lectures, Leigh's purpose has been to secure for English music the sea passages to and from mainland Europe – the so-called 'English' Channel and more urgently, the treacherous North Sea. In Leigh's perspective Hindemith is one of the two 'outstanding' exemplars for the next generation. The other – Schoenberg's senior by two years – is the 'Grand Old Man' of English music, Ralph Vaughan Williams.[48]

Until now there has been no mention of Stanford's most renowned pupil. Leigh introduces Vaughan Williams by quoting a passage from Cecil Gray's 1924 *Survey of Contemporary Music* that was to be a rallying-point for Vaughan Williams's detractors for decades to come. Gray attributes to Vaughan Williams a 'sublime incompetence' that is (perhaps) excusable on sentimental grounds but not on musical ones. Leigh has no time to spare for arguing with Gray – there had been time enough in recent years. For now, he is content to let such works as *Flos Campi* and *Job* speak for themselves – and play the *furioso* opening of the F minor Symphony in the composer's recent recording with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

In a paper delivered at a colloquium in London on 5 June 2008 the musicologist Thomas Irvine described Leigh's conclusions as at best 'parochial', at worst, 'egregiously wrong'.[49] These are questions of perspective and matters of opinion, depending on one's own parish and congregation. The Cambridge Lectures are dependent upon nothing and nobody apart from the speaker's own musical conscience and understanding. In his creative and practical life they are precisely analogous to the sequence of youth-and-amateur music that began in 1929 with the *Drei Stücke* for Baden-Baden, continued with the Schloss Bieberstein triptych (the little Quartet, the Music for Strings, and the Harpsichord Concertino) and ended in 1936 with the *Frogs* for Cambridge and the

[47] Cambridge Lectures [fn 43], 150–151.
[48] Cambridge Lectures [fn 43], 185.
[49] Thomas Irvine, 'Walter Leigh in the Turbulent Thirties'. Seminar at Institute of Musical Research, Senate House, University of London, 5 June 2008.

Sommernachtstraum for Schloss Ettersburg. If the Sonatina for recorder and piano, the Piano Album, and the Trio for flute, oboe and piano are incorporated for the purposes of more advanced student players, the connection with the Cambridge Lectures becomes even clearer. Whether modal, diatonic, or chromatic, the melody and harmony are as one; and counterpoint is their driving force and natural expression. Hindemith and his *Unterweisung* have of course contributed to that unity, but only in the sense so gracefully conveyed by William Walton in a letter to Leigh written after hearing the first broadcast of his Viola Sonatina: *If I may say so, I think perhaps the most remarkable thing about it, is how unlike, except for occasional touches in the last movement, it is to your venerable master, which is, I humbly consider a great tribute to you both*.[50]

The Leigh of the Cambridge Lectures has learned some valuable lessons from *The Frogs* and learned them well. The artist no less than the craftsman should and perhaps must serve at least two masters. The Aristophanic Dionysus is only allowed to recover one 'Great Poet' from Pluto's kingdom, but leaves the one he came for and ignores the third. The Leigh of the Cambridge Lectures is making room for all three but choosing just two for the generation to come.

In the final paragraph of an article published in the *London Star* of 15 February 1938 under the rubric *Youth Week-2*, Leigh wrote: *Let those wonderful Prom audiences become accustomed to hearing new music, not as a 'novelty' but as a regular thing; let Walton, Lambert and Britten provide operas for Covent Garden before they are too old to care about such things.* Britten was then aged 24. In May 1939 he and Peter Pears sailed for the New World. On 15 March 1942 they began their voyage home. Britten had just received from Koussevitzky the commission for *Peter Grimes*. The next three years would see the emergence of Leigh's hitherto almost unknown contemporary Michael Tippett; and a succession of highly successful Britten premières that ended with the triumph of *Peter Grimes*.

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'I can't tell you where we are', wrote Leigh to his parents after boarding ship on 25 June 1941, *'I have no idea where we are bound for, I can't guess how long the voyage will be, and letters are censored'*. The Leigh of the Cambridge Lectures is the uncensored Leigh of *The Frogs* and its Chorus. He knows and can say exactly where he is and from whence he has come. He has an unmisted and agnostic view of where he and his fellow musicians are bound for. Like other mortals, he cannot guess how long the voyage will be.

[50] William Walton to Walter Leigh, undated (WLA). The letter begins: *I have just been listening to your Sonatina* […] – obviously meaning the Viola Sonatina rather than its (much later) successor for Alto Recorder.

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