

THE US-AMERICAN PERCEPTION OF MUSIC FROM THE GDR (GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC):  
CASE STUDIES ON HANNS EISLER (1898-1962), PAUL DESSAU (1894-1979), AND KURT SCHWAEN  
(1909-2007)

THESIS

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by

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## **ABSTRACT**

THE US-AMERICAN PERCEPTION OF MUSIC FROM THE GDR (GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC):  
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American reception studies of music from the GDR (German Democratic Republic) have posited a focus on Hanns Eisler (1898-1962) and Cold War ideology. Joy Calico's and Margaret Jackson's writings on Eisler have focused on his absence from American musicology in regards to a Cold War ideology through a discussion of the House Un-American Activities Committee (House Committee Un-American Activities or HUAC) and his being a communist (Calico 1998 and Jackson 2003). Calico's writing in 2003 does re-examine the claim that Eisler is not taken seriously because of Cold War ideology by labeling him a "Marxist Polyglot", stating that his



many styles make it hard for musicologists to categorize (Calico 2009). However, in these articles she still focuses on Eisler, when some of her conclusions on Eisler's lack of reception in the American musical consciousness are now somewhat out-dated. Since these papers have been published, Eisler has become a considerable focus in scholarly writing, as my research will suggest. While Calico's and Jackson's writings may have unearthed some reasons as to why Eisler might have been lacking in American music scholarship for some period of time, their research does not group Eisler with other East German composers who have to some degree remained excluded from American musicological studies and concert repertoire.

Through interviews with East German musicians and empirical studies on concert repertoire and college curricula in U.S. universities, I will argue other East German musicians – specifically Paul Dessau (1894-1979) and Kurt Schwaen (1909-2007) – are widely disregarded in American musicology and concert repertoire. The first chapter will give an overview of scholarly literature cited in this thesis. The second chapter will give a brief overview of anti-communist and anti-socialist sentiments that developed during the McCarthy Era, and the third chapter will give an overview of the development of the musical culture during the GDR. The fourth chapter will give biographical sketches of Hanns Eisler, Kurt Schwaen, and Paul Dessau, and the fifth chapter will discuss empirical studies and interviews conducted for this thesis.

## INTRODUCTION

American reception studies of music of the GDR (German Democratic Republic) have posited a focus on Hanns Eisler (1898-1962) and Cold War ideology. Joy Calico's and Margaret Jackson's writings on Eisler have focused on his absence from American musicology in regards to Cold War ideology through a discussion of Eisler's hearing before the House Un-American Activities Committee (House Committee Un-American Activities or HUAC) and his being a communist (Calico 1998 and Jackson 2003). Calico's article "Hanns Eisler, Marxist Polyglot" does re-examine the claim that Eisler is not taken seriously because of Cold War ideology by labeling him a "Marxist Polyglot", stating that his many styles make it hard for musicologists to categorize him (Calico 2009). However, in her article she still focuses on Eisler, when some of her conclusions on Eisler's lack of reception in the American musical consciousness are now somewhat outdated, as my research will suggest. While Calico's and Jackson's writings may have unearthed reasons as to why Eisler might have been lacking in American music scholarship for some period of time, their research does not group Eisler with other East German composers who have to a degree remained excluded from American musicological studies and concert repertoire.

In discussing the "perception" of music from the GDR, this pertains to a collective cognitive or psychological understanding of the music discussed in this thesis. "Reception" in this case refers to physical or material information that can be perceived. The reception studies provided in the fifth chapter of this thesis and Calico's and Jackson's respective articles will

provide the basis on which I will discuss a general American “perception” of music from the GDR.

There are some perceptions that can be seen in American culture concerning the GDR, such as the tendency to call it a ‘communist’ country, when it is actually a socialist country. These two terms are sometimes confused and are coalesced into one definition that relates more to communism, which is defined as “a social and political doctrine or movement based upon revolutionary Marxian socialism that interprets history as a relentless class war eventually to result everywhere in the victory of the proletariat and the social ownership of the means of production with relative social and economic equality for all and ultimately to lead to a classless society.” Socialism is “any various theories or social and political movements advocating or aiming at collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and control of the distribution of goods” or “a stage of society that in Marxist theory is transitional between capitalism and communism and distinguished by unequal distribution of goods and payments to individuals according to their work” Generally speaking, the term ‘communism’ refers to a political system achieved by a rebellion or coup d’état, while socialism refers to a systematic reform of the government which distribution of goods are divided among the population in a more fair and just means than in a capitalist society. While these perceptions are not found everywhere in the U S , there still remains to some degree a misperception between these two terms Chapter 2 provides a brief overview of the HUAC during the McCarthy era and might give insight as to why Jackson would attribute to a period in which Eisler was largely ignored in American musicology.

My thesis will explore the lack of attention paid to Paul Dessau and Kurt Schwaen in both American musicology and concert repertoire The first chapter will give an overview of scholarly literature that pertains to the afore-mentioned composers. The second chapter will

discuss the HUAC and to what degree this might affect American artistic culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the third chapter will give an overview of the musical development during the time of the GDR. The fourth chapter will provide biographical sketches of Hanns Eisler, Paul Dessau, and Kurt Schwaen, and the fifth chapter contains empirical studies and interviews. My research includes interviews with musicians, relatives of musicians, composers, and former citizens from the GDR as well as empirical studies related to college curricula and concert programs as they concern music from the GDR.

## 1 OVERVIEW OF SCHOLARLY LITERATURE RELATED TO EISLER, DESSAU, AND SCHWAEN

### 1.1 Introductory Remarks on the Literature

The lives of Hanns Eisler, Paul Dessau, and Kurt Schwaen are very well documented in secondary sources (mostly by German and other non-American scholars), and the dissertations written about them in America go back to 1974 with Thomas Nadar's dissertation "The Music of Kurt Weill, Hanns Eisler and Paul Dessau in the Dramatic Works of Bertolt Brecht".

In the past ten years, there has been a growing amount of scholarly literature on music from the GDR in American musicology, which has further examined how these composers are treated in research. These are a second wave of studies, resulting from the writings that were published immediately after the reunification, drawing heavily from the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED or the Socialist Unity Party of Germany) archives made available after the reunification in 1990. Many of the writings on music of the GDR that were published immediately post-*Wende*<sup>1</sup> have posited on the political aspects, not citing the everyday cultural facets which – maybe – have had more relevance in the musical life of the GDR (Kelly 2006, 4). As we approach the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reunification, more writings have appeared concerning non-political aspects on this music.

This chapter will focus on the scholarly works that discuss the composers Eisler, Dessau, and Schwaen and music of the GDR in general. The dissertations will be limited to those

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<sup>1</sup> *Wende* is a German term meaning "turning point". It usually refers to the events occurring in 1989 and 1990, which led to a change from a socialist country to a democracy in the GDR and the reunification of Germany.

written in the U.S. as a means to discuss the reception of East German music in the U.S.

## 1.2. Dissertations

Dissertations written in the U.S. focusing on composers and music from the GDR have very distinct patterns in relation to when they were written. The ones written before the reunification are used in relation to Brecht studies and are not written by musicologists. Thomas Nadar, a German studies scholar, in 1974 completed the first dissertation in the U.S. concerning Hanns Eisler and Paul Dessau entitled “The Music of Kurt Weill, Hanns Eisler, and Paul Dessau in the Dramatic Works of Bertolt Brecht”. This dissertation describes the collaborations between Brecht, Weill, Eisler, and Dessau, and cites these composers as the most successful musicians to work with Brecht.<sup>2</sup> The dissertation divides the music into four genres: music in the epic theater, opera, *Lehrstucke*, and plays with music. It also provides short chronologies of all the composers, and a comparison of the instrumentations of the different collaborations and musical examples. The next dissertation was completed in 1985 by Michael Gilbert, another German studies scholar: “Bertolt Brecht and Music: A Comprehensive Study” discusses the compositions by Eisler, Dessau, and Schwaen in connection to Brecht. This dissertation is significant, because although Gilbert does not have a high opinion of Schwaen’s work<sup>3</sup>, he still

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that Nadar states, in 1974, that Dessau had never achieved the same recognition as Weill and Eisler (Nadar 1974, 10)

<sup>3</sup> Gilbert writes the following about Schwaen “By any standard, Schwaen was a minor composer and perhaps the least significant of those with whom Brecht worked during the eight years preceding his death, but he deserved to be mentioned here as a another example of the influence which Brecht exerted upon the many music professionals he collaborated with over the course of three decades ” (Gilbert 1985, 431) The author of this thesis strongly disagrees with Gilbert on categorizing Schwaen as a minor composer, as both his compositional achievements as well as the overall perception of Schwaen’s music in Germany and Europe in general show clearly otherwise. In addition, other scholars also differ from Gilbert’s judgment of Schwaen’s collaborative work with Brecht. Ina Iske states that Schwaen and Brecht had a mutual respect for each other’s work, and worked well together because of their similar work ethic and artistic style (see Appendix 7) Gudrun Tabbert-Jone’s article “The Collaboration between Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Schwaen,” (discussed later in this chapter) describes Schwaen as different from other

mentions his work and cited the positive critiques Brecht and others expressed in regards to Schwaen's music during the years of their collaboration in the mid-1950s (Gilbert 1985, 429-430.) Carol Flinn's dissertation "Film Music and Hollywood's Promise of Utopia in Film Noir and the Woman's Film" (1988) draws from Eisler and Adorno's book *Composing for the Films* (1947) and discusses Eisler periodically throughout the work as a film music theorist. Flinn includes a chapter entitled "Music and Nostalgia in Marxism: Lowe, Eisler, Ballantine, and Shepherd", where she discusses Eisler's thoughts on the difference between visual and aural adaptation to "bourgeois rationalism" (Flinn 1988, 134-135.) Philip Lee Craik, a theater scholar, wrote his dissertation "Musical Theory and Practice in the Stage, Film, and Non-Theatre collaborative works of Bertolt Brecht and Hanns Eisler, 1930-1956" in 1989. This dissertation documents Brecht and Eisler's collaboration and Eisler's influence on Brecht with regards to protesting contemporary bourgeois musical theatre prevalent at the time (Craik 1989).

The dissertations written during the 1990s discuss the composers as they directly relate to politics.<sup>4</sup> Sarah McCall wrote "The Musical Fallout of Political Activism: Government Investigations of Musicians in the United States 1930-1960," which thoroughly discusses Eisler's and other musicians' hearings before the HUAC, and how this affected the musicians' lives. She argues that the details of government investigations of musicians during this period are not as well documented as investigations on film directors or literary figures. Joy Calico wrote her dissertation on "The Politics of Opera in the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1961" (1999), which describes how the SED promoted the use of opera to legitimize the country and construct

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composers with whom Brecht collaborated, because Brecht appreciated Schwaen as a human and artist, and did not try to exploit him, of which Brecht is often accused (Tabbert-Jones 2004, 73 )

<sup>4</sup> One exception is Gerdemen-Klein's dissertation "The Dramaturgical Integration of Text and Music in Brecht's "Schweyk im zweiten Weltkrieg" (1995) which contains a theoretical analysis of Eisler's work, and asserts that the piece demonstrates the "remarkable potential of the combined arts" (Gerdemen-Klein 1995)

a national identity. She focuses on the government criticisms of Brecht's and Dessau's *Das Verhör des Lukullus* and Eisler's unfinished opera *Johann Faustus*.

The dissertations we see in the 21<sup>st</sup> century move away from both politics and Brecht, and focus on either the composers or their compositions as studies of the composers in a cultural context. One can find this specifically in dissertations concerning Eisler, and we see more dissertations which include Eisler and discuss him as a significant composer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As compared to earlier decades, we see a lot more dissertations focusing on composers of the GDR. These dissertations also tend to focus on the time period from the 1940s to the 1970s, and do not mention the more advanced compositional techniques that appear in the late 1970s or 1980s. Sally Blick's dissertation "Composers on the Cultural Front: Aaron Copland and Hanns Eisler in Hollywood" (2001) focuses on Eisler's and Copland's modernist compositional techniques in film scores, and argues that they were innovative in a conservative 1930s Hollywood. These two composers felt that intelligent and socially relevant films such as *Of Mice and Men* (1939) and *Hangmen Also Die* (1943) deserved progressive and modernist compositional techniques, which in turn would influence the modern moviegoers' musical taste. Margaret Jackson's doctoral treatise (which will be discussed later in this chapter in more detail) gives accounts of Eisler's "Kampflieder," which, she asserts, led the HUAC to question him in the now infamous hearings and caused his neglect in American music scholarship. David Tompkins' dissertation "Composing the Party Line: Music and Politics in Poland and the GDR, 1948-1957" compares the two countries' similar musical cultures and their vastly differing histories. He argues that although music assisted in maintaining communist regimes in these countries during 1948-1957, the composers did exercise the ability to push their boundaries within the context of socialist realism. Among other composers, he discusses Hanns Eisler, Paul Dessau, Witold Lutosławski, and Andrzej Panufnik (Tompkins 2004.) Marie Marfil and Jiyoung



Park both wrote theoretical analyses of Eisler's *Palmstrom* op. 5, and they both unceremoniously present Eisler as an accomplished musician without mentioning any issues with his reception (Marfil 2005 and Park 2007)

Michael Hix's doctoral treatise shows an important development in dissertations on music from the GDR. "The Lieder of Paul Dessau" (2006) is the first one to focus solely on Paul Dessau. Hix discusses the development and stylistic characteristics of Dessau's Lieder and how Dessau's progressive compositional techniques distinguished him during the first twenty years of the GDR. Hix also concludes that composers from the GDR should be reevaluated and their works should be performed more in the US, despite some of the political content of the compositions. (Hix 2006.) Amy Wlodarski draws attention to Eisler's *Nuit et Brouillard* (1955) and Dessau's *Judische Chronik* (1960-61), both compositions that address the Holocaust. She describes Eisler and Dessau as "obscure" composers and how their compositional techniques affected the perception of the Holocaust in composing these pieces immediately after the World War II. (Wlodarski 2005.)

At the present date, Laura Silverberg is the most recent scholar to write a dissertation on the music from the GDR, detailing how composers used contemporary compositional techniques while dealing with a suppressive government that mandated socialist realism in music.<sup>5</sup> She uses examples of Dessau and Eisler, among others, as composers who both found means to justify their use of atonality and dodecaphony without government interference.

Other dissertations include Mina Yang's "New Directions in California music: Construction of a Pacific Rim cultural identity, 1925 - 1945," which places Eisler in the context as part of the group of European émigrés (such as Schoenberg and Stravinsky) that helped develop the California film music scene in the 1930s and 1940s (Yang 2001). David Jenemann's

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<sup>5</sup> The concept of socialist realism will be discussed more in Chapter Three.

dissertation “Transmissions: Adorno in America: 1938-1953” (2003) which, in the context of Adorno’s poor reception in America, describes the unfair focus on Eisler in Adorno and Eisler’s *Composing for the Films* (1947), and Richard Nangle’s D.M.A. dissertation on his piece *Homage* (2008). *Homage* is an analysis on the composition, which includes monograms from Bach, Eisler, Shostakovich, and Webern (Nangle 2008).

### 1.3. Books and Scholarly Articles

The eminent biography on Eisler is Albrecht Betz’s *Hanns Eisler: Political Musician*, published in 1976 and translated into English in 1982 by Bill Hopkins. It was the first comprehensive study of Eisler to appear in English. The biography divides Eisler’s life into four sections: (1) his early years in Vienna and his years as a student of Schönberg, (2) his years during the Weimar Republic, during which he made a big impact with his political vocal music in Berlin, (3) his years spent in exile (he lived for a great part of this period in the United States), and (4) his life in the GDR. The first chapter describes Eisler’s early years in Vienna, and recounts Eisler’s beginnings as a composer, and the time he spent as a student of Schönberg. This chapter details the differences of opinion on politics and music between Eisler and Schönberg. Schönberg felt that politics had no place in music, and did not have a strong opinion on social class structure. Through these differences, Eisler eventually felt that he was supposed to compose for the masses. Chapter two details Eisler’s move to Berlin where he found a more socially progressive musical culture. It was in Berlin where he would compose his first political works (militant music, political choruses and ballads). This section also details the break between him and Schönberg in 1926, where they split on their differences of opinion on the direction of new music. This chapter also discusses the first of Eisler’s collaborations with Bertolt Brecht: *Die Massnahme* (1930), *Kuhle Wampe* (1931), and *Die Mutter* (1930), and how the political message of these pieces related to Eisler’s

new compositional methods. During this time, Eisler composed in a manner that would allow the text and music to passionately express the revolutionary spirit of Berlin at this time. The third chapter discusses his fifteen years of exile, first traveling to Vienna, France, Paris, and Belgium, before finally settling in the United States in 1938. It was during his exile in Europe where Eisler began his composition *Deutsche Sinfonie* op.50 (1937-1957), which emoted the anti-fascist resistance during the 1930s. The sub-chapter “Escape to America” details Eisler’s stay in the U.S. from 1938 to 1948, when he left due to the anti-communist sentiments that were made stronger by his hearing before the HUAC. Eisler composed an abundance of incidental music during his time in the U.S., including music that accompanied the cartoon *Pete Roleum and his Cousins* (1939) and the film *400 Millionen* (1939), which are discussed in the sub-chapter “Practice and Theory: The Project for Film Music”. He began a project on film music with a grant from the Rockefeller foundation, which eventually resulted in the book *Composing for the Films* (1947). The sub-chapter “A Victim of the Witch Hunt” describes his time in Hollywood before and during the HUAC hearings. The chapter discusses the support he received from his fellow émigrés such as Thomas Mann (1875-1955), Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977), and Albert Einstein (1879-1955), and his eventual return to Germany due to pressure from the HUAC. The concert program of the farewell concert held for Eisler in New York in 1948 is documented within the sub-chapter. The fourth chapter “The Final Decade” details Eisler’s return to Germany and settling in the GDR in 1950. The fourth chapter focuses on two important compositions he composed during this time: *Johann Faustus* and *Ernste Gesang*. *Johann Faustus* was an opera that Eisler never completed. The last chapter “Eisler’s Modernity” discusses the affect of socialism on his music, and how he is unique in that as a composer, he took the social function of music seriously.

The prominent East German musicologist Nathan Notowicz documented interviews he conducted with Hanns and his brother, Gerhart Eisler, in the book *Wir reden hier nicht von Napoleon. Wir reden von ihnen!* (1971) Notowicz and Eisler discuss, amongst other topics, influences, compositions, politics, Eisler's lessons and friendship with Schoenberg, his friendship and collaborations with Bertolt Brecht, and his hearings before the HUAC.<sup>6</sup> Eisler recounts his time spent in the U.S. through discussion of his acquaintances during this time, such as Charlie Chaplin and Bertolt Brecht. He gives a personal account of the activities surrounding his hearing before the HUAC and his deportation. After Eisler's death in 1962, Notowicz conducted an interview with his brother, Gerhart, in which they discussed childhood memories of Hanns, literary, and political interests, military service in World War I, Hanns' music education and his earlier compositions. David Blake was a significant component in spreading Eisler's biography to the United States in compiling *Hanns Eisler: A Miscellany* in 1995, which contains writings by Eisler and several Eisler scholars. This was the first compilation of its kind in English. The essays written describe the main themes in his life and works, including his pieces composed as a child and young man before he was a student of Schoenberg, his twelve-tone music, his *Lehrstücke* (or "teaching pieces") on which he collaborated with Brecht. The essays written by Eisler himself in this compilation discuss his relationship with Schoenberg, his thoughts on modern music, and his opera *Johann Faustus* (1951) This book is the first to include an English text of the opera, and includes Eisler's introduction to libretto "Notes on Faustus". Werner Mittenzwei's article "On the 'Faustus' Debate" discusses Eisler's unfinished opera *Johann Faustus* Eisler published the libretto to this opera, but before he could finish an accompanying music score, the Socialist Realist faction criticized Eisler's concept of Faustus, which represents the *Deutsche Misere*. Eisler fell into a deep depression after this and fled to Vienna. (Blake 1995.) Joy Calico's tireless efforts

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<sup>6</sup> Eisler's hearing before the HUAC will be discussed in Chapter 2

in promoting Hanns Eisler as an applauded composer who is worthy of research is seen in her article “The Karl Marx of Music” (1998), which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The paucity of biographical materials on Dessau in English might count for his seeming lack in American music scholarship when compared to Eisler. The German Fritz Hennenberg is the leading scholar on Dessau and has written, among other works, his biography *Paul Dessau. Eine Biographie* (1965), the first comprehensive biography on Dessau, and a detailed account of his collaborations with Brecht in *Dessau - Brecht: Musikalische Arbeiten* (1963). *Paul Dessau: Eine Biographie* divides Dessau’s life into five sections. The chapter detailing his life from 1894 to 1918 accounts his early childhood until the end of World War I, in which he served for three years. The second chapter, 1918 to 1933, details his life in the Weimar Republic. The chapter details his time spent as a Kapellmeister and resident composer for the Hamburger Kammerspiele. The chapter also details his career as a composer in Cologne, Mainz, and Berlin in the early 1920s, and how this career in the theater assisted him in composing film scores for silent films. Other pieces mentioned include his *Lehrstücken*, his first political songs, and the Psalm settings he composed that questioned the racism of the Nazi regime. The third chapter discusses his life from 1933 to 1942. This section discusses his life in exile in the U.S. and France up until the time he met Bertolt Brecht in 1942. This chapter discusses the symphonic works – an orchestral suite (later re-composed into his second symphony) and a suite for the film *AWODAH* (1935). The chapter also discusses *Haggada* (1936), a scenic oratorio that draws from Jewish folk music. During this time, he also composed twelve-tone compositions, which were a result of him studying with René Leibowitz. He fled to the U.S. in 1939 after France declared war on Germany, and this chapter accounts his troubles in finding work as a musician in New York. The next chapter, which details his life from 1942 to 1948, describes his collaborations with Brecht in the United States. The following collaborations are discussed in detail within this

chapter: *Lied einer deutschen Mutter* (1943, Song of a German Mother), *Das deutsche Miserere* (1944-1947, The German Miserere), *Horst-Dussel-Lied* (1943), *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder: Chronik aus dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg* (1946, Mother Courage and her Children: A Chronicle of the Thirty Years' War), and *Der gute Menschen von Sezuan* (1947-1948, The Good Men from Sezuan). The last chapter elaborates on his life from 1948 until 1964, just before the book was published. He returns to Germany this time, and settles in East Berlin in 1949. This section discusses his collaborations with Brecht during this time, and he also many political songs. This book contains a comprehensive list of Dessau's works and discography. (Hennenberg 1965.)

Daniela Reinhold, archivist of the Paul Dessau Archive, edited *Dokumente zu Leben und Werke* (1995), which is a catalogue of an exhibition on Dessau, held at the *Akademie der Künste* in 1995. Another book Reinhold edited, *Paul Dessau: "Let's Hope for the Best" Briefe und Notizbücher aus den Jahren 1948 bis 1978* (2000), which is a compilation of Dessau's personal correspondence with René Leibowitz (1913-1972), with whom Dessau took composition lessons during his stay in France (1933-1939), and of excerpts from his personal notebooks and sketchbooks. *Das Verhör in der Oper: Die Debatte um Brecht/Dessaus „Lukullus“ von Bertolt Brecht und Paul Dessau* details the debate between the SED and Dessau's and Brecht's opera *Die Verurteilung des Lukullus* (1948 – The Sentencing of Lucullus), which was later revised to *Das Verhör des Lukullus* (1951 – The Trial of Lucullus) (Lucchesi 1993).

The Kurt Schwaen Archive that is held in his house in Berlin-Mahlsdorf is a unique archive in that it is run by his widow, Ina Iske. She has his original diaries dating back to 1939, a complete library of his scores, and as his wife and archivist, she is able to give a personal account of his life and works. Schwaen's autobiography *Stufen und Intervalle: Ein Komponist zwischen Gesellschafts- und Notensystemen* (2005) gives a personal and detailed account of his life and acquaintances with, among other prominent East German composers, Bertolt Brecht,

Hanns Eisler, and Paul Dessau. This book also includes Schwaen's essays on Mozart, Debussy, and Beethoven (and his ninth symphony). The autobiography also includes a list of selected compositions and documentation of his imprisonment in Penal Division 999. The video documentary *Eine weite Reise* (2001), directed by Jochen Krauß (b.1943), provides an in-depth look at the composer from his beginnings in Katowice, Poland (formerly Kattowitz, in the former Prussian Province of Silesia) to his life as an accomplished composer in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This documentary includes interviews with many people in Schwaen's life, including writers Günter Kunert (b. 1929), Wera (b. 1929) and Claus Küchenmeister (b. 1930), and artist Werner Klemke (1917-1994). Rosemarie Groth and Wolfgang Hanke contributed to his entry in *Komponisten der Gegenwart*, which is an overview of his life and his compositional style and also includes a selected list of his works. Groth also contributed to the article in *Oxford Music Online*, which unfortunately not been updated to cite his death which occurred in 2007. Festschriften for his 85<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> birthdays were edited and compiled in 1995 and 2000 (Ochs and Schüler 1995; Schweinhardt 2000). For his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Festschrift was a compilation of interviews with his professional acquaintances, writings and analyses of his works, documents such as his conscription order, and the documentation of his imprisonment in the Penal Division 999. The Festschrift for his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday includes papers presented at a conference in Berlin in 1999. Gudrun Tabbert-Jones wrote the article "The Collaboration between Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Schwaen" (2004) for the journal: *Communications of the International Bertolt Brecht Society*, which describes Schwaen as one of the last living composers (before his death in 2007) to have worked with Brecht during the last years of his life (1953-1956). The article disputes the common opinion that Brecht did not work amiably with his collaborators and exploited them to where they could not function as artists themselves by citing Schwaen's long and successful career

Conferences in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have provided a more in-depth look at the music of the GDR. The national conference of the American Musicological Society in 2006 held a panel on music of the GDR with Matthias Tischler as the chair. Laura Silverberg presented the paper “New Music and Musical Tradition in the German Democratic Republic,” which discusses the music of the GDR and how it evolved into a new music despite the early SED mandates of socialist realism. Elaine Kelly presented the paper “Ideology versus Pragmatism: The Politicization of the Nineteenth-Century Musical Canon in the German Democratic Republic,” which discusses the treatment of compositions of Beethoven and Händel in the GDR.

The conference entitled “Reconsidering the Role of the Arts in the German Democratic Republic” was held at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in 2007, in which many papers on music and culture in the GDR were presented, including “Reading the Past in the German Democratic Republic: Thoughts on Writing Histories of Music” by Elaine Kelly, “Is Dissonant Music Dissident Music? – SED Advocates of Western Modernism” by Laura Silverberg, “‘Vielleicht befreit uns Aktion...’: Music and Political Ideals in Leipzig, 1989” by Andrea Bohlman, “Dictatorship and the Everyday” by Jakob Norberg, and “Regieoper or Eurotrash? – The Legacy of GDR Theater Directors on the Opera Stage” by Joy Calico. A panel will be held at the national meeting of the American Musicological Society in November 2009, “Researching Music of the Cold War: Methodological Challenges and New Critical Approaches,” which will discuss the “methodological, interpretative, and ethical challenges that confront musicologists” when dealing with living subjects who experienced tribulations during the Cold War.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The call for presentations for this panel was distributed via the AMS announce mailing list



#### 1 4. Reception Studies in the United States

The reception studies of composers from the GDR have primarily focused on Eisler. These studies argue that he is not given fair consideration in American musicology, and some have attributed this to his hearings before the HUAC.

In 1993, Sarah McCall wrote her dissertation on “The Musical Fallout of Political Activism: Government Investigation of Musicians in the United States, 1930-1960,” which discusses the lack of published material that detailed how musicians were treated by the HUAC, especially when compared to the corresponding literature on writers and actors. She asserts that it was not possible to accurately assess how this treatment affected the quantity or the quality of the musical output of composers, and could only explain how it affected their lives. (McCall 1993.)

In 1998, Joy Calico wrote the article “The Karl Marx of Music” and was able to detail the quantity of Eisler’s reception in the US from 1947 to 1998. She follows the reception of Eisler’s music starting in 1947 by citing newspaper articles, concerts, academic writings, and recordings, and she asserts that while he was a very gifted and unique composer, American scholarship, concert repertoire, and musical recordings were lacking a focus on, or integration of, Eisler’s music. Her article states that when Eisler and his music are incorporated into scholarship and academic teaching, it was always in connection to another historical figure, such as Schoenberg or Brecht. She concludes, this lack could only be attributed to the Cold War and asserted there should be a reassessment of his work since the Cold War had ended and the ‘threat of communism’ was over, claiming that the music was as relevant today as it was during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Calico 1998, 120-136.)

Calico wrote another article on the subject, “Hanns Eisler: Marxist Polyglot,” which broadened the Eisler argument by attributing his absence from the “collective music

consciousness” in America to his proficiency in a variety of genres, thus making it harder for musicologists to classify him and his music (Calico 2009). The work attempts to explain why Eisler’s music is lacking in the American musical consciousness, and it also recommends recordings and demonstrates how he could be relevant in a 21<sup>st</sup> century musical setting. She categorizes his reception into two types: popular music reception and classical as well as academic reception. In popular music, she cites Sting as well as the collaboration of Billy Bragg and Wilco, two big names in American pop music who have utilized Eisler’s music and his subject in and “Secret Marriage” (1987) and “Eisler on the Go” (1998) She discusses *The Brecht-Eisler Songbook* edited by Eric Bentley and Earl Robinson (1962), his theatrical collaborations with Brecht, and his collection of art songs *The Hollywood Songbook* (1938-1943), and she states that while they are popular songs which are inclined to be catchy and simple, they are elegantly written and bear the mark of a great composer. (Ibid.)

In the section on his reception in classical music and academic reception, she states that his lack of reception in academia is conspicuous, because he was a master student of Schoenberg. Here, she states that the lack cannot be due to his political ideology, because universities tend to act as a haven for discussion of communism She also disputes Eisler scholar David Blake’s point that Eisler’s music was hard to acquire during the Cold War by maintaining that it is the focus of academics to search and collect rare resources. Concerning his reception in classical music, she asserts that Eisler disposed of his great musical talents by making his music too accessible for the masses, even though he did maintain a cultivated atonal style Calico affirms that this polylingualism is what kept him from being known in academia, because he was not easily categorized and did not fit the “classical mold” (Ibid )

She concludes by suggesting that the political statements Eisler makes in his music about the era in which he lived is also relevant in a 21<sup>st</sup> century setting Eisler studies could be

relevant in academics and in performance, which are merging popular and high art more often than in the past, and that he should be reassessed as a great composer worthy of further research (Calico 2009 )

Margaret Jackson wrote “Workers, Unite! The Political Songs of Hanns Eisler, 1926-1932” – a doctoral treatise that sought to introduce English-speaking singers and music historians to Eisler’s fighting songs from the pre-World War II period. In the fourth chapter of the treatise, entitled “Eisler’s Fate in U.S. Musicology,” Jackson concedes Calico’s theory of Eisler being a “Marxist Polyglot” as one of many reasons to describe Eisler’s predicament, but also argues that there are many “musical polyglots” that have received ample attention, such as Leonard Bernstein, George Gershwin, Dmitri Shostakovich, and Aaron Copland (Jackson 2003, 65). She asserts that American universities have a long history of being controlled by the government, starting with the McCarthy era’s Red Scare attempt to remove “communists” from all prominent positions of leadership, including professorships. By arguing this, Jackson reaffirms the notion of Calico’s first article, which states that a Cold War ideology is the reason for the lack of Eisler studies in American musicology. Jackson supports this by citing a statement by Joseph McCarthy, which urged parents to assist in purging ‘communism’ in America by showing that students are going into college as “good Americans” and returning four years later as “wild-eyed radicals” (McCarthy, quoted in Jackson 2003, 56). The “Red Scare” during the McCarthy era never allowed ‘communism’ to gain a strong foothold in America, therefore suppressing any hint of ‘communist’ sentiments. She also discusses the beginning of the development of musicology as a discipline in American universities in between World Wars and how many of the German immigrants who fled Europe during World War II assisted in developing the academic discipline. These scholars focused on the exalted German past, rather than a Germany that was ravaged by war. This excluded Eisler from musicological studies, because, at that time he was a musician of

the present. (Ibid , 58-59 ) Jackson examines Eisler's hearings before the HUAC, stating he had long been suspected of being a communist due to the fact that his brother, Gerhart Eisler, was under investigation for his strong connection to the communist party. (Ibid., 62 )

Jackson concludes with asserting that McCarthyism still resides in American universities, citing that major universities still heavily rely on government funding, which affects what professors teach and how they are able to conduct their lesson plans. This results in part of American history being erased, since 'communism' was a large part of American history during the 1950s. She states that now the Cold War is no longer a viable threat, and that Eisler and his music can be reassessed in America's music schools. (Jackson 2003, 65-66).

All three of these reception studies have several ideas in common. They all suggest that there is a noticeable lack of studies directly related to Eisler and his music in American musicology and that he is only known for his association with other historical figures, such as his brother, Gerhart Eisler, his teacher Schoenberg, or his collaborator, Bertolt Brecht. They also show that Eisler is a diverse and talented musician, and his music could be played in a wide variety of contexts. Calico discusses how his music is normally played in an academic context (rather than for the masses, for whom it was supposed to be performed), and Jackson attempts to show that scholars themselves have a bias due to the university being funded by the government. The differences of opinion in these studies provoke debates on politics and its influence on music in America. They also bring about questions concerning composers from the GDR in general. Are these issues also pertaining to other composers that resided in the GDR during its time? Will scholars pay more attention to others as they have gained a new focus on Eisler and his music? The empirical studies in Chapter Four of this thesis will question whether other composers from the GDR incur the same treatment in the US as Eisler, focusing on Paul Dessau and Kurt Schwaben

## 2. THE HOUSE UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Jackson's writing on Eisler's fate in American musicology focuses on residual effects of the McCarthy Era.<sup>8</sup> The McCarthy era, which roughly took place from 1946 to 1960, is rooted in the time period after World War I. In late April 1919, approximately 30 bombs were sent through U.S. mail to various government officials including the Attorney General of the United States, justice officials, financiers, and John D. Rockefeller. These bombs were sent by followers of Luigi Galleani (1861-1931), an anarchist communist and an immigrant from Italy who gained a somewhat strong following in the U.S. during the first 20 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the bombs were ineffective due to insufficient postage, and did not effectively reach any of the politicians to which they were originally sent.<sup>9</sup> This prompted the Galleanists to send another round of bombs in June of 1919, which again, did not harm any of the politicians for which they were meant, but harmed a several innocent bystanders (Allen 1931, 41-43 ) After this act, the New York State Legislature established the Lusk Committee under the chairman Senator Lusk to make reports on revolutionary radicalism (Buckley 1962, 92 ) The Senate had also authorized investigation of the brewing industry and German propaganda, during the World War I, and now the committees were to include communist activities (Ibid., 93.)

Over a year after the bombings in 1919, another more powerful bomb was planted in the financial district in New York City outside the J.P. Morgan Bank which killed 30 people and injured 300 (Buckley 1962, 93). These actions caused further panic concerning the actions of

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<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that while this period is called the McCarthy Era after Senator Joseph McCarthy (1908-1957), he did not take part in the HUAC hearings

<sup>9</sup> The bombs did kill a postal service employee, a servant, and injured the wife of one of the politicians

communists In 1930, Congressman Earl C. Michener offered a resolution to appoint a committee to investigate communist propaganda in the U S , specifically, the educational institutions. The resolution passed, and Hamilton Fish, III (1888-1991) was appointed chairman, and the committee was known as the Fish Committee was established in 1930. The committee proposed to make the Communist Party illegal to avoid a “violent destruction of [the] American government” (Ibid. 95.) The Fish Committee conducted hearings from July to December of 1930, and found 12,000 dues-paying members of the Communist Party and a half million sympathizers This led the committee to recommend, among other proposals, that the Communist Party be declared illegal and to deport alien Communists. The Representative John E. Nelson of Maine pointed out that the growth of communism was most likely due to the Depression, and these people should not necessarily be labeled as criminals Out of the many bills that the Fish Committee tried to pass through the Senate during its existence, only one bill managed to pass through the House, and was never called to a vote in the Senate. (Goodman 1968, 8-9 ) The Fish Committee eventually dissolved, and the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization took over the duties of dealing with Communists, because most of the Communists were immigrants This Committee noticed the growing tension in the U S with the rise of Hitler in Germany, and passed a resolution to appoint a committee to further investigate: “(1) The extent, character, and objects of Nazi propaganda activities in the United States; (2) the diffusion within the United States of subversive propaganda that is instigated from foreign countries and attacks the principle of the form of government as guaranteed by our Constitution; and (3) all other questions in relation thereto that would aid the Congress in any necessary remedial legislation ” (*Congressional Record- House*, March 20<sup>th</sup> Quoted in Buckley 1962, 95) <sup>10</sup> The resolution was adopted in 1934, and this committee was named the Special

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<sup>10</sup> The word “Nazi” was eventually changed to “foreign” to dispel the accusation that it was an anti-

Committee on Un-American Activities or the McCormack-Dickstein Committee, named after the chairman John McCormack and vice-chairman Samuel Dickstein. It was principally designed to investigate Nazi activity in the U.S , but also inspected Communist activity. The committee disbanded in 1935, and Dickstein attempted to form another committee, but his resolution was not adopted, due to the fact that it seemed he desired publicity, rather than dealing with matters in professional manner within the committee (Goodman 1968, 15). Martin Dies, a representative of Texas, with the support of Dickstein established a new resolution which had almost identical duties of the Dickstein resolution of 1934, but the resolution focused on “Un-American activities” rather than “foreign propaganda activities” (Buckley 1962, 96). Due to the fear that this committee would be the beginning of a witch hunt, Dickstein was asked what he meant when he used the word “Un-American activities”. Dickstein made it clear that he meant “pro-German” activities (Goodman 1968, 14). Dies wanted to make clear that he this was not an anti-German resolution, but was against, Nazism, fascism, and Communism, which he felt posed a threat to the American government (Buckley 1962, 97). His resolution passed in 1938, and the Dies Committee, or the HUAC came into being. The HUAC was made a permanent committee in 1945 (Buckley 1962, 104)

In the summer of 1947, the HUAC interviewed 41 people from the motion picture industry; the people were called “friendly witnesses”. These people named 19 people from the Hollywood film industry who were thought to be affiliated with the Communist Party. Hanns Eisler was included in the Hollywood 19. The 19 were subpoenaed to come before the committee to be questioned on their supposed communist affiliations and how it might be infiltrating Hollywood films. 10 of the people refused to give a testimony to the HUAC, and were cited for contempt of congress for pleading the Fifth Amendment. These people were

afterwards referred to as the Hollywood Ten. (Goodman 1968, 210 ) They were later fired from their respective positions due to the “Waldorf indictment”, which was a response by the Association of Motion Picture Producers (AMPP), saying they would discharge the Hollywood Ten, due to the fact that they were in contempt of congress (Goodman 1968, 300).<sup>11</sup>

During this time, the HUAC included persons such as Richard M. Nixon, the harsh and oppressive chief investigator Robert E. Stripling, and Chairman J. Parnell Thomas (Hearings, 1947). The Hollywood Ten consisted of Alvah Bessie, Herbert Biberman, Lester Cole, Edward Dmytryk, Ring Lardner, Jr , John Howard Lawson, Albert Maltz , Samuel Ornitz, Adrian Scott, and Dalton Trumbo. (Goodman 1968, 210.) These names probably do not sound familiar to a majority of people today, because while the AMPP did not fire these artists on its own accord, the government exhibited great control during this time. Had these artists not been among the first to be blacklisted, they probably would have been noted for their talents rather than their supposed political affiliations.

A few years after the “Hollywood Ten” incident, the “Red Channels” report was published in 1950, which was published in the right-wing journal *Counteract* founded by former FBI agents. It listed people in the radio and television industries who were named as communists or communist sympathizers. Some of these people include Leonard Bernstein, Langston Hughes, Pete Seeger, Aaron Copeland, Orson Welles, Arthur Miller, and Charlie Chaplin (Cogley 1956 ) These people are arguably more recognizable to a modern audience, as these artists all led successful careers and are still widely regarded as those who made great contributions to their respectful fields The persons in the entertainment industry known as the “Hollywood Ten” are put in the same group as Eisler; they were made famous in U.S history as people who were the first to be blacklisted. However, in 1950, the “Red Channels” report

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<sup>11</sup> The AMPP discharged the Hollywood on account of their contempt of court, and not because these people were affiliated with the Communist Party



officially started the paranoia in artistic fields as it listed a grand total of 151 names of actors, artists and musicians. The HUAC began to quickly lose any acceptance it had previously gained. It is due to this dramatic part of history that there still seems to be somewhat of a misperception of the word 'communism' or 'socialism'

### 3 AN OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE MUSIC COMPOSED IN THE GDR

Before discussing the reception of these musicians, one must know their cultural and historical context in the GDR. For the first twenty years of the GDR's existence, the cultural doctrines that existed in the Soviet Union had a large influence on the culture of the GDR, and in turn, influenced the style of the music in the early years of the GDR. On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1932, the Soviet Union's Central Committee<sup>12</sup> issued a decree entitled "On the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organizations". It was brief and to the point, asking new writers and artists to emerge from their mills, factories, and collective farms, because the Russian Association of Proletariat Musicians (RAPM), the Russian Association of Proletariat Writers (RAPP), and other artistic organizations had become "too narrow and [held] back the serious growth of literary creation." (Olkhovsky 1955, 278-279.) The RAPP, RAPM, and by association the ACM (Association of Contemporary Music) were disbanded as well with this decree, and in their places a union for each individual field of arts was created, among others the Union of Soviet Writers and the Union of Soviet Composers. The new unions were asked to work together to bring a change to other forms of art and to trust the *Orgburo*<sup>13</sup> to work out all practical matters in regards to implementing the change (James 1973, 120 )

The magazine *Sovetskaya muzika* was a publication by the new Union of Soviet Musicians. It named Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857), Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840-1893), and The Mighty

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<sup>12</sup> The Central Committee was the highest body of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It directed all communist party and government activities, members were elected every five years.

<sup>13</sup> The Organizational Buro (Orgburo) of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Union oversaw work of local party committees and was in charge of placing Communist members in certain political positions.

Five as the only possible beginning from which Soviet Music could develop and revived musical nationalism as a new form. (Frolova-Walker 1998, 333-334.) In the January 1934 issue of *Sovetskaya muzika*, it provided a slogan for the Cultural Revolution, which Stalin himself had written: “The Development of Cultures National in Form and Socialist in Content.” (Ibid., 334). It stated that Soviet musicians should not compose music that was “national in content”, which would imply that they were composing in the bourgeois nationalist form. Composers in each republic under Soviet rule at the time should compose music that reflected each nationality until they would all merge into one culture, socialist in form and content. (Ibid., 334 ) The concept of “Socialist Realism” was discussed at the first Writer’s Congress later in 1934 and was introduced as an artistic method, to be used in all fields of art. The Soviet politician Andrei Zhdanov (1896-1948)<sup>14</sup> attempted to define “Socialist Realism” and summarized what it would entail in all fields of art: “Socialist Realism demands from the author a true and historically concrete depiction of reality in its revolutionary development. Moreover, this true and historically concrete artistic depiction of reality must be combined with the task of educating the workers in the spirit of Communism.” (Quoted in James 1973, 88.) His vague and amorphous definition set the precedence for socialist realism as “Zhdanovism” (*zhdanovshchina*) until his death in 1948.

One can see the continuation of socialist elements under Stalin’s regime when on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1936, Stalin and other high-ranking officials went to see a production of the opera *Quiet Flows the Don* by Ivan Dzerzhinsky (1909-1978). Joseph Stalin (1878-1953) saw this opera as the epitome of Soviet music and made a list of characteristics he preferred in operas: “a libretto with a Socialist topic, a realistic musical language with stress on a national idiom, and a positive hero typifying the new Socialist era” (Stalin, quoted in Schwarz 1983, 123.) It was easy

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<sup>14</sup> Andrei Zhdanov was a Soviet politician who was prominent in his intellectual and political contributions to the Communist Party. He spoke at several conferences of both Soviet Writers and musicians and served his apprenticeship as Party Leader in the Gorky region (1924-1934), then in Leningrad (1934-1944). (Miller 41, 1949 )

to transfer the elements of socialist realism from the definition Zhdanov provided at the Writer's Congress to the context of opera because of its literary affiliations.<sup>15</sup> In the January 28<sup>th</sup>, 1936 issue of *Pravda*<sup>16</sup>, the article entitled "Muddle instead of Music" censored "formalist"<sup>17</sup> attributes in the ballets *The Golden Age* (1929-30) and *The Limpid Stream* (1934-35) as well as the opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (1930-32) - all composed by Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975). (Olkhovsky 1955, 151.) The article reprimanded Shostakovich for "'leftist' confusion instead of natural, human music," and also implied what could happen to him if he did not change his style (Fanning 2009).

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1948, Zhdanov (as secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Part) issued the now infamous decree on music "On the Opera *The Great Friendship* by Vano Muradeli (1908-1970)." The decree unfairly scrutinizes the opera, stating that it was "feeble" and "inexpressive" and that it was "confused and disharmonious, built on complicated dissonances, on combinations of sound that grate upon the ear." The decree also states that the opera had the false aim of "originality", because it did not draw upon Russian folk songs and rhythms, or past Russian operas that are "loved by and comprehensible to wide masses of the people." (Quoted in Olkhovsky 1955, 280 ) The decree goes on to state that this opera was not an isolated incident, but rather a chain of events that can be traced back to Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (as explained above) It listed Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975), Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953), Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978), Vissarion Shebalin (1902-1963), Gavriil Popov (1904-1972), and Nikolai Myaskovskii (1881-1950) as composers who followed this 'formalist tendency', and it recommended that government organizations such as the

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<sup>15</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the Soviet affiliation with opera, see Joy Calico's dissertation, "The Politics of Opera in the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1961", 1999.

<sup>16</sup> *Pravda* (Russian for "Truth") was the leading newspaper of the Soviet Union and an official publication of the Central Committee of the Communist Party between 1912 and 1991

<sup>17</sup> Formalism was a term the Soviets deemed for any music they felt was bourgeois and did not follow the doctrine of socialist realism

Committee on Art Affairs, the Central Committee, and the Department of Propaganda and Agitation correct the situation. (Olkhovsky 1955, 280-285.)

Later on that year, April 19<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, 1948, the first All-Union Congress of Soviet Composers met to reinforce the strict rules on Soviet music after World War II. There were more attacks on the “formalist tendency”, as seen by the statement that Tikhon Khrennikov (1913-2007), the Secretary General of the Union of Soviet Composers, made during the meeting:

The entire thirty year history of Soviet musical art represents an intense and contradictory process, the leading tendency of which is the establishment of popular and realistic bases and the struggle against the pernicious, poisonous influences of formalism. (Quoted in Olkhovsky 151-152, 1955 )

This congress firmly instated the doctrine of socialist realism as the national compositional approach and as a concept that would force composers to abandon their “formalist tendency” and to embody the musical trends of Russian classics such as Glinka, The Mighty Five, Tchaikovsky, and Alexander Dargomyzhsky (1813-1869) ,

At the time of this doctrine, the Soviet Union had occupied the Eastern sector of Germany, the Sowjetische Besatzungszone (SBZ), for three years, and the SBZ would become the GDR the following year on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1949. The intent of the Soviets was to erase the recent past of World War II with the GDR, and part of this endeavor was supposed to be accomplished by means of the musical culture. The SBZ inherited the same strict cultural policies from the Soviet Union, but they would be enforced by adhering to great pre-1900 German composers such as Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759) and Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) <sup>18</sup> This was the opposite of West Germany, which embraced composers they felt could not be politicized in any form. West Germans wanted to break away from the pre-1900 composers and support

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<sup>18</sup> For a detailed discussion on the politicization of Handel and Beethoven in the GDR, please refer to Potter 2001 and Kelly 2006

modern music, such as composers of the Darmstadt school (Karlheinz Stockhausen [1928-2008] and Pierre Boulez [b. 1925]) as well as Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) and his pupils. Although it appears that most West German composers were trying to keep any political connotation from their music, there still existed an infiltration of the Cold War biases in musical politics, as these were the same composers that East Germany was against and labeled as bourgeois and formalist. (Applegate and Potter 2002, 28-29.)

During the beginning stages of East Germany, before the wall was erected, there was still a chance for interaction with Western Europe and the United States. Many artists and intellectuals who were still in exile from World War II returned to the GDR. Ernst Hermann Meyer (1905-1988), a musicologist and composer, Hanns Eisler, Paul Dessau, Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), and Georg Knepler (1906-2003), a musicologist, all returned to the GDR within the years 1948-1950. (Hix 2006, 12.) The SED integrated these artists in the founding of the *Deutsche Akademie der Künste* in 1950 and the *Verband der Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftlicher* (VdK or the Association of Composers and Musicologists) in 1951. (Calico 42-43, 1999.) These organizations had the similar effects that the Union of Soviet Musicians had in the USSR; they gave the ability to the Soviets to monitor music in the GDR. There was, however, a difference in the inside dealings between the organizations in the USSR and those in the GDR. The members of the East German organizations were a conglomerate of persons from the USSR and former KPD (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands or the Communist Party of Germany) members in Moscow, who were in agreement with the doctrine of socialist realism, while some of the people who returned from exile in the West were opposed to it. (Calico 45-46, 1999 ) This caused discord in the cultural area of the GDR, and this friction is what largely set it apart ideologically and culturally from the USSR

After Joseph Stalin died in 1953, there was a chance to break away from the strict doctrines of socialist realism. In 1956, at the Soviet party's 20th congress in 1956, Nikita Krushchev (1894-1971) publically denounced Stalin, and this caused the GDR to break away from certain attributes of Stalinism, such as his erratic and discretionary acts of violence and punishment. While there were some examples of modernization, the socio-political system of Stalinism remained the same in the GDR. (Ross 2002, 27-28.) In 1954, the GDR Ministry of Culture (Ministeriums für Kultur, or MfK) was established to execute the cultural mandates of the Central Committee and to oversee the projects of musical organizations (Silverberg 2007, 67). Otto Grotewohl (1894-1964), the first Prime Minister of the GDR, appointed Johannes R. Becher (1891-1958) as the first minister of culture of the GDR and held this position until his death in 1958. While he did administer a *gesamtdeutsche* (unified German) culture, he was still against 'formalism' Under his administration, there were attacks against intellectuals such as Hans Meyer (1907-2001, a musicologist), Georgy Lukács (1885-1971, philosopher, writer, and literary critic), and Ernst Bloch (1885-1977, philosopher) Albert Abusch further criticized these philosophers at the 1957 SED Culture Conference and used this as a segue to denounce the bourgeois dance music coming from the West. (Calico 1999, 290.) This led to a proclamation in January 1958 at the Ordinance of Ministry for Culture that not more than 40% of all music performed in any concert could come from the West (Brockhaus, Niemand, et al. 1980, 190 )

During this time, while there were many restrictions put on art music, the SED also tried to make high culture more accessible to the working class. Concert tickets were subsidized by the government, and children of working class individuals were given special consideration for admission to music schools The ministry of culture also provided ample financial support for amateur musicians (Silverberg 2007, 75-76 ) The 5<sup>th</sup> Party Congress of the SED was held from July 10<sup>th</sup> to July 16<sup>th</sup> 1958, and it was determined that the artistic development of culture should

be guided by the phrase “Storm the heights of culture and take possession of it.”<sup>19</sup> (Brockhaus, Niemand, et al. 1980, 70). This notion was further developed and discussed at the first Bitterfeld Conference, which was held in November of 1958 at the electro-chemical cooperative in Bitterfeld (Ibid.). The conference held the motto: “Chemicals bring bread, prosperity, and beauty.” (Quoted in Calico 1999, 291). They decided on the Seven Year Plan for the chemical industry, and, as was customary with every economic plan, they included a cultural political agenda, which was to be discussed at the first official Bitterfeld Conference in April of 1959 (Ibid). The motto for the conference was “Grab your pen, mate! The socialist national culture needs you!” The artistic mandate was meant to encourage intelligent workers to write about their experiences, therefore breaking the barrier between high culture and the masses. (Fenemore 2007, 91.) It also was meant for the ideological support of an economic program that advocated workers to strive for outstanding performance awards, and to surpass the West German per capita production of important goods.<sup>20</sup> It could accomplish this by appealing to workers by encouraging them to compose *Unterhaltungsmusik* or entertainment music. (Calico 1999, 291-292) *Freundschaftsverträge* (friendship contracts) were made between the Association of Writers and the VdK (*Verband der Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler* or Association of Composers and Musicologists) and local factories to assist the workers with their newly mandated creative endeavors. Genres such as mass songs, new songs for youth, dance, and popular music were most important for the new *Bitterfelder Weg*, because simple texts could accompany these genres and could be easily performed by factory workers. Works such as “Chemie” (“Chemicals”) and “Funke und Flamme” (“Sparks and Flames”) were composed during this time (Calico 1999, 297-301 )

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<sup>19</sup> “die Höhen der Kultur zu stürmen und von ihnen Besitz zu ergreifen” (Brockhaus 1980, 70)

<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that emigration totaled 143,917 in 1959 and 199,188 in 1960, which occurred during the Seven Year Plan (Hilton 2002, 12)



The next major event that caused a change in musical culture in East Germany was the building of the wall and closing of the borders on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1961. Since the end of World War II, there had been a constant flow of people migrating from East Germany to West Germany. By 1961, almost 2.5 million people had emigrated from East Germany to West Germany. Walter Ulbricht<sup>21</sup> (1893-1973) saw that the country would not have a substantial amount of citizens if the rate of people leaving East Germany would continue. Although the wall was given the title “anti-fascist protection wall”, instead of keeping out fascists, it was really to keep East German citizens from immigrating to the West. (Hilton 2001, 12-24 )

Despite the fact that the GDR government had built a wall around its citizens, East German musicians experienced some artistic freedom during this time. Since there was no means of emigrating to the West, the government felt it had accomplished a significant feat and did not feel the need at that time to enforce any more restrictions. It was during the late 1950s and early 1960s that the *Materialdebatten* took place. These were a series of debates that discussed whether the compositional technique could be considered congruent with a socialist ideology.<sup>22</sup> (Silverberg 2007, 104-105.)

In December 1965, the 11<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the Central Committee put an end to this artistic freedom. The ruling put an end to the growing liberalization of the arts. While art music appeared to remain unscathed, pop music, literature, and film was censored, as they had become platforms to express their disfavor of the East German government. (Ibid ) The *Abgrenzungspolitik*<sup>23</sup> rose considerably in 1967, which limited its contact with West Germany by raising transit fees and incorporating a limited exchange rate. The GDR also replaced all slogans

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<sup>21</sup> Walter Ulbricht was the General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party from 1950 to 1971, he played an important role in the early development of establishing the GDR.

<sup>22</sup> For a thorough discussion of the *Materialbedebatten*, please see Chapter 3 of Laura Silverberg’s dissertation (2007).

<sup>23</sup> “Demarcation politics” denotes a definite break from the *gesamtdeutsche* trend with making East Germany unique and limited its contact with West Germany.

using the word “Germany” with “GDR” (Ross 2002, 10.) The Prague Spring of 1968<sup>24</sup> did little to change the view of the SED. The Prague Spring was thought of as a threat to the GDR, and as an attempt for the West to infiltrate and demean their society. This resulted in stricter laws against Western ideas. (Allinson 2000, 146-155 )

After Erich Honecker (1912-1994) took over the position of First Secretary of the SED Central Committee from Ulbricht in 1971, he applied for the GDR to become a member of the United Nations. This resulted in the GDR acquiring a national flag, anthem, and Olympic team, which gave them more opportunities for asserting themselves as an independent nation, separate from the FRG (Federal Republic of Germany). While the previous constitution stated that the GDR called for the eventual reunification on the foundation of democracy and socialism, the constitution now stated that it was “a socialist state of workers and farmers.” (Mütter 2000, 236.) This was reflected in the musical culture by adding the abbreviation “DDR” (GDR) in the names of the VdK (*Verband der Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler* or the Association of Composers and Musicologists) and the *Akademie der Künste* (or Academy of the Arts) in 1974. The national anthem, *Auferstanden aus Ruinen* (Arise from the Ruins), the music of which was composed by Hanns Eisler and the text written by Johannes R. Becher, was now purely instrumental, because the words referred to a “united Fatherland”. (Silverberg 2007, 111 )

There were also developments in the early 1970s that would help in developing a progressive musical life in the late 1970s and 1980s, developments that encouraged a connection with the West. In 1970, the Beethoven Congress made a clear statement that it was dedicated to a progressive tradition of German music history. The congress held in 1977 had

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<sup>24</sup> The Prague Spring was a period of political liberalization of Czechoslovakia. Enforced by Alexander Dubček from January 5<sup>th</sup> to August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1968, it was a period during which restrictions were lifted off of travel, media, and speech. The period ended with the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops, which put an end to the reforms. (Allinson 2000, 146-155.)

scholars and visitors from the West, where they were able to exchange ideas. Such facilities as the Bach Archive in Leipzig and the Schumann House in Zwickau also brought many scholars to the GDR, which helped with having a contact with the West (Mehner 1995, 1191.)

In the 1980s, a new generation of composers of new music emerged, and their presence in prominent music festivals in the East and West was noteworthy. Some of these composers include Bernd Franke (b. 1959), Lutz Glandien (b. 1954), Steffen Schleiermacher (b. 1960), Jakob Ullmann (b. 1958) and Helmut Zapf (b. 1956). They were *Meisterschüler* at the *Akademie der Künste der DDR* and had conflicting ideas with some of the previous generations of composers who did not have a connection with the West. (Ibid., 1191.)

Other developments during the 1980s include opening up opera houses and other concert venues, which encouraged renowned composers from the West to visit, such as Pierre Boulez (b. 1925), John Cage (1912-1992), Gyorgy Ligeti (1923-2006), and Luigi Nono (1924-1990). The conferences and events that took place in 1985, in honor of the birth years of Heinrich Schutz (1585-1672), Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759), and Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) seemed to create a bridge between early music and the new music that had come forth since the late 1970s (Mehner 1995, 1191.)

The *Mauerfall*<sup>25</sup> and reunification put an end to the GDR, and many problems presented themselves in the years after the *Wende* and continue to persist today. In an interview, jazz and new music composer Hannes Zerbe accounts that the years immediately after the *Wende* were decent for musicians, because many performances and concerts were still financially sponsored. However, the situation soon changed, and not as many opportunities existed to play, perform, or give concerts. In the GDR, everyone could afford a decent living, and there were no major social problems. This has changed since the *Wende*, and these problems still continue to persist.

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<sup>25</sup> *Mauerfall* is German term meaning the “falling of the wall” and refers to the Berlin Wall falling in 1989.

today. (see Appendix 5.) Although it was rare, composers such as Kurt Schwaen were still able to have their music published and commissioned (Kraußer 2001) Although composers like Schwaen still had a following with a large number of musicians, there still existed some level of criticism from Western musicians who felt East German composer's music was "abnormal", which furthered the divide between East and West (Tischer 2005, 2)

#### 4. THREE KEY COMPOSERS FROM THE GDR

##### 4.1 Introductory Remarks

In choosing composers that would create case studies to shed further light on the lack of East German music in the US, many factors were taken into consideration. American music scholarship concerning Dessau and Schwaen exhibits characteristics that Calico attributes to Eisler. They are often discussed in relation to Bertolt Brecht, and their respective oeuvres cover many different genres, which make their music difficult to classify

All three composers had well-established careers before the founding of the GDR in 1948. This gave them an advantage in composing during the first twenty years of the GDR, because the SED was not as likely to censor or punish them for composing music not congruent with a socialist ideology. Matthias Tischer classifies the music of young composers in the first 20 years of the GDR as “GDR Music”, as opposed to music composed by well-established composers, which is labeled “Music from the GDR” (Tischer 2005, 7-8).<sup>26</sup> The young composers who did not have prestige would not succeed if they composed music that did not follow the doctrine of socialist realism. Their music would be labeled as “late bourgeois, formalist, decadent, and hostile towards the people” (ibid, 8). The older composers who had more clout did not have to deal with these politics, because a large audience would notice if the SED punished them.

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<sup>26</sup> This does not take into account the younger generation of composers in the 1970s and 1980s, who utilized contemporary compositional techniques.

It is clear that with the success Hanns Eisler, Paul Dessau, and Kurt Schwaen attained before the founding of the GDR, they would fall under the category of “Music from the GDR”. In choosing Dessau and Schwaen, who could add to the reception studies on Eisler, I felt it was important that they represented aspects that might not be already apparent East German music. Paul Dessau is one of the most noteworthy composers of the GDR. He also exemplifies a pioneering spirit in his use of atonal techniques in his works, even during the times of strong emphasis of socialist realism in the GDR. When many music scholars in the US think of the GDR, they focus on the political control of the government, and not on the people and how they lived and worked in their everyday lives. Dessau bears some resemblance to Eisler in that he is widely noted for his political compositions, he collaborated with Brecht, and he immigrated to the United States after World War II (although he did not have a hearing before the HUAC) before settling in the GDR in 1949. Comparing a composer like Dessau to Eisler might shed light on how the hearings before the HUAC affected Eisler.

Kurt Schwaen might seem like an unlikely choice for this thesis, since he was not an immigrant such as Eisler or Dessau and did not work in the US and, therefore, did not have a chance to gain reception in the US. Still, the lack of writings on – and the lack of performances of music by Schwaen suggests a deficiency in knowledge of the history and culture of the GDR. His long life span provides a unique perspective, as there is little focus in American music scholarship on the last decade of the GDR, or the post-*Wende* effects on musical culture. Kurt Schwaen was a well-known composer and fits the profile of a prominent composer of the GDR: He held various high positions in the GDR, such as the Presidency over the National Committee of Folk Music of the GDR (1962-1978), he became an honorary member of the Academy of the Arts of the GDR in 1961, he was head of the music division of the *Volksbühne Berlin* (1948-1953), and he collaborated with famed artists such as Bertolt Brecht. He also composed the film score

one of the most well-known DEFA<sup>27</sup> films in the West, *Der Fall Gleiwitz* or *The Gleiwitz Case*. Schwaen is also one of the most performed composers from the GDR in Germany and Europe.

These composers will be discussed in the following sub-chapters, which will further explain their accomplishments and how they established their place in GDR history.

#### 4.2. Hanns Eisler

Johannes (Hanns) Eisler was born on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1898, in Leipzig to Dr. Rudolph Eisler and Ida Maria Eisler. His father, born in Paris, was a well known professor of philosophy of Czech-Jewish heritage, and his mother was a worker from Leipzig. He was closer to his mother, whose father was a socialist and an avid supporter of August Bebel<sup>28</sup>. His relationship with his parents appears to be the basis of his political views for the rest of his life. While both of them had communist ideologies, his father had an affluent job as a professor, and his mother was a working-class woman whose father was a butcher. He would always see his mother as one who knew the disparity of poverty, and view his father as one who always had a stable income (Notowicz 1971, 27-28.) Hanns Eisler was the second of three children. His brother was Gerhart Eisler (1897-1968), who became a communist after serving in the Austrian army in World War I. He later became a famous figure in American history for being known as the “Number One Communist in the US” in 1946 (“The Brain” 1946). His sister, Ruth Fischer (1895-1961), born Elfriede Eisler, was a co-founder of the Austrian Communist Party in Vienna in 1918. She moved to Berlin in 1919 and led the German Communist Party from 1919 to 1926 (*Ruth Fischer Papers*, 2008). When Hanns was 3 his family moved to Vienna. His father enjoyed singing and playing

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<sup>27</sup> The DEFA or the *Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft* (German Film Corporation) was the state film monopoly in the GDR and was the first film production company in post-World War II Germany, founded in 1946 (DEFA-Stiftung, 2009).

<sup>28</sup> August Bebel (1840-1913) was a German social democrat and one of the founders of the Social Democratic Party of Germany

the piano, and his mother sang as well. It is known they could not afford a piano, and Hanns reported that he learned music from books and scores. His first attempt at composition was a small piece for his grandmother's birthday, when he was six years old, and his second attempt while attending Staatsgymnasium.<sup>29</sup> He wrote incidental music for Gerhard Hauptmann's play *Hanneles Himmelfahrt* (1893), although this music did not survive. From 1916 to 1918, he served in a Hungarian regiment during World War I, while still composing; one of his pieces during this time was the oratorio *Gegen den Krieg*. He composed music in World War I in trenches, hospitals, and sanatoria (Blake 1995, 11-12) After the war, he was admitted into the New Vienna Conservatory. The teaching standards were not to his liking, so he went to Arnold Schönberg (1874-1951) in 1919. Eisler took composition lessons from Schönberg from 1919 to 1923. The pieces he composed during this period were chromatic and had rich harmonies (Blake 2008)

In 1925, he moved to Berlin, where he was offered a teaching position at the Klindworth-Scharwenka Conservatory. His compositional technique incorporated the harmonic style of his earlier works, which included augmented triads and seventh chords with major and minor thirds. He also started using twelve-tone technique as a method for controlling rich harmonies. Also during this time, he developed strong Marxist beliefs, and in 1926 he joined the German Communist Party. He had a quarrel with Schönberg in March of 1926 over the development of new music. Eisler felt that it was "boring", especially "music festival music," and felt that it lacked social relevance. Schönberg took this as a personal attack on his own music, which started a feud between the two, during which they wrote several argumentative letters to one another (Betz 1982, 40). Although they did not speak to each other for some time after that, Schönberg considered him one of his best pupils, along the lines of Alban Berg (1885-1935) and

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<sup>29</sup> In one of his interviews with Nathan Notowicz, he states he was about eleven when he composed a piece for piano trio for violin, cello, and piano (Notowicz 1971, 31)



Anton Webern (1883-1945). Eisler in return always held Schönberg in great esteem. For Schönberg's 70th birthday, he revised the instrumentation of his piece *Regen* in homage to *Pierrot Lunaire* and renamed it *Vierzehn Arten, den Regen zu beschreiben* (Fourteen Ways of Describing the Rain, 1941). (Feisst 1999, 93).

His break from Schönberg occurred the same year his father died. This was a time when Eisler was going through a period of self-doubt and depression, which is shown in a diary he kept at the time. This made him re-examine his compositional techniques, and he now wanted to compose music that would serve the worker's movement. He became a music critic of the publication *Die rote Fahne*, which helped him form his political theories. (Levi 1998.) Three transitional works he composed during this time were *Tagebuch* op. 9 (1926), *Heine-Chöre* op. 10 (1925), and *Zeitungsausschnitte* op. 11 (1925-27). Many of his compositions during this time were in minor keys, but interestingly, he keeps them in a positive light. (Betz 1982, 45.)

In 1929, he met Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), which would begin a deep friendship that lasted until Brecht's death in 1956. He would provide the music to many of his plays, such as *die Maßnahme* (1930), *die Mutter* (1930-31), and *Schweyk im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (c. 1943). They went through many of the same tribulations, such as the economic difficulties that occurred during the Weimar Germany, their works being banned during the Nazi period, their Hollywood Exile, and dealing with the censorship of their music in the GDR in the 1950s. The many plays they collaborated on together showed their deep and personal friendship, which is not apparent in the many other composers with whom Brecht collaborated during this time (Jackson 2003, 7).

Between 1933 and 1935, Hanns Eisler visited the United States and composed film scores in Vienna, France, Belgium, and London. He collaborated with Brecht on several compositions, and the pieces mainly focused on anti-fascism. Such pieces include *Deutsche Sinfonie* (1935) and *Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe* (1934). In 1938, he settled in the United

States, where he was to stay in until 1948. During this time, it was not possible in Europe to combine music and politics, because the arts were heavily regulated by the Nazi regime. He could not flee to the Soviet Union, because political tensions were high. They had already executed two of his friends, Sergei Tretiakov (1892-1939) and Ernst Ottwalt (1901-1943), both of whom had collaborated with him on *Kuhle Wampe* (1932). When he first came to the United States, he was not planning on staying past six months - the length of time that his visa allowed. He faced many bureaucratic obstacles when entering the US, because of his left-wing background. He also had many financial hardships, due to difficulty in finding a stable teaching position or any other jobs. (Betz 1982, 166-167.) He held several teaching posts, all relatively short, including positions at the New School for Social Research in New York, the Mexico Conservatory, and the University of Southern California. The film music industry was thriving while Eisler was in exile, and he received a grant to study music for films, which allowed him to write *Composing for the Films* (1947). He co-wrote this book with Theodor W. Adorno, who also had a grant from the Rockefeller foundation for a similar project, the Princeton Radio Research Project (Mayer 1977, 142-143).

In March of 1939, when his visa expired, he fled to Mexico as a temporary solution, so that he might return to the US at a later date when he could renew his visa. He was able to return to New York, with the aid of the New School for Social Research (which aided many people in exile by means of hiring them) (Betz 1982, 174). While he taught at the New School, he gained important contacts, such as Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977) and Charles Laughton (1899-1962), which facilitated his move to Hollywood in 1942. While in California, he taught at the University of Southern California and collaborated with Bertolt Brecht, who was also in exile in Hollywood at the time. (Jackson 2003, 8.)

In 1947, he was questioned by the HUAC about his affiliation with the communist party. Specifically, he was asked about several pieces that made reference to communist ideas, such as *die Maßnahme* (1930), *The Comintern March* (1933), and *Workers of the World, Unite!* (1935) (Hearings 1947, 31-32, 48-49). Many of his prominent friends protested the hearings, including Charlie Chaplin, Thomas Mann (1875-1955), Albert Einstein (1879-1955), Woodie Guthrie (1912-1967), Aaron Copland (1900-1990), Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962) and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), protested Eisler's unfair treatment during the hearings, but were not successful in assisting him in receiving a fair trial. Eisler was released from the custody of the court, but under the threat of deportation, he and his wife were allowed to leave on their own accord in March of 1948. His unfair treatment during his hearings before the HUAC may have not only been due to anti-Communist sentiments during this period, but also anti-German – and general 'anti-foreigner' – sentiments that accrued during the 1930s, as mentioned in Chapter Two.

Eisler visited Vienna and Prague before settling in East Germany in 1950. His final years in East Germany were spent composing many film scores and writing about modern music. He felt that applied music, which is music for plays, films, television and for public events, as the way to depart from the style of late romantic music. He wrote several books on the subject of modern music, including *Musik und Politik* (1924) and *Einiges über die Dummheit in der Musik* (1950). In 1956, Brecht passed away unexpectedly, and Eisler never fully recovered from this ordeal (Betz 1982, 230). Eisler died on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1962, after years of depression and declining health. He is buried next to Brecht in the Dorotheenstadt Cemetery in Berlin. His obituary in the *New York Times*, although thorough, seems to focus on his communist tendencies. The sub-caption of the obituary reads "Wrote East German Anthem – Brother Fled US in '49" (New York Times 1962). The article also goes on to defend Eleanor Roosevelt's

support for him in his hearings before the HUAC, stating that she was unaware of his communist background, and she did similar actions all the time for people she did not know Ibid., 1962).

#### 4.3. Paul Dessau

Paul Dessau (1894-1979) was not as overt in his political ideology as Hanns Eisler, but still felt that politics played an important part in music. He was born on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1894, in Hamburg to Jewish parents, Sally Dessau (1849-1923) and Louise Dessau née Burchard (1863-1942). His musical influences started early in his childhood. His grandfather was the cantor in the synagogue in Hamburg, and his father, Sally Dessau (1849-1923), also had desired to become a musician, but instead opted for working as a tobacconist. Sally Dessau did perform at home and sang Lieder, which encouraged the young Paul to pursue musical endeavors. (Hennenberg 1965, 9.) His uncle, Bernhard Dessau (1861-1923), the concertmaster of the Royal Opera House Unter den Linden, gave him a violin when he was six years old, and he began performing as a soloist when he was eleven (Hennenberg 2009.) He moved to Berlin in 1909 to study violin at the Klindworth-Schwarwenka Conservatory with Florian Zajic (1853-1926), who later told him that he was not suited for playing the violin (Hennenberg 1965, 9). Wanting to continue his musical pursuits, he began studying composition and conducting. He studied piano and score studies with Eduard Brehm at the conservatory, and this influenced some of his first compositional attempts. He also studied composition with Max Loewengard (1860-1915) at the conservatory, who was a critic and a theorist and who wrote several textbooks on harmony, musical analysis, and counterpoint (Hix 2006, 2 )

As a student, Dessau composed many Lieder that drew on stylistic traits from the Romantic era. His *Vier Lieder* Op 2 (1912) were settings of poems by Theodor Storm (1817-1888), Otto Ernst (1862-1926), and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832). (Ibid ) During this

time as a student, he also showed an affinity for composing for the theater. He composed an opera fragment, *Giuditta*, and regularly attended operas at the Hamburg Stadttheater. He became familiar with the conductors at the Hamburg Stadttheater and landed a job as vocal coach after his graduation from the Klindworth-Schwarwenka Conservatory in 1912. (Ibid.) He was able to work with great singers of the time, including Enrico Caruso (1872-1921). He was also able to work with the conductors Felix Weingartner (1863-1942) and Arthur Nikisch (1855-1922). Dessau's cousin, Max Winterfeld - better known as Jean Gilbert (1879-1942), a prominent composer of operettas - put him in touch with the Tivoli Theater in Bremen, and helped him obtain a post as Kapellmeister in 1914. (Hennenberg 2009.)

His first compositional success came from his *Klaviersonate* that was premiered by Bruno Eisner (1884-1978) in Berlin. The sonata was a cardinal piece in his oeuvre, marking his first creative period. Other pieces he composed during this time include *Verkündigen* (Proclamation, 1914), *Helle Nacht* (Clear Night, 1914), *Schlummerlied eines Landsturmmannes* (Slumber song of the Militia Man, 1914), and *Betrachtung* (Reflection, 1914). (Hix 2006, 3 )

Dessau served in World War I starting in June of 1915 until its end on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918. He was drafted into military service for the 84<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment in Schleswig-Holstein, and spent half a year in the trenches on the French front. After an injury, he spent the rest of his time in the war in a military band (Reinhold 14, 1995). He played the tenor horn, tuba, and the drums during this time. This experience helped him later with his compositions (Dessau 1974, 123)

Like many soldiers, this came as an awakening to Dessau. He began to think of war as a crime, and he, like many others involved in the war, felt that capitalism was the cause of the war. The war revealed to him the *Schreckensherrschaft des entfesselten Militarismus* or the "reign of terror of unleashed militarism". (Hennenberg 1965, 11 ) He felt that the war had

changed him, but it had not yet made him a Marxist (Dessau 1974, 19) He would not fully adapt to the ideas of communism until after World War II.

After the war, he acquired a job at the Hamburger Kammerspiele, where Dessau worked as a resident composer and conductor. He composed his first theater piece during this time, *Lancelot and Sanderein* (1919). (Hix 2006, 4.) He also conducted opera in Cologne (1919-23), Mainz (1923-24), and Berlin (1925-26). His success with his Violin Concertino, for which he won the Schott Prize in 1925, led him to abandon conducting in favor of composing (Hennenberg 2009.) The works he composed at this time were greatly influenced by the Romantic era, and he composed many Lieder including his *Vier Lieder* Op. 2 (1914), which had songs set to the poems of Theodor Storm (1817-1888), Otto Ernst (1862-1926), and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) During the 1920s, with the growing demand for original scores for silent films, his previous experience in the theater assisted him in writing film scores. He composed music for films with Richard Tauber (1891-1948) and symphonic scores for the films of Arnold Fanck (1889-1974). (Hennenberg 2009 ) He served as musical director in a movie theater that was owned by his uncle, where he created several through-composed scores for short documentaries and animated films, which were influenced by the “Neue Sachlichkeit”<sup>30</sup> movement. During the rise of the Nazis, and having been born to Jewish parents, he was forced into exile in Paris, where he continued to work on film music At this point, as many other composers living during this time, he had experienced much political distress: World War I, the Holocaust, the economic problems plaguing Germany at this time and World War II He did not focus on politics with these problems beforehand, because he was busy with his many conducting jobs, but during World War II, he began to embrace communism and composed

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<sup>30</sup> The “Neue Sachlichkeit” movement was a movement in the 1920s against expressionism This movement relied heavily on structure, form, counterpoint, and design It strived to express the joy of music and music-making and wanted the music to be understood by the common people in the sense of functional (or applied) music

some of his first political works, including the songs “Die Räuberballade vom Pierre, dem roten Coquillard” (The Robber Ballad of Pierre, the Red Bandit, 1931) and “Kaffeeholer ‘raus; ein ernstes Soldatenlied” (Coffee Carrier; a Serious Soldier Song, 1931). (Hix 2006, 6.)

His works during his time in Paris tended to focus on the Jews’ suffering in Germany. He edited a piece he had composed the year before, *Palastinensisches Hirtenlied* for vocals and piano (Palestinian Sheppard’s Song, 1932), published under the title *Schirat roe*, 1932) It was published again in 1933 as *Hebraisches Hirtenlied* (Hebrew Sheppard’s Song) for string trio and vocals. (Reinhold 1995, 218 ) He composed the score for the film *Awodah* (1935) by Helmar Lerski (1871-1956), which drew on the tradition of the Jewish synagogue that is prevalent in his Symphony no. 1 (1926), and the music for the dramatic oratorio *Hagadah* (1936), for which Max Brod<sup>31</sup> (1884-1968) wrote the text. (Hennenberg 2009 )

Dessau also began to study twelve-tone technique during this time. He took composition lessons with René Leibowitz<sup>32</sup> (1913-1972), a music theorist, teacher, conductor, and composer of Polish-Latvian origin. Leibowitz claimed to have met Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) and to have been a pupil of Anton Webern (1883-1945), although this has never been proved, and it is thought that he became familiar with their music through his study of their scores. (Meine 2009) The twelve-tone works that he composed in Paris include *Les voix* for soprano and orchestra (1936), which was later performed at the International Society of Contemporary Music (ISCM) International Music Festival in 1941, *Zwölfton-Versuch: Fünf Studien für Klavier* (Twelve-tone Attempts: Five Studies for Piano, 1937), and *Guernica (nach Picasso)* (Guernica [after Picasso], 1938) He also set his first piece to a text by Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), *Kampflied der schwarzen Strohhute* (1936), although he did not play it for Brecht

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<sup>31</sup> Max Brod is a Czech-Jewish composer, journalist, and author who is predominantly known for his affiliation with Franz Kafka (1883-1924)

<sup>32</sup> René Leibowitz is significant for his diffusion of Schoenberg’s music after World War II. He also wrote *Schoenberg et son école* (Paris, 1947), the first writing on Schoenberg in a language other than German

until 1942, when they met in New York. (Reinhold 1995, 219-220.) He had met Brecht briefly in 1926 at the Baden-Baden Music Festival, but did not feel he was adequately developed as a musician to speak in-depth with him (Hermand 1984, 237-238). In 1938, he set music to Brecht's theater piece *99%* (later called *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reichs* or "Fear and Misery of the Third Reich") This piece discussed fascism in Germany, in which German propaganda said that 99 percent of the people were for Hitler, when in fact it was 99 percent of the people that feared Hitler. (Hennenberg 1965, 39.)

In 1939, Dessau fled to the U.S., when France declared war on Germany. Like the many other musicians that fled Germany during World War II, he found a very different musical culture in the U.S. Compared to the positions he had in Europe, he was forced to work numerous menial jobs in the U.S. He worked as a copyist and private piano teacher (Reinhold 1995, 211-212). He also taught music in a New York orphanage, composition to the Young Men's Hebrew Association, and even found himself working for a chicken farm in 1943 (Hennenberg 1965, 33). His experience was not made any easier by the news that his mother was murdered in the Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1942. (Reinhold 1995, 212.) There were, however, several positive aspects to his stay in New York: Several of his pieces were performed in public arenas. His friend, Georg Alexan, who was the secretary of the Tribune for Free German Literature and Art in America, set up a meeting with Dessau and Brecht, at which Dessau was able to play *Kampflied der schwarzen Strohuhne* (Hennenberg 1965, 45.) Brecht liked the music, and included it in his program on March 6th, 1943, in the Studio Theater of the New School of Social Research (Hennenberg 1963, 476). His *Psalm No. 3* was also performed on February 12th, 1940, in a concert at the Modern Museum of Art, which was organized by the League of Composers (Reinhold 1995, 63)



In October of 1943, at the advice of Brecht, Dessau moved to Hollywood (Reinhold 1995, 212). He worked for a brief time as a gardener, but also found work composing for films, as he had in the Weimar Republic in the 1920s. (Dessau 1974, 240.) He worked for several studios in Hollywood, including Warner Brothers, where Arnold Schoenberg also worked. He assisted Schoenberg in re-typing his lectures in a larger font, which enabled him to read them with more ease, as Schoenberg had bad eyesight. This allowed Schoenberg to read his lectures in Chicago, and therefore his teachings were spread to a larger audience. (Hermand 1984, 235-236 ) He also collaborated with Brecht on several pieces, including *Das deutsche Miserere* (The German Miserere), dedicated to Paul Robeson (1943), *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder: Chronik aus dem Dreißigjährige Krieg* (Mother Courage and her Children: A Chronical of the Thirty Years' War, 1946), and *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* (The Good Man from Sezuan, 1947) (Hennenberg 1963, 447-452, 468-469).

In 1948, Dessau returned to Germany and settled in East Germany in 1949. This was a result of the Second Congress of the *Kulturbund* in the GDR, at which they were attempting to court German intellectuals who were in exile (Calico 1999, 40.) Dessau continued to work with Brecht, who had been black-listed in Hollywood, and moved to the GDR in 1947. Their collaborations during their time in the GDR include *Die Ausnahme und die Regel* ("The Exception and the Rule", 1948), *Herr Puntila und seine Knecht Matti* (1949, "Mr. Puntila and his Man Matti" ), *Die Verurteilung Lukullus* or *Das Verhör des Lukullus* ("The Condemnation of Lukullus" or "The Questioning of Lukullus", 1949), *Der Hoffmeister* ( "The Tutor", 1950), *Herrnberger Bericht* ( "The Report from Herrnburg", 1951), *Mann ist Mann* ( "Man Equals Man" or "A Man's a Man", 1951), *Don Juan* (1953), and *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis* ("The Caucasian Chalk-Circle", 1953-1954) (Hennenberg 1963, 482-483). One of the most well-known pieces on which they collaborated in the GDR was *Das Verhör des Lukullus*. Part of the fame of this opera deals with

the dictated-censorship by the SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands or the Socialist Unity Party of Germany - the ruling party of the GDR). At the meeting of the Abteilung Kultur of the Central Committee in March of 1951, a report was presented by Ernst Hermann Meyer (1905-1988), discussing the opera. He felt the opera was too formalist and described Dessau's music as having "excessive dissonance". He also compared the opera to "The Great Friendship" by Muradeli, which was criticized in the Soviet Union for similar reasons. (Meyer, quoted in Calico 1999, 60.) The opera was edited and released in 1952 as *Die Verurteilung des Lukullus* (Hix 2006, 14)

Although Brecht's death was detrimental to Dessau, Dessau began incorporating more avant-garde procedures. He was criticized for the dissonant nature of *Hymne auf den Beginn einer neuen Geschichte der Menschheit* ("Hymn on the Beginning of a New History of Mankind", 1959) and *Appell der Arbeiterklasse* ("Appeal of the Working Class", 1961). (Hennenberg 2009 ) Since Dessau had established himself as a composer before he moved to the GDR, he was allowed to compose atonal music without fear of any significant ramifications. The SED was afraid to give any severe punishment to famous composers for fear of losing their people's trust. (Tischer 2005, 7-9.) Dessau took advantage of this political power and used to teach young composers avant-garde techniques (Hennenberg 2009)

Dessau became a member of the *Akademie der Künste* in 1952 and served as its Vice-President from 1957 to 1962. During this time he taught both as a professor at the *Akademie der Künste* (he was appointed as a professor in 1959) and as a teacher at a primary school in Zeuthen from 1962 to 1975 (Hennenberg 2009 ) During the latter part of his life (1960-1979), he composed several operas, including *Puntilla* (1956-1957, not performed until 1966), *Lanzelot* (1967-1969), *Einstein* (1969-1972), and *Leonce and Lena* (1976-1979) (Reinhold 1995, 229-235).

Paul Dessau died on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1979. One of the most influential composers of East Germany, he won many awards, including an honorary doctorate from Leipzig University in 1974 and four National Prizes of the GDR (1953, 1956, 1965, 1974 ) (Reinhold 1995, 212 ) His obituary in the *New York Times*, while not as thorough as Eisler's, is more positive. It does not make any mention of a communist ideology, and even somewhat denounces the government of the GDR for censoring his work "The Trial of Lucullus", stating that the East German press condemned the opera for its 'pacifist libretto and formalist music' (New York Times 1979). This difference could be the 17- year difference in the date of their deaths, but it could also be the effect that the HUAC had on Eisler's death.

#### 4.4. Kurt Schwaen

Kurt Schwaen (1909-2007) was not as politically radical as Eisler and did not compose as many political pieces as Dessau. Schwaen, like the other two composers discussed in this thesis, was drawn to communism because of the anti-fascist ideas that the Communist Party provided. He was born on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1909, in what is now Katowice, Poland (formerly Kattowitz, which was part of the Prussian Province of Silesia at the time of Schwaen's birth). He was born to a merchant family, but at an early age he showed an aptitude for improvising on the piano (Hanke 2004, 1 ). His mother, Emilie Schwaen, spent much time with her children, Hanne, Kurt, and Georg. She took over her husband Arthur Schwaen's duties as shopkeeper during World War I, and she had to convince her husband to let Kurt take music lessons. Although Arthur Schwaen was not enthusiastic about his son's interest, he was tolerant of his son's musical capacity (Kraußer 2001 ). He started piano and violin lessons in 1919. In 1924, he started taking organ lessons from Fritz Lubrich, Jr. (1888-1971), who was a student of Max Reger. Lubrich taught him piano, organ, and the fundamentals of composition (Hanke 2004, 1 ). In a

documentary of Kurt Schwaen, directed by Jochen Krauß, Kurt recalls a story of when he was an adolescent. Some childhood friends asked him to play the *Triumphant March* from *Aida* by Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) on the church organ. He had the keys to the church and started playing the piece. The superintendent came and scolded him, telling him he had disgraced the church by playing the secular music within its confines. At the next lesson, Lubrich does not say anything about the incident to Schwaen, but asks that he return the organ keys. (Krauß 2001.)

From 1929 through 1933, Schwaen studied musicology, art history, philosophy, and German at universities in Breslau (today known as Wrocław, Poland) and Berlin. His professors during this time included the German musicologists Curt Sachs (1881-1959), Arnold Schering (1877-1941), Walther Vetter (1891-?), and Friedrich Blume (1893-1975) (Hanke 2004, 1.) The symphony orchestra in Breslau was conservative and only played music from the Classical and Romantic periods. The opera group in Breslau performed more progressive pieces, including *King David* (1921) by Arthur Honegger (1892-1955). Schwaen was so impressed by *King David* that he followed the touring opera group to Warschau (Warsaw), where his previous teacher, Franz Lubrich, conducted the opera. Franz Lubrich lent Schwaen the score for him to study. Schwaen would visit Lubrich during the winter break to play him the German dances that he composed. Lubrich recommended the pieces to German radio stations and was able to get a few movements of these pieces played (Krauß 2001.)

Kurt Schwaen did not acquire further formal compositional lessons during his college years, but he was greatly influenced by Hanns Eisler, whom he met in 1932 when he attended a seminar at MASCH (*Marxistische Arbeiterschule* or the Marxist Worker's School)<sup>33</sup>. During this time, he joined an anti-fascist student group and soon afterward became a member of the German Communist Party. In 1936, he was sentenced in Germany to three years in prison for

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<sup>33</sup> The Marxist Worker's School was a school situated in East Berlin. It was free of charge, and would teach topics in a broad sense, so that the lectures were understood by anyone who cared to attend the lecture.

the *Vorbereitung eines hochverräterischen Unternehmens*, or preparation of an endeavor of high treason. In fact, he was only associating with other communists. (Schwaen 2005, 279.) The prison where he was held was in Luckau, a city that is now in the district of Dahme-Spreewald in Brandenburg. He shared his three-square-meter prison cell with two other prisoners, and he started giving French lessons to his fellow inmates. He was asked to lead the prison band and composed two pieces while imprisoned, one of which, *Musikalische Episode* for the piano, he performed at a Christmas concert. The band disbanded after one year, and the compositions were seized by prison officials. (Kraußer 2001.)

Schwaen was released in 1938 and shortly afterward was invited to a recital of Gertrud Wienecke's dance studio -- a group of dancers that performed *Ausdruckstanz* or German Expressionist dance. He had never been acquainted with this genre of dance, and he later became the piano accompanist for the dance studio. Many of the dancers of the studio had been prisoners of war, so there was a nondiscriminatory atmosphere in which they could talk about their experiences. This was not commonplace in Nazi Germany during the beginning years of World War II. During this time, he became good friends with Oda Schottmüller (1905-1943), who was both a sculptor and a dancer. She was a part of the *Schulze-Boysen* resistance group,<sup>34</sup> and she was later arrested and sentenced to death by the Nazi party. Before she was executed, she was able to send out a *Kassiber*<sup>35</sup> to a fellow group member of *Schulze-Boysen*, telling him to relay anecdotal stories of the group to Schwaen, knowing he would appreciate the humanitarian and personal aspects of the association. (Schwaen 2005, 35.) Schwaen also met Hedwig Stumpp

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<sup>34</sup> The *Schulze-Boysen* group was one group out of three Soviet espionage rings called the *Rote Kapelle* (Red Orchestra). The *Rote Kapelle* consisted of the *Trepper* group, the *Schule-Boysen* group and the *Rote Drei* (The Red Three). The *Schulze-Boysen* group was named after Harro and Libertas Schulze-Boysen who were communist sympathizers and fought to thwart the German invasion of Russia. (Harro was a first lieutenant on the Luftwaffe Leadership Staff, and therefore had access to secret documents of the *Wehrmacht*.) (German Resistance Memorial Center 2008.)

<sup>35</sup> *Kassiber* or "secret message" was a way of communication by prisoners. It consisted of messages written discretely on scraps of paper to be sent outside of prison.

(d. 1976) in this dance studio, whom he later married in 1942. Stumpp directed the dancers in Gertrude Wienicke's studio, and also children dance groups. They remained married until her death in 1976 (Schwaen 2005, 307 )

After World War II, Schwaen played a great role in rebuilding the musical culture in Germany. For several years after the war, he composed many pieces for amateur music groups, choirs, music schools, and chamber ensembles. In 1948, he met Bertolt Brecht at a reception in the Haus der Kultur in Weißensee. Brecht introduced Schwaen to the *Lehrstück*<sup>36</sup>, and they collaborated together on *Hans Pfriem oder Kuhnheit zahlt sich aus* (1953) and *Die Horatier und die Kuratier* (1955-1956). Wera (b.1929) and Claus Küchenmeister (1930), prominent writers in East Germany and Brecht's *Meisterschuler* (master students) at the time, edited the *Hans Pfriem* script. They were in charge of finding old plays and adapting them for the Berlin Ensemble and found *Hans Pfriem* as a 16<sup>th</sup> century *Volkstück*. Brecht had written *Die Horatier und die Kuratier* in 1934 and 1935 in collaboration with Hanns Eisler, who never finished the music for the piece. This piece was a Marxist lesson for children and was meant to educate young people on justifiable and unjustifiable wars; Brecht felt this was a necessary lesson in Germany as the Nazis were coming to power. Brecht fell ill in 1956, as the piece was in its finishing stages, and never lived to see the piece performed. At the time of Schwaen's death in 2007, he was the last living composer to have worked with Brecht in his final years. Although these pieces were not as celebrated as his earlier works, they still purveyed Brecht's aesthetic and ideological style (Tabbert-Jones 2004, 73.) Schwaen continued to compose works for children and composed prominent East German children's theater pieces, such as *König Midas* (1958), *Pinnochios Abenteuer* (1969-1970), on which he collaborated again with Wera and Claus Küchenmeister,

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<sup>36</sup> The *Lehrstück*, a genre developed by Brecht, is an amateur performance. The purpose of which is to educate the participants (through performance and discussion), rather than to engage the attention of an audience. A *Lehrstück* often attempted to teach a Marxist moral or lesson. (Kemp 2009 )

and *Alle helfen Happi* (1971-1973). He also founded the AG Kindermusiktheater in Leipzig in 1973 with Ina Iske, who in 1980 became his second wife.

Schwaen also composed film music, including one of the most prominent films of the GDR, *Der Fall Gleiwitz* (1961). The film details the events occurring during the “Gleiwitz Incident”, an attack occurring on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1939, on the radio station *Sender Gleiwitz*. The radio station was located in Upper Silesia, Germany, which was later renamed Gliwice and is now located in Poland. It involved a group of Nazi soldiers dressed as Polish soldiers who overtook the German radio station and broadcasted anti-German sentiments in order to prove that the Polish were aggressors towards Germany. (Kirk 2002, 140.) In choosing the composer for the film score, the librettist of the film, Günter Rucker (1924-2008), wanted someone who lived during the time of the “Gleiwitz Incident” and who could compose non-pretentiously and work directly with the subject matter. Schwaen fit this profile and was asked to compose the music for the film. He incorporated a popular song of the time, “Enjoy Life”, and used it ironically in the film. (Krauß 2001.) *Der Fall Gleiwitz* was a very prominent film in the GDR and even won acclaim in West Germany as the best DEFA film. Rucker later collaborated with Schwaen on the first radio opera in the GDR, *Fetzers Flucht*, which later became a TV opera. The radio version premiered in the GDR before the building of the wall, and the TV version was aired afterward the wall was built. The radio opera was successful, and was awarded a diploma from the “International Broadcasting Organization” in 1959, which was signed by Dmitri Shostakovich, who was one of the judges (Schüler 1995, 172). Although the two versions were essentially the same, the many critics did not approve of the television opera<sup>37</sup> (Schüler 2004, 226-227). Many people criticized Rucker at this time, but Schwaen remained friends with him. Schwaen

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<sup>37</sup> For a more comprehensive discussion of the different receptions the Radio Opera and the TV Opera of *Fetzers Flucht*, please refer to Nico Schüler’s “Socialist Realism and Socialist Anti-Realism in a Single Composition? The Rise and Fall of the Opera *Fetzers Flucht* (1959/1963) by Kurt Schwaen” (2004).

risked supporting Rücker at a great risk to his reputation at the *Akademie der Künste* and in society in the GDR in general, and this showed great integrity in the composer (Kraußer 2001 )

With several prominent pieces in his oeuvre, Schwaen became very well-known in the GDR. When the wall came down in 1989, many composers were unable to have their works commissioned and performed. The West Germans looked down upon music from East Germany as “abnormal” and not a valid art form<sup>38</sup> (Tischer 2005, 2). During this hard economic time for the former East Germany, Schwaen still had credibility so that musicians would commission his works. He published over fifty pieces after the wall fell and before his death in 2007.

Schwaen’s oeuvre spans seven and a half decades and includes 621 pieces ranging from choral music, piano pieces, chamber music, orchestral works, opera, and works for the ballet. His compositions have been performed in the United States, Japan, Belgium, Germany, Russia, Bulgaria, Austria, and Switzerland (See Appendix 7). The international acclaim of his music is not common for an East German composer who lived and performed before and after the reunification and shows his international appeal and his compositional excellence.

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<sup>38</sup> Tischer describes the differences in perception of West and East German music as “normal” and “abnormal”, respectively



## 5 EMPIRICAL STUDIES

### 5.1. Impetus for Empirical Studies

In the first chapter, I attempt to summarize reception studies by presenting examples and citing particular reasons that Calico and Jackson attributed to the lack of focus on Eisler in American music scholarship. The writings show that when he is mentioned in academia, he is associated with other historical figures, such as his brother, Gerhart Eisler, his teacher Schönberg, or his collaborator, Bertolt Brecht. The studies presented in this chapter will attempt to further examine these assertions and deduce whether there has been any change in the “Eisler Question”. The studies will also discuss whether the lack of attention paid to Eisler relates to his being a composer from the GDR, through studying the reception of Paul Dessau and Kurt Schwaen.

The empirical study on course curricula in universities will provide evidence as to how music from the GDR is treated on a university level, therefore how it will affect future research on the subject. The study on symphonies will show how the music is presented to a concert audience, which includes not only academics, but the general public as well. Finally, the interviews conducted will bring a German perspective from people of various backgrounds, including composition, performance, music education, and musicology.

## 5.2. Empirical Studies on University Course Curricula

For this study, professors from 74 universities listed on the American Musicological Society list of graduate programs (see Appendix 1) were asked if they had ever taught a course geared towards music of the GDR, or a course with a section dedicated to this topic (see Appendices 2 and 3). The surveys were sent to musicology departments as well as German studies departments.<sup>39</sup> German studies departments were included due to their inclination to teach interdisciplinary subjects. The professors surveyed were heads of their respective departments, who would, if necessary forward my survey to professors who would be better suited to answer the question. The following table shows the number of academic departments that responded that they do include music from the GDR in their course curriculum.

**Table 1: Departments that Incorporated Music from the GDR into their Course Curriculum**

Departments Surveyed	Number of Departments the Survey was sent to	Number of departments to respond	Departments that incorporated music from the GDR into their course curricula
Musicology	74	58	14 (24%)
German	71	48	14 (29%)
Total	145	106	28 (26%)

This information might suggest a lack of incorporating music from the GDR into university course curriculum. If one were to conduct a similar study on more ‘canonic’ composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (i.e. Schoenberg, Webern, Berg, Stravinsky, Hindemith, etc.) the study of composers from the GDR might appear that these composers are not taught often. However, the study does show a substantial percentage of the total universities questioned. 14 (or 24%) of the 58 musicology departments and 14 (or 29%) of the 48 German studies

<sup>39</sup> In this study, there 74 musicology departments and 71 German departments surveyed

departments responded that they did teach music from the GDR. It should also be noted that 13 (or 17%) of the 78 departments that indicated they did not teach music from the GDR did voluntarily state they had professors who were knowledgeable in this area, had supervised a dissertation on music from the GDR, or were interested in teaching it in the future. I will now discuss how some of these departments structure their courses that include music from the GDR, to show how this information is conveyed

Out of the 28 academic departments that did indicate they included music from the GDR in their course curriculum, 18 professors included at least composer's name of their own volition, whom they taught in their courses. The most frequent name mentioned was Hanns Eisler (11 times), followed by Dessau (7 times), and Brecht (7 times) Other names mentioned include Wolf Biermann (b. 1936).<sup>40</sup>

Two of the most extensive teachings on Eisler mentioned in the survey responses include a graduate seminar at one university, where the students traveled to Berlin to attend a conference on Eisler and visited sites where Eisler worked. Another university offered courses entitled "Music Since 1900" and "Exiled Composers in America: 1933-1950", which covered Eisler extensively and treated him equally with Webern and Berg as an important student of Schoenberg and discussed Eisler's reception in America (or lack thereof), and how this pertains to him being a communist. These courses show a very thorough understanding of Eisler and a desire to incorporate him into a university course curriculum. The mention of his student Wolf Biermann implies that Eisler is independently a prominent historical figure.

The departments that incorporate Dessau into their coursework, while not as thorough as the Eisler courses, still show a substantial appreciation for the composer. While the departments that reported including Dessau in their curriculum are being taught in connection

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<sup>40</sup> Biermann is a folk singer who was a former student of Eisler

with Brecht, they also include him in other contexts. Dessau is normally taught in conjunction with the censorship issues of *Das Verhör des Lukullus*, but one university discussed him in the course entitled “Exiled Composers in America: 1933-1950” (which also discussed Eisler, as mentioned above), and another course discussed not only Dessau’s music during the GDR and his collaborations with Brecht, but also discussed his earlier *Kampflieder*<sup>41</sup> and cabaret songs.

The trend in discussing composers from the GDR in conjunction with Brecht does not completely consume studies of music from the GDR. While half of the German departments surveyed indicated that they taught music from the GDR in conjunction with Brecht, it was not the only way in which this music was taught. Several departments voluntarily reported that they included folk and pop music, including Wolf Biermann, who, as mentioned above, was a student of Eisler.

It is also interesting to note several of the musicology courses (7 out of the 14 who responded yes) voluntarily stated they taught music from the GDR in a political context. This means they would teach the music in courses labeled “Music and Politics”, “Music from the Cold War Era”, or they would refer to the music in terms such as “communist”. This is in contrast to including the music within a certain time period, such as “Music or Literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> century” More German professors stated that they taught music of the GDR within these courses.

As a whole, these studies show a substantial interest in music from the GDR. This suggests growth in the field of Eisler studies since Calico and Jackson published their respective pieces in 2002 and 2003, because the context in which professors discussed how they taught Eisler are more open than either Calico’s or Jackson’s writings from 2002 and 2003 suggest In

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<sup>41</sup> *Kampflieder* or “fighting songs” are songs that Dessau composed after he joined the Communist Party, which contain a political message. His most popular is *Thalmannekolonne* or the *Thalman Convoy*

contrast to Jackson's writing, several professors included figures such as Eisler in their courses, and some of the departments that did not include music from the GDR voluntarily welcomed the idea for future courses of music from the GDR. This supports Calico's assertion that universities are somewhat of a haven for discussing such topics, because half of the musicology courses that indicated they taught music from the GDR voluntarily stated they taught the courses in a political context.

### 5.3 Empirical Study on Symphony Orchestras

The purpose of this empirical study is to show how the music of Eisler, Dessau, and Schwaen is treated outside of an academic setting, and for a public audience. A list of 40 symphony orchestras was compiled from the website for the League of American Orchestras (see Appendix 4). Ten of the symphonies chosen are included in the "Top Ten" symphonies in the United States, as named by critic Michael Anthony in the *Star Tribune*, the "Top Ten" being an extension of the established "Big Five" (Anthony 2009). The rest of the list of symphony orchestras was chosen at random. The "Top Ten" are comprised of the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the San Francisco Symphony. One might question the choice of orchestras because respective oeuvres of Eisler, Dessau, and Schwaen include a variety of genres, including cabaret music, film music, and chamber music. Genres of this nature are not always performed by symphony orchestras. I addressed this issue by conducting an additional search on the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (or ASCAP) website (ASCAP Website 2009) and by including information on performances by Falko Steinbach, a pianist who performs Eisler's and Schwaen's piano works in the United States.

For the empirical study, symphony orchestra librarians were asked if the ensembles had ever performed music by Hanns Eisler, Paul Dessau, or Kurt Schwaen within the past ten years. In many cases, the records went back several decades, in which case more data could be presented. In the survey of the ensembles, very few performances were found of any of these composers. Out of the 40 symphony orchestras questioned, 31 responded to the survey. Out of these 31 ensembles, four (13%) reported performances by these composers, and the Minnesota Orchestra's library contained a copy of Dessau's *Funf Lehrstucke zu Tiergedichten* (*Five "Teaching Pieces" to Animal Poems*) and Schwaen's *Variationen uber Grun sind alle meine Kleider* (*Variations on "All of my Clothes are Green"*). The ensembles that did perform pieces by these three composers were symphonies listed in the "Big Five" (Anthony 2002). Four performances of compositions by Eisler and two performances of music by Dessau were founded. Dessau's *In Memoriam Bertolt Brecht* (1956-57), which was premiered in the U S by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in 1962 supports the fact that music from the GDR was not completely impossible to obtain during the Cold War, as suggested by Calico.

Information on the ASCAP website indicates more pieces have been performed in the United States. Started in 1914, the purpose of ASCAP is to report any use of pieces from composers, authors, or publishers who are associated with ASCAP, in order for the royalties can be paid to the artists. The website exhibits which pieces are performed in the United States, but not necessarily when or in what context. Since the composers were not members of ASCAP, some performances were not reported on the website. In a search on Kurt Schwaen's name, one can find 12 of his pieces. 76 individual pieces show under Eisler's name, and 27 appear under Dessau's name.

In addition to the performances found through empirical studies discussed above, a concert was performed on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009, by the American Symphony Orchestra, entitled

“Music of the Other Germany”, which included pieces by Hanns Eisler, Paul Dessau, Rudolf Wagner-Régeny (1903 - 1969), Udo Zimmermann (b. 1943), and Siegfried Matthus (b. 1934). The concert included, among other pieces, Eisler’s *Auferstanden aus Ruinen* (1949), the national anthem of the GDR, Eisler’s *Goethe Rhapsody* (1949), and Dessau’s *In Memoriam Bertolt Brecht* (American Symphony Orchestra Website 2009). In the concert program, the music director Leon Botstein wrote a thorough commentary on the history of music from the GDR and concludes: “When it comes to music, we should give the period of the German Democratic Republic the same latitude we have afforded to the Soviet era and the era of Metternich.” (Botstein 2009.) Despite the fact that Botstein presents the music as a form of ‘otherness’ in the title of the concert notes, he also encourages the listener to maintain a serious outlook on this music, even though it can be easy to overlook the validity of it (Ibid.). While past performances of the American Symphony Orchestra have shown that Leon Botstein prefers somewhat ‘obscure’ orchestra repertoire, this is still the only record found of a full concert dedicated to music from the GDR, and might be an impetus for more performances of music from the GDR.

Other findings that make up for the lack of records on chamber music recitals are pieces performed by Falko Steinbach. Falko Steinbach is a pianist from West Germany, who in 1999 came from being head of keyboard studies at the Music Conservatory of Cologne (*Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln*) to the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque as head of keyboard studies (Steinbach, 2009). Steinbach was a friend of Kurt Schwaen, who has dedicated piano pieces to Steinbach. Steinbach, along with being among the first pianists to perform Hanns Eisler’s Third Piano Sonata on CD (Ambitus, 2000), has also recorded Schwaen’s *Nocturne Lugubre* (1992) on his CD: *Six Take, New Music for Piano*, (Ambitus, 1997) and the CD *Miniaturen: Späte Klavierstücke* (Dittrich Verlag 2001), which is an entire CD of Schwaen’s piano compositions. He has performed several chamber music concerts of Schwaen and Eisler in the

United States, Germany, and Asia, and also organized an Eisler symposium at the University of New Mexico. (Personal Correspondence with Falko Steinbach, 2009 )

These sparse findings show a difference between how the composers are taught in universities and how they are handled in performance praxis. Could this be due to a difference in attitudes between academia and music directors of symphony orchestras? If this music is continually analyzed and scrutinized within universities and not played for a general audience, what does that say about the overall attitude towards this music? These two case studies can be put into perspective by a more personal account of the music in the next section, which analyzes interviews with four natives of the GDR and one West German.

#### 5.4 Interviews with *Zeitzeugen*<sup>42</sup>

Interviews were conducted with five persons with some relation to the arts or culture of the GDR (see Appendices 5-9). The persons include Ina Iske, the widow of Kurt Schwaen, Hannes Zerbe, a new music and jazz composer from the former GDR, an anonymous former citizen of the GDR, who taught middle and high school math during this time and now lives in a district near Erfurt, Nico Schuler, who grew up and studied music in the former GDR, and Falko Steinbach, a pianist from West Germany, who now lives in the United States and performs chamber music of Hanns Eisler and Kurt Schwaen. Each of the interviews was tailored to accommodate each of their individual experiences and expertise. Nico Schüler and Falko Steinbach are ex-patriots, so they are able to detail how the culture and arts of the GDR are received in the United States. The anonymous teacher, Ina Iske, and Hannes Zerbe are able to discuss in detail their own experiences in the culture of the GDR.

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<sup>42</sup> A German word for those who have firsthand witnessed historical events



The purpose of these interviews is to obtain a more personal and introspective look at the culture of the GDR and explain misperceptions some might have related to this subject. This will also be able to shed light on the lack of music from the GDR in the United States. Through analyzing the interviews, one can see several patterns: (1) Americans (at least in the lives of these *Zeitzeugen*) tend to have a misguided notion of the every-day culture of the GDR, yet maintain an open-minded attitude towards it. (2) The every-day life in the GDR was not as negative as some believe, and this had a positive impact on producing music in an abundant musical culture, and (3) that there still exists a large gap in how musical life was conducted and how it is conducted today in a unified Germany.

When asked about the general perception of the culture of former East Germany, Schüler states that while there are some misguided perceptions of the actual culture of the GDR, all of the Americans with whom he has spoken are positive and open-minded about the subject. On the topic of the misguided perceptions, Schüler states that there is some perception of “exotism” or a notion of a “horrible communist country”, but affirms that people are positive and want to know the truth about the culture (see Appendix 9). Steinbach asserts that Americans are inquisitive and open about the culture of the GDR, stating that Americans are “very interested in historical connections and personalities, rather than being involved in politics ” (See Appendix 10 ). Steinbach goes on to mention that the music is perceived for its own value and that the political dimension of the music does not have a bearing in the United States, since it is not as close to the political situation as Germany and other European countries. (Ibid ) If these assertions are true, then the American culture provides a substantial atmosphere for the discussion of music from the GDR.

In response to the notion that many Americans believe that the everyday life in the GDR was a negative existence, everyone who was interviewed agreed that while people were shot

and killed while trying to escape the GDR, this represented a relatively small percentage of the population and was not reflected in the everyday life. Everyone interviewed also agreed on that the GDR had a well-supported musical culture. Music studies were supported and encouraged from an early age and for all social strata. This support allowed everyone the opportunity for a good music education. The culture also provided a non-competitive atmosphere, in which everyone had healthcare, an assured job in the work place, and affordable rent and food, which, in connection with government sponsorship of the arts, allowed musicians to focus on performing and composing music. (see Appendices 7 and 9.)

Since reunification, there has been a large gap in the musical life of the former GDR and what it has become today. As mentioned in the second chapter, there was a noticeably large divide in the music between West and East Germany. Hannes Zerbe notes that musicians' lives are more difficult now than they were in the GDR, because of the lack of sponsorship for concerts and the lack of job stability. Not everyone can afford their means of living, so they are not able to focus on their music. (see Appendix 5.) This gap has created a tendency to overlook the GDR as part of a unified Germany, because it is not accepted as a part of German culture. As the anonymous teacher states, the GDR's existence cannot be refuted, and since the Germany is a unified culture today, the divide is a part of history and should be discussed and remembered (see Appendix 11). Steinbach attempts to close this gap by performing works of Schwaen and Eisler alongside other composers in concert programs. He states that it was "important to set a sign for cultural unity, coexistence, tolerance and understanding after 1989", which he reflects in his performances (see Appendix 10). Iske claims that since reunification and the readily technological advances that have developed in the past 20 years have helped spread knowledge of Schwaen's music, which is making it more popular and easily accessible to a wide array of people (see Appendix 7). As an ex-patriot living in the United States, Schuler believes that the

gap is very large in regards to changing the musical perspective of a unified Germany, because it would require lots of financial sponsorship that is not available in the United States and would probably not have any affect on a broader audience (see Appendix 9) This point of view might stem from the immediate demise of an East German society, where arts were not widely funded in America, or West Germany for that matter.

What do these interviews suggest in regards to the reception of music from the GDR in the U.S.? The fact that everyone was allowed an opportunity to engage in music changed the language of the music and made it more suitable for a general audience. Both Iske and Steinbach comment on the enthusiastic reception of Schwaen's and Eisler's music by American musicians, especially contemporary performers. This might come from the idea that this music should be comprehensible to a general audience, while not losing any sophisticated qualities of the music.

On a cultural level, these interviews show that people in the U.S. are open to speaking about the culture and history of the GDR. If they are open to discussing the culture, then they will find out that not all aspects of it were negative. This is associated with speaking about the everyday culture and not focusing on the government or politics. This in turn would help filling the large cultural gap that exists in viewing German culture.

### 5.5. Implications of the Studies

These studies suggest a substantial focus on Eisler in courses in American universities, which signifies that there has been some sort of reassessment of Eisler studies since Calico and Jackson first wrote their respective works in 2002 and 2003. He is not only taught in conjunction with Schoenberg or Brecht, but is also as a talented musician of his own accord. There is even

mention of Wolf Biermann, a student of Eisler, which makes Eisler more credible as a historical figure.

The studies also suggest that there are problems with the reception of other composers, in this case, Paul Dessau and Kurt Schwaen, both of which are referred to in teachings and writings in the United States in conjunction with Brecht and censorship issues with works in the GDR. German departments in American universities (as compared to musicology departments) that teach music from the GDR tend to include the music with other artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, rather than teaching them within a political context, such as courses entitled “Music of the Cold War” or “Music and Politics”. The fact that these courses include the political ideologies that connected with music from the GDR does not support Jackson’s writing, which states that universities must adhere to some political view as mandated by the government. The universities surveyed for this study included public and private universities from across the nation, including ones that rely on significant funding from the state, as mentioned in Jackson’s writing. (Jackson 2003, 64-65.) To what extent the focus on teaching the courses with a political focus affects the research world is questionable. The conference “Reconsidering the Arts in the GDR” (2007) exhibits the cultural side of music with papers such as Jakob Norberg’s “Dictatorship and the Everyday” and Elaine Kelly’s “Reading the Past in the German Democratic Republic: Thoughts on Writing Histories of Music”. The panel for the AMS conference in November 2009 will provide further cultural knowledge in dealing with *Zeitzeugen*.<sup>43</sup>

The lack of performance praxis is definitely conspicuous when compared to its treatment in the universities. A focus in an academic setting suggests that there is something inherently ‘wrong’ or ‘abnormal’ with the music, and does not treat the music as it was meant to be treated in that it was meant to be performed for a general audience

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<sup>43</sup> As stated before, this panel will discuss dealing with “methodological, interpretative, and ethical challenges that confront musicologists ”

While there is a growing interest in music from the GDR, there still remains somewhat of a lack of focus on it, both in academia and in concert repertoire in the U.S. As Joy Calico states in her article "Hanns Eisler: Marxist Polyglot", while it was difficult for anyone to acquire any sort of information from the GDR during its existence, "tracking and interpreting rare material is precisely the purview of academics." (Calico 2009). Calico has also noted that the study of GDR literature was popular during the time of the GDR, and while many 20<sup>th</sup> century literature scholars would likely be familiar with East German writers such as Christa Wolff, a 20<sup>th</sup> century music scholar would not necessarily know Hanns Eisler (Personal Correspondence with Joy Calico, 2009). While my studies show a lack of music from the GDR in the academia and concert repertoire, it should be noted that it is receiving attention and approaching acceptance in the U.S.

## CONCLUSIONS

The empirical studies presented in this thesis suggest a substantial interest in Eisler, and he is treated in a manner that reflects his unique talent and historical importance. However, are the problems addressed in Calico's and Jackson's writing also evident in other composers from the GDR?

Dessau and Schwaen are not studied as much as Eisler and their works are similarly treated as described in Calico's writings. There is a tendency to focus on them in conjunction with Brecht, and their respective oeuvres make the music difficult to classify by established means of classifying post-World War II music. The fact that there is little evidence from my research indicating that university professors purposefully ignore figures associated with 'socialism' or 'communism' does not support Jackson's view that universities would have to adhere to a political ideology in accordance with the government. In other academic fields (such as theater or German Studies) the strong focus on Brecht suggests that professors at universities are open to conducting courses that deal with 'communist' figures. Academia's tendency to explore unknown and misrepresented music also does not cohere with her argument.

While these problems are manifest in dealing with various composers of the GDR, there is a growing interest in this music, as seen by the rising number of dissertations, conferences, and articles in recent years. The recent concert performed by the American Symphony Orchestra suggests a possible new interest in performance praxis of music from the GDR. Perhaps the new focus on this music could be because it is an exotic music from the past that

was previously unable to be explored, or maybe it suggests an end to Cold War ideology. The recent focus on the cultural aspects of this music strongly suggests the latter. In any event, while the music from the GDR proves to be a difficult history to fit in post-war musical styles, the great musical culture that developed during this time provides a wealth of compositions for future generations to interpret and include in a unified musical consciousness

APPENDIX 1 Compilation of Universities Surveyed on Teaching Music from the GDR as listed on  
the website for the American Musicological Society

- Arizona State University
- Ball State University
- Boston University
- Bowling Green State University
- Brandeis University
- Brooklyn College
- Case Western Reserve University
- Catholic University of America
- University of Cincinnati
- City University of New York – Baruch\*
- Claremont Graduate University\*
- Columbia University
- Cornell University
- Duke University
- Florida State University
- Harvard University
- Indiana State University
- Indiana University
- Louisiana State University
- Marywood University\*
- Michigan State University
- New York University
- Northwestern University
- Ohio State University
- Pennsylvania State University
- Princeton University
- Rice University
- Rutgers University – Camden
- San Diego State University
- Stanford University
- SUNY University of Buffalo
- SUNY Stonybrook
- Temple University



- Texas Tech University
- Tufts University
- Tulane University
- University of Arizona
- University of California - Berkeley
- University of California - Davis
- University of California - Los Angeles
- University of California - Riverside
- University of California - San Diego
- University of California - Santa Barbara
- University of California - Santa Cruz
- University of Chicago
- University of Colorado - Boulder
- University of Florida
- University of Georgia
- University of Hawai'i at Manoa
- University of Houston
- University of Illinois - Urbana Champagne
- University of Iowa
- University of Kentucky
- University of Kansas
- University of Louisville
- University of Maryland
- University of Memphis
- University of Michigan
- University of Minnesota
- University of New Hampshire
- University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
- University of North Texas
- University of Northern Iowa
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Rochester
- University of Southern California
- University of Tennessee - Knoxville
- University of Texas at Austin
- University of Virginia
- University of Washington
- University of Wisconsin at Madison
- Washington University in St. Louis
- Yale University

\* Denotes colleges did not have comprehensive German department

## APPENDIX 2. Question Addressed to Musicology Professors

To whom it may concern-

My name is Amy Puett, and I'm a graduate student of music history at Texas State University. I'm conducting research on course content in American universities that include music of East Germany. Does the music department have any courses now or in the past geared towards East German music? This could include, for example, an Eastern European music course with a section on music of the GDR.

Thank you for your time,

Amy Puett

### APPENDIX 3: Question Addressed to German Studies Professors

To whom it may concern-

My name is Amy Puett, and I'm a graduate student in Music History at Texas State University. I'm conducting research on course content in American universities that include studies of East German music. I was wondering if there were any courses in the German department that include studies of music from the GDR? This could include twentieth-century literature courses that deal with Brecht, and might go into his work with East German composers such as Hanns Eisler or Paul Dessau.

Thank you for your time,

Amy Puett

#### APPENDIX 4· List of Symphonies Compiled from League of American Orchestras Website

- Alabama Symphony Orchestra
- Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
- Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
- Boston Symphony Orchestra
- Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
- Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
- Chicago Symphony Orchestra
- Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
- Cleveland Orchestra
- Colorado Symphony Orchestra
- Columbus Symphony Orchestra
- Dallas Symphony Orchestra
- Detroit Symphony Orchestra
- Florida Orchestra
- Fort Worth Symphony
- Hartford Symphony Orchestra
- Honolulu Symphony
- Houston Symphony Orchestra
- Indianapolis Symphony
- Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra
- Kansas City Symphony Orchestra
- Los Angeles Philharmonic
- Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra
- Louisville Orchestra
- Minnesota Orchestra
- Nashville Symphony
- National Symphony Orchestra
- New York Philharmonic
- Omaha Symphony
- Philadelphia Orchestra
- Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
- Sacramento Philharmonic
- San Francisco Symphony
- Seattle Symphony
- St. Louis Symphony Orchestra
- Syracuse Symphony Orchestra
- Tucson Symphony Orchestra
- Utah Symphony Orchestra
- Vermont Symphony Orchestra
- Virginia Symphony Orchestra

APPENDIX 5: Interview with Hannes Zerbe, Recorded on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008 in Berlin

1. What influences you as a musician? How do you get your ideas (what other composers have influenced you or what intangible ideas influence you)?

Other composers did have an influence on me, for instance Hanns Eisler. I worked things of his into my music, my Big Band music for example. I use his songs for improvisations. For example, I am playing with a clarinetist ... clarinet and piano, and this is where we use Hanns Eisler's songs. I feel that it's not always conscious which influences you take in.

2. How would you classify your music? You compose Jazz, but in what other genres do you compose?

That is difficult to say, since I work in a large spectrum between Jazz and Contemporary Classical music. I am not able to classify my music strictly. Yes, I compose Jazz, but also Contemporary Classical music. Here in Germany that's called "E-Musik" (Serious Music). I see myself as between all genres, building bridges. You can find anything from contemporary Classical music to Jazz in my compositions.

3. What was it like working with Paul-Heinz Dittrich? In what ways did he influence you?

I attended the Academy of Music "Hanns Eisler" in Berlin and studied composition with Professor Wolfram Heiking. I started with studying counterpoint with Paul-Heinz Dittrich, as this was part of my course of studies in composition. Later, I became a student of Dittrich at the

Academy of the Arts. He is a very strict composer of Classical Music and has nothing to do with Jazz. His areas are not my main areas of work. He is very strict, composes meticulously, and that is what I learned from him: the thoroughness, the strictness, exactitude. He really is very strict, whereas in my case much is open toward Jazz.

4 Did you notice a big change in working as a composer after the *Wende*?

The living conditions for composers and musicians have worsened after the “Wende.” I am a musician myself, a Jazz musician, and for me, composing and performing go hand-in-hand. On the whole, everything has become worse.

5. From your perspective, was it a “calm” revolution, or something that happened all at once?

It was amicable, but also quite sudden. During the first years after the “Wende”, the social situation was still better than now. There were still financial support and sponsorship. However, this has become worse. For Jazz musicians, too, there weren’t as many opportunities to play, perform, or give concerts. In addition to that, you have to consider, of course, that there weren’t really any such social problems as the ones we have nowadays. Everyone had a job and an apartment and could earn enough to make a living. There were no social problems. We have them now. Now, there is no more Right-To-Work. And not everybody has an apartment they can afford. All this is different now, not like it used to be.

6 How have politics in the GDR influenced your artistic development?

If you were writing instrumental music, there were really no problems. It was more difficult for people who worked with texts, meaning with the words. Whenever somebody composed songs with text, it became more difficult with the political system. It was regularized quite strictly,

whereas with instrumental music or Jazz .. let's just say that music is ambiguous. Pure music is not specific; it can be interpreted in many ways. However, if you work with words, it becomes more difficult in a dictatorial system. Those who wrote songs, worked with words, had a hard time. That was not the case for me, however. I had no problems with the political system. Much was good, to be sure, but there was also a lot that was not so good.

#### 7. How was the jazz reception in the GDR?

After the war, it was hard. The government was not kindly disposed toward it. They said: Jazz – that's an American influence. Later, though, during the last ten years of the GDR, Jazz was actually supported a lot and promoted. This is evidenced by the fact that I was able to travel to the West since 1979. Jazz musicians were allowed to travel to the West. As an example, I was in Bloomington, Indiana with a tuba player with whom I had had a long-time cooperation. We played two concerts there at the International Brass Convention. It's fair to say that in the last ten years of the GDR, things were going well for Jazz. There was also a very good audience for Jazz in the GDR, and Free Jazz and avant-garde Jazz developed especially well. It had a certain function in the (political) Underground. Free Jazz created an opposition. There were Jazz clubs in many small towns. The audience experienced this as – and Free Jazz was powerful – a little bit as a kind of opposition to the government. Free Jazz was not verbal, after all.

#### 8. Is your music targeted at a general audience or a specific audience for new music?

My music addresses an audience between Contemporary Classical music and avant-garde Jazz. It is not Hit- or Pop- music.

#### 9. What do you tend to compose these days?



I have been working with a Big Band in Berlin for 12, 13 years now. It is based out of a music school, and I composed most of my music for this band. I play Big Band pieces, as I have discussed with Nico Schuler. Maybe I can come over next year and work with the Big Band at Texas State University. I also compose instrumental and vocal chamber music.

APPENDIX 6: Interview mit Hannes Zerbe, aufgezeichnet am 15. Oktober, 2008, in Berlin

1. Was beeinflusst Sie als Komponist? Wirken andere Komponisten oder nicht-materielle Konzepte auf Sie ein?

Andere Komponisten haben Einfluß auf mich gehabt, z.B. Hanns Eisler. Ich habe Sachen von ihm in meiner Musik verarbeitet, z.B. für Big Band. Und die Lieder Eisler's, z.B. die nach Texten von Brecht, verwende ich auch für Improvisationen. Ich spiele z.B. mit einem Klarinettenisten zusammen – Klarinette und Klavier, und da verwenden wir Lieder von Hanns Eisler. Ich denke aber, man ist sich nicht immer bewußt, welche Einflüsse man aufnimmt.

2. Wie würden Sie Ihre Musik charakterisieren? Sie komponieren Jazz, aber welche andere Arten von Musik komponieren Sie?

Das ist schwer zu sagen, da ich ein großes Spektrum habe zwischen Jazz und Neuer Musik. Ich kann sie nicht streng einordnen. Auch Jazz, aber auch Neue Musik – hier heißt es E-Musik (ernste Musik). Ich liege zwischen allen Genres, sitze sozusagen zwischen allen Stühlen. Von Jazz bis Neue Musik kommt bei mir alles vor.

3. Wie war es, mit Paul-Heinz Dietrich zu arbeiten, und wie hat er auf Sie eingewirkt?

Ich war auf der Hochschule für Musik "Hanns Eisler" in Berlin. Da habe ich Komposition bei Prof. Wolfram Heiking studiert. Bei Paul-Heinz Dietrich studierte ich dabei zunächst Kontrapunkt. Das gehörte zum Kompositionsstudium dazu. Später war ich dann bei ihm Meisterschüler für Komposition an der Akademie der Künste in Berlin-Ost. Er ist ein sehr strenger Komponist für E-

Musik, aber er hat nichts mit Jazz zu tun. Was er macht, ist nicht mein Hauptarbeitsgebiet. Er ist sehr streng, er komponiert sehr genau, und das habe ich von ihm gelernt: die Gründlichkeit, die Genauigkeit. Er arbeitet sehr konsequent in der E-Musik, während bei mir sehr vieles offen ist auch zum Jazz.

4. Hat es sich nach der Wende geändert, Komponist zu sein?

Die Lebensbedingungen für Komponisten und Musiker sind nach der Wende schlechter geworden. Ich bin selbst auch Musiker, Jazzmusiker, und das Komponieren und Spielen gehören für mich zusammen. Und das ist insgesamt schlechter geworden.

5. Ihrer Meinung nach, war es eine "ruhige Revolution" oder etwas, das ganz plötzlich passiert war?

Die Wende kam zwar friedlich, aber doch ziemlich plötzlich. Die ersten Jahre nach der Wende war es sozial gesehen noch besser. Da waren finanzielle Unterstützung, Förderung noch mehr vorhanden. Das ist aber schlechter geworden. Und auch z.B. für Jazzmusiker gab es dann nicht mehr so viele Möglichkeiten zu spielen, aufzutreten, Konzerte zu geben. Dann muß man natürlich sehen, daß es in der DDR soziale Probleme wie die heutzutage eigentlich nicht gab. Jeder hatte eine Arbeit, jeder hatte eine Wohnung und konnte soviel verdienen, daß er leben konnte. Also es gab keine sozialen Probleme. Die gibt es jetzt. Jetzt gibt es kein Recht auf Arbeit mehr. Und es hat auch nicht jeder eine Wohnung, die er bezahlen kann. Das ist jetzt alles anders, nicht mehr so wie früher.

6. Wie hat die Politik in der DDR Ihre künstlerische Entwicklung beeinflußt?

Wenn man Instrumentalmusik gemacht hat, gab es eigentlich keine Probleme. Schwieriger war es für Leute, die mit Texten gearbeitet haben, also mit dem Wort. Wenn einer Lieder mit Texten

komponiert hat, das war dann mit dem politischen System natürlich schwieriger. Das war ziemlich streng reglementiert, während bei Instrumentalmusik oder Jazz . sagen wir mal: Musik ist vieldeutig. Reine Musik ist nicht eindeutig, man kann sie verschieden deuten. Wenn man aber mit Worten arbeitet, dann ist es schwieriger in einem diktatorischen System. Die Leute, die Lieder gemacht, mit Worten gearbeitet haben, hatten es schwer. Aber das traf für mich nicht zu. Ich hatte keine Probleme mit dem politischen System. Vieles war ja auch gut, aber vieles auch nicht so gut.

7: Wie wurde Jazz in der DDR aufgenommen – von der allgemeinen Bevölkerung als auch von der Regierung?

Nach dem Krieg war es schwer, da war es nicht so gern gesehen von der Regierung. Sie sagten: Jazz, das ist amerikanischer Einfluß. Aber später dann, in den letzten zehn Jahren der DDR, wurde Jazz sogar unterstützt und gefördert. Man sieht das auch daran, daß ich seit 1979 in den Westen fahren konnte. Viele Jazzmusiker konnten in den Westen reisen. Ich war z.B. 1984 in Bloomington, IN mit einem Tubaspieler, mit dem ich lange zusammengearbeitet hatte. Da war eine "International Brass Convention", und dort haben wir zwei Konzerte gespielt. Man kann also sagen, in den letzten zehn Jahren der DDR ging es mit Jazz gut. In der DDR gab es für Jazz ein sehr gutes Publikum. Besonders hat sich der Free Jazz, Avantgarde Jazz entwickelt. Der hatte eine gewisse Funktion im Underground. Free Jazz bildete eine Art Opposition. Es gab Jazz-Klubs in vielen kleinen Orten. Free Jazz war ja auch kraftvoll, und das Publikum empfand das als eine gewisse Opposition zur Regierung. Free Jazz war ja nicht verbal.

8: Ist Ihre Musik auf ein allgemeines Publikum gerichtet oder auf ein spezielles Publikum für Neue Musik?

Es ist auf ein Publikum zwischen Neuer Musik und Avant Garde Jazz gerichtet. Es ist keine Schlager- oder Popmusik.

9. Was komponieren Sie heutzutage?

Ich arbeite seit 12, 13 Jahren mit einer Big-Band in Berlin. Die ist an einer Musikschule, und dafür habe ich die meiste Musik komponiert. Ich spiele meist eigene Big Band Titel; ich habe ja mit Nico Schüler darüber gesprochen. Vielleicht kann ich ja nächstes Jahr kommen und an der Texas State University mit der Big Band arbeiten. Darüber hinaus komponiere ich auch Kammermusik, instrumental und auch für Gesang.

APPENDIX 7: Interview with Ina Iske, Recorded on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008, in Mahlsdorf

1. How widespread is your husband's work? In what countries has his work been performed?

You would have to limit this temporally. During the GDR's existence, my husband's works were well-known mainly in the GDR, i.e. the Eastern part of Germany. Partially also in the socialist countries of Bulgaria, in the CSSR (Czechoslovakia, now the Czech Republic) especially, and in the USSR as well. Much change came after the "Wende", as we call it, in 1990, when the two parts of Germany became united – change for the better! The first person who made known my husband's oeuvre in the United States was Falko Steinbach. He had been in Cologne and then moved to the University of New Mexico. There, he performed a lot of Schwaen's works. He is a pianist and has recorded a CD of Schwaen's piano works (Miniaturen. Späte Klavierstücke). He has many students, and therefore Schwaen's oeuvre is well-known at the University of New Mexico. When I say "oeuvre," I mean mainly piano works (since Falko Steinbach is a pianist). These piano works are also well-known in Japan. And I do not mean all of Japan. However, we have what I might call "bases" there. The pianist Erika Herzog, who lives in Tokyo, said it was her goal in life to make the works of Schwaen known to the public in Japan. Therefore, when she gives performances, she will also play Kurt Schwaen, and his music resonates well with the people there.

We've recently developed a close relationship with Belgium. The outstanding "Aquarius Choir" there has just recently recorded a CD of A Capella Choir works by Schwaen. Back in the

GDR, all these works were recorded and produced by the National Broadcasting Service, so we have had recordings. But after the “Wende”, there were no funds for such things. In fact, there were very few productions overall, almost non-existent. Now the Belgians said: “These choral works are interesting to us, especially here in Western Europe. We knew very little ... We did know Hanns Eisler, but otherwise we were unfamiliar with anything by composers from the GDR. And back then there were no CDs, either.” The Belgians then recorded a new CD to commemorate Schwaen’s 100th birthday in the coming year (2009). It’s a recording of extraordinary quality, exclusively pieces for choir. This recording represents a cross-section of Schwaen’s choral works: from the most well-known, simplest folk – song like songs to the adaptations of texts from the Bible.

Schwaen’s works were known in part in the Soviet Union, mostly his work for children “King Midas.” We now have one of our bases in St. Petersburg. Professor Kurevich is very active in the local composer’s association, and therefore Schwaen’s works are becoming known there. Then there are connections to Academies of Music, such as the “Shostakovich Schools of Music” in Russia and to the Academy of Music in Odessa (Ukraine), where there’s a particular interest in Schwaen’s works for plucked string instruments. Obviously, this is the place where people play the Domra and the Balalaika, and Schwaen composed pieces for the Balalaika. This is actually very unusual for a respectable composer from Germany, since this instrument is very rarely played in Germany.

We also have relations with Bulgaria: there is one orchestra that has recorded Schwaen’s orchestral music on CD. I will leave it at that - I won’t go further into where Schwaen’s music is being played. Every year when I receive the statements from GEMA [German

Licencing Agency]<sup>44</sup> I see entries where Schwaen's works are being performed in public: in Japan, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, the US, and Russia – those are the centers

2. I understand he had a teacher, Fritz Lubrich, a student of Max Reger, and that he received a degree in musicology, but received little professional instruction. Can you tell me how he developed his ideas for his compositions, and who and what his influences were?

Schwaen is self-taught. He had no formal training in composition, with the exception of those few months with Professor Lubrich when he was in Kattowitz back in the day. Schwaen originates from the piano, in particular from improvisation. As a boy, he improvised on the piano for hours without ever considering writing down these notes. He did have piano lessons: at first with a piano teacher, a virtuous lady, then later with an excellent teacher, the aforementioned Lubrich, who played an important role in Kattowitz' music scene. Lubrich was also an organist and choral conductor. This Lubrich asked Schwaen whether he had ever composed before. Schwaen said "Yes," but said he had never written anything down. Lubrich then asked him to record his compositions, and this is how it happened that Schwaen started writing *anything* down. Up to that time, everything had been improvised. Schwaen later studied Musicology and Germanic Studies, but never Composition. This was very unusual! Now the question is: How did he learn to do it? Well, the first score that Schwaen ever owned was one by Arthur Honegger (*King David*). Again, very unusual! Not a Mozart or Haydn score, which are typical for beginners' analyses, but one by Honegger! This happened, because Professor Lubrich's choir was just performing one of Honegger's works, and Schwaen was very fond of that.

To be sure, there were many influences. At first, Schwaen studied the scores by contemporary composers. In addition, he was very fond of Bach's music. Not as a boy, but once

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<sup>44</sup> Refer to [www.gema.de](http://www.gema.de)



he came to be Lubrich's student, the professor presented Schwaen with Bach's works, and then Schwaen realized that this music is wonderful! Throughout his life, Schwaen held Bach and Mozart in very high esteem. There's no need to discuss the reasons for liking Bach. He liked Mozart most of all because of the clarity. When you look around in this office, you see that he has the complete editions of Mozart's works, with many added notes. Schwaen was continuously reading in Mozart's scores; he admired Mozart. Even on his deathbed, he talked of Mozart and was singing Mozart.

There were influences from other composers. Of the contemporary composers, Stravinsky was a particularly strong influence. On Stravinsky, Schwaen opined that Music would develop in that direction. The music of Wagner and Bruckner was alien to Schwaen. He loved to have "transparent" music, without a great apparatus and such that one could make out single instruments. Such as Mozart's scores are: clear and transparent. Schwaen certainly learned a lot from Mozart, simply through studying his works.

People often said upon seeing Schwaen's scores: "Oh, well, that's very easy!" And once the rehearsals began, everyone realized that it wasn't easy at all, because in these scores every tone was important. You had to play every tone just the way it was notated in the score, you couldn't botch it. It did happen that even great orchestras were sent packing, for example once at the Berlin Staatsoper. The musicians were thinking: 'Schwaen, that's easy to see - a clear, well-arranged score.' But the devil is in the details! Schwaen had a tendency to connect to popular themes and then to twist that, and there was always a little trap somewhere! Christian Kaden, the long-time director of the Institute of Musicology here in Berlin has correctly termed this compositorial practice a "Twisting of the Familiar." The audience gets an easy entry into the music, and then suddenly there's the surprise. Yet the listener can cope with that.

3. Is there a particular work or genre from his oeuvre that he liked in particular?

That is difficult to say. But he did come from the piano, and it is his main instrument. As he once wrote: The piano is like a diary to him. To the piano he entrusted everything that he felt. And (in Schwaen's opus) the category "Piano Works" contains the most pieces. When looking through the index of his oeuvre, it is interesting to observe that the piano is present through all his years of work. That cannot be said for film music, the music for plucked strings instruments, strings, or orchestral music. Those merely have focal points somewhere, whereas the piano is ever-present.

A particular piece? That's tough. He especially loved his "Nocturne lugubre", a piano piece from the post-GDR era, written in 1991. It is a kind of autobiography, I believe. And he did talk about this in his autobiography, as well. Falko Steinbach, as well as three or four other pianists have made recordings of the piece.

Regarding other genres, Schwaen set high value on a play that he co-authored with Brecht: "Die Horatier und die Kuriatier." It's a didactic play, which, incidentally, was performed in Belgium last year – that was the first time it was shown outside of Germany after 50 years. Schwaen very much wanted to be at the premiere, and so the two of us went to Belgium in April of last year, six months before he died, to see and hear the play.

4. Can you describe how he met Bertolt Brecht, and how this influenced his works?

Brecht's influence is really quite decisive. Actually, it was more of a coincidence that the two met. This happened by way of Wera and Klaus Kuchenmeister, two writers who were Master Students under Brecht and who knew Schwaen. At one of their meetings with Brecht they recommended to Brecht to have Schwaen join them and compose something for him. Schwaen tells this story in his autobiography. You may ask yourself why the two of them liked each other

so much. I believe that they both were true work horses. Brecht valued his work more than anything, and Schwaen felt the same about his music (this is also evident in his diaries). In fact, with everything that ever happened in his life, it was music and politics that fulfilled him most, until the very end. I believe that this (being alike) proved a strong basis. What's more, Brecht's way of thinking and working came very close to that of Schwaen. Indeed, he adopted much of Brecht's aesthetic views. And after the collaboration with Brecht on "Die Horatier und die Kuratier", there were many plays for children that had this kind of didactic-play-character.

He always wanted to affect something, didn't want people to be let astray by music or by a play; nor did Brecht. The members of the audience were not supposed to leave their heads at the coat check, they were supposed to be aware and to take a stand, as Eisler once said. This idea was truly the foundation of both Brecht and Schwaen, and the loss of Brecht had affected Schwaen gravely. When Brecht had died, Schwaen talked about having suffered one of his greatest losses, and he deeply regretted not having worked longer with Brecht.

5 Can you describe his personality? How do you see his personality in his works?

This ought to be answered on several levels. After all, I am his wife. I knew him for over 36 years, and I must say that he was an extraordinarily loveable man. In the Eulogy they said "He was a noble man." He was very considerate in how he treated people. He was very honest and outspoken in his opinions, but he never wanted to hurt people. Whenever folks came to the studio and played something for him, he was short and sweet with them; he would tell them "I don't like this and that." And they weren't asked to play his works, either. Whether they played Schwaen or Beethoven, he gave his opinion to everyone. No-one took his words amiss, either, because he never said anything in a hurtful way. Of course you can insult someone by saying "That's a bunch of crap you're playing there," but you can express that very differently, as well.

Speaking as his wife, all I can say is that he was a wonderful man. We were a couple for 36 years, and married for 27. He was 72 when we got married. I am 26 years younger, that's pretty crazy! We experienced so much together, and I must say that he really did shape me. When we got married, I had already received my doctorate from the university, and one would think: she ought to know quite a bit already. But, truth be told, I knew nothing at all. My knowledge of literature and the fine arts developed through us being married and me getting to know the artists and the literature. He really did educate me incredibly, and not just me.

You were asking how his personality influenced his compositions: He always used to say "things I cannot express with words, I express through tones." Now, that's certainly the case with every composer. If he were able to use words, he wouldn't have to compose. In truth, my husband was the lyrical type, and that tends to be overlooked. People believe that the rhythmic element is the dominant one in his works, and that is not true. He experienced it often that CD releases were missing those works that showed the other side of Schwaen, the lyrical, still side. He was actually a quiet, a still man. He preferred to be intimate, also in his music. He did not like large orchestras. Situations like that were too opaque for him, it seemed false to him. This stance has something to do with politics: He experienced the Nazi-Era, during which such music was used to glorify Fascism. Your question is difficult, yet interesting, it would be impossible for me to answer it exhaustively here. It would be better to explore the question further and answer it in writing.

6. One thing I find remarkable about him is that he rebuilt the music schools after World War II. Can you tell me more about this, what help he received, and how it affected the next generation of musicians?

After the war, Germany was experiencing a period of reconstruction and change. Fascism had been crushed. Schwaen suffered for a long time to see this happen. He had been active in the Communist Party, was arrested and sentenced to three years imprisonment. Thank God, it wasn't the Concentration Camp, "merely" the penitentiary. Likely one cannot imagine what it is like to be imprisoned for three years unless one experiences it! After his time in the penitentiary, he had been regarded as unfit for military duty for some time. There was a fear that the political prisoners could have pointed their guns the other way. In the beginning, Hitler did not draft such individuals into the Wehrmacht. But as the end of the war was approaching, there weren't enough healthy soldiers. Then they drafted boys, 14, 15 year olds like my husband, who was drafted at 15. Boys, the older men, and the ones previously declared unfit for duty. And he (Schwaen) became "conditionally fit for duty," as they called it. But he wasn't drafted into a regular battalion, but into a "convict-battalion," Battalion 999. You can read about this in (his autobiography). It was into the convict-battalion that all the uncertain candidates were drafted into. Many times, these people didn't return from the front, and they were often charged with dangerous duties like searching for land mines or used in similarly dangerous missions.

Schwaen was very lucky. He didn't have experiences like that, and he survived this period. I have no idea why he was so lucky – he always had a Guardian Angel. He risked a lot – you can read about that [in his autobiography] – there was a lot he did not participate in. For instance, there were orders issued to appear at an execution day, when comrades were to be executed. He did not go there, and nothing happened to him as a result. How unlikely that it would end alright! Normally, those who were ordered to appear would be shot and killed too. But he did risk it and he did not soil his existence with such deeds [i.e., killing others].

Then came the end of the war, and many – not just he – felt: “Let us begin with something new.” He was already carrying the idea of socialism within him, being a communist, the idea to end inequality, to stop splitting people into such categories as rich and poor the way it used to be done in the past. And he understood that you needed to begin at the ground level. As an artist, he was most partial to the arts. Therefore he was asked by Berlin’s city government, the Magistrate of Great-Berlin (at the time Berlin was still one city, albeit divided into [allied] Zones) whether he would like to take part in rebuilding Berlin’s music schools. He was glad to do it. Even today, there are still music schools, like the one in Berlin-Neukölln, that have fond memories of him being one of the people who successfully tried to get musical instruments and sheet music to the schools.

You need to understand: Everything was destroyed. There wasn’t a library, no literature. You could find instruments only in private homes, if at all. All of this needed to be procured, and under unbelievably difficult circumstances! There was no heating or fuel, people had very little to eat. Whenever I read in his diaries of those years ... you just cannot imagine what these people accomplished! Schwaen was not the only one to rebuild the music schools. There were many involved, but he was the project leader. And he went everywhere for it. He was not afraid to ask: “Do you have any paper? We would like to write something down.” I say ‘write down’ because you couldn’t dream of getting anything printed. And when he had asked, someone answered “Paper, are you nuts? We don’t even have the paper to write out death certificates.” It’s impossible to imagine anything like this nowadays.

After that, Schwaen was asked to act as the director of the Berliner Volksbühne (see his autobiography on this subject). The Volksbühne was an organization where lay actors, choirs and ensembles were united under one roof, so to speak. Of course, these folks needed some guidance and direction. Many times, the directors didn’t come back from the war. There were

no decent conductors, the choir members were over-aged, and the young folks just weren't there anymore. Most of all, there was a need for finding good literature. Schwaen was very actively involved in this task and traveled all over Germany – East Germany mostly at that time – and organized symposia and training efforts. It wasn't always easy to convince people to participate. They had other worries and needs, such as "Where do I get bread and potatoes?" He really became very involved as a motivator and an agitator for the New Art, and he said to many people: "Write something for rehearsal! Write new music! Write music they can understand, and they can perform. Write for their instrument, where there's nothing written, maybe with the exception of "Zupfgeigenhansl" [a collection of folk songs]. There was no decent music written for small instruments like the guitar or the mandolin. Schwaen was a great example to others in these areas, but as I said there were many others involved in this effort.

#### 7 Why do you think that his works are not well-known in the US?

How should it have become popular? After all, he wasn't Hanns Eisler, hadn't emigrated, he wasn't over there. During the Cold War, we didn't know about things in the US and vice versa, and maybe people didn't want to know – it's a shame. After the "Wende", all this became much easier, mainly through technology. Sure, you could exchange sheet music before, but that's no comparison. Now with the Internet in place, you can find out who wrote for orchestra of plucked instruments (Zupforchester). Sooner or later you will encounter Schwaen's name, whether you knew of him before or not.

When you go to [Schwaen's] homepage you see that he composed even more for other instruments. And that's how I imagine it would have been for people from abroad – they would have discovered this composer via the Internet and then find see there are recordings, as well. After all, the radio hardly broadcasts anything by new composers. This really was very different.

in the past. During GDR times, they produced and broadcast a great amount of contemporary music. There was no important choral work by Schwaen that would not have been produced (by the radio) This situation has become much worse these days, I must say The state invested a lot of funds in culture and the arts. Say what you like about the GDR, but you have to admit that cultural life was extraordinarily rich. And people understood that they had to promote from the lower classes, starting with the students at the music schools. They understood that the demands have to be challenging, but also that these people needed to be afforded opportunities

But why it was that Schwaen was not known in the U.S. and other countries, I don't exactly know. I suppose there was no knowledge of him there. That must be the main reason. Many people from the US tell me that Schwaen's music was very well received there And I do know that those Americans who are interested in contemporary music deal well with Schwaen's music It is a kind of contemporary music which does not stump people, which does not sound coo-coo, has its own logic. This is music that is actually fun, as well.

8. Music (of the GDR and in general) developed a lot during his lifetime. How did he manage to keep up with the music styles over a period of 7 and a half decades?

You are correct there; there have always been phases in Schwaen's musical life Earlier I had hinted at this: When you make a list of the specific genres – something I have done – you see that in some periods certain genres are not present Take for example the corpus of cantatas and the plain songs those became accelerated after the war. There were I don't know how many cantatas –let's say ten. And those would be drilled into people Then, later, the choir institutions, at least the lay choirs, were on the decline. The "Singebewegung" (state-sponsored, singing movement) was on the rise, therefore choirs did not perform cantatas any longer. They



wanted a more relaxed form, and a more political one. In Schwaen's works, this genre disappears completely, and other genres appear

Look at instances where political demands were made [on the arts] during the Culture Symposia, for example the demand to bring contemporary Opera to the foreground. Then, quite a number of composers, to be sure, were thinking "Oh yes, now I shall write operas!" Not Schwaen. He wrote his first opera simply motivated by his interest in the text by Georg Büchner. Other genres are more typical for Schwaen, namely the folk music genres. Though they were in higher demand and were being sponsored post-war, since there were no large orchestras. There were simply no people left over. Though the Berlin Philharmonic had not allowed to get their members drafted into the military, there were members of other orchestras in the war effort and those did not return from the war.

In the beginning, the mainstay were folk songs that were demanded and promoted, and there was literature available in this genre. After a while, people realized that folk instruments were not that important anymore and that there was now a need for musicians and classical instruments, strings, as there were many new orchestras forming in the GDR at the time. Likewise, they demanded that there be more music written for these (classical) instruments "They demanded" sounds peculiar these days, but back then this was daily practice. I know for instance that teachers from music schools would come to my husband and said: "Schwaen, we need Level-Three-Difficulty compositions for the violin, we need something that exercises the fourth finger. Very specific tasks like that. The demands from above were carried out through the music teachers from below. People wouldn't say: "The Party demands 'Write music for strings!' or 'Write Operas and symphonies'" Rather, this was a phenomenon of the time itself. You could feel that there had to come something different, something new. In addition, there was the demand directed by the appearance of so many new orchestras. The GDR had an

orchestra in nearly every city, which was mind-boggling, really. However, this came after some time, not right after the war

9. Is his music directed towards a general audience, or a specific audience for new music?

In truth, he never really wrote any music for a specific audience. He wrote music that was needed. Let me say it in the words of Werner Klemke, the famous functional graphic artist, who would always say: "I am not an artist; I am a *Functional Graphic Artist*!" He wanted to have his audience. Certainly this should be no reason for devaluing his work, as they were high grade pieces, artistically. But he did want to write for the people and not against them. He did not want to see people run out and shout: Abominable music! He did want for his music to have an effect. He believed in the function of music. For instance, the Marseillaise had a political function: it arouses people. A wonderful song, incidentally, and a song which he valued highly and sang often in his later years. He was convinced: music has a function, and when I compose something, I do it for the audience, not for the desk drawer, not for some kooks. That was not his game.

Yet there are pieces that are not easy to understand. And I will concede that I only understood some pieces after hearing them several times, but that's not unusual in music. With Schwaen, the trick is that he connects to tradition, as I discussed earlier. Also to the tradition of his homeland. He is from Kattowitz, and the Biskites [the mountains in upper Silesia] are close by. Polish Folk Music, the music of the Gorale (the people who lived in the mountains) played a role during his childhood, he heard this music. He does connect to such traditions, and this way the audience finds access, as they are part of this tradition. But then he adds to it his twists and turns, and he spices his music with dissonances, bi-tonality, and other devices which a musicologist needs to explicate. Detail is incredibly important with him.

APPENDIX 8· Interview mit Ina Iske, aufgezeichnet am 16. Oktober 2008 in Mahlsdorf

1. Wie verbreitet sind die Werke Ihres Mannes? In welchen Ländern werden seine Kompositionen aufgeführt?

Das muß man zeitlich begrenzen. Zu Zeiten der DDR waren die Werke meines Mannes hauptsächlich in der DDR, also im Ostteil Deutschlands, bekannt. Zum Teil in den sozialistischen Ländern: Bulgarien, besonders in der Tschechoslowakei (jetzt: Tschechien) und auch in der Sowjetunion. Nach der „Wende“ - so wie wir das nennen - 1990, als sich die beiden Teile Deutschlands vereinten, änderte sich vieles, und zwar zum Guten. Der Erste, der in den USA die Musik Schwaens verbreitet hat, war Falko Steinbach. Er war früher in Köln gewesen und ging dann an die Universität in New Mexico und spielte dort sehr viel Schwaen. Er ist Pianist und hat auch eine CD mit Schwaens Klavierwerken eingespielt. [„Miniaturen. Späte Klavierstücke“.] Er hat viele Studenten, so daß die Werke an der Universität in New Mexico auf jeden Fall bekannt sind. Wenn ich sage „die Werke,“ meine ich natürlich hauptsächlich Sachen für Klavier. Die Klavierwerke sind auch in Japan bekannt. Wenn ich sage „Japan,“ meine ich nicht ganz Japan, aber wir haben so Stützpunkte. In Tokio lebt die Pianistin Erika Herzog, und sie hat gesagt, es sei ihr Lebensziel, die Klaviermusik Schwaens in Japan zu verbreiten. Wenn sie also Konzerte gibt, spielt sie auch Kurt Schwaen, und seine Musik kommt dort sehr gut an. Neuerdings haben wir eine enge Beziehung nach Belgien. Dort gibt es einen hervorragenden Chor, der nennt sich „AQUARIUS“, und sie haben jetzt gerade eine CD mit A-Capella Chormusik von Schwaen aufgenommen. Es gab zwar Aufnahmen bisher, in der DDR wurde das alles

produziert im Rundfunk. Nach der Wende gab es dafür kein Geld, da wurde überhaupt sehr wenig produziert, eigentlich fast nichts. Und die Belgier haben gesagt: "Für uns ist die Chormusik so interessant vor allem im westlichen Teil Europas. Wir kannten nichts. Wir kannten Eisler, aber wir kannten sonst nichts von DDR-Komponisten. Und es gab auch damals keine CDs." Und sie haben eine neue CD aufgenommen, in einer ganz hervorragenden Qualität zum 100. Geburtstag nächstes Jahr. Nur Chormusik, ein Querschnitt durch das Chorschaffen Schwaens, von den einfachsten, bekanntesten volksliedhaften Liedern bis zu Vertonungen von Texten aus der Bibel nach den Sprüchen Salomons.

In der Sowjetunion war Kurt Schwaens Musik zum Teil bekannt, vor allem sein Kinderstück "Karol Midas" (König Midas). Jetzt ist es so, daß wir in St. Petersburg einen Stützpunkt haben. Da gibt es einen Professor Gurevich, der sehr aktiv ist im Komponistenverband, und dort wird die Musik Schwaens verbreitet. Es gibt Beziehungen zu Musikschulen - zu Schostakowitsch-Musikschulen in Rußland; auch zu Odessa, wo es eine Musikakademie gibt, die sich besonders für das Werk Schwaens für Zupfinstrumente interessiert. Sie spielen ja dort Domra und Balalaika, und Schwaen hat für Balalaika Stücke geschrieben. Das ist sehr ungewöhnlich für einen „seriösen“ Komponisten, der aus Deutschland kommt, da dieses Instrument in Deutschland sehr selten gespielt wird.

Es gibt Beziehungen zu Bulgarien. Dort gibt es ein Orchester, das Schwaens Orchestermusik auf CD aufgenommen hat. Der Titel lautet „Jeu parti.“ Ich will nicht weiter darüber sprechen, wo auf der Welt noch Schwaen gespielt wird. Ich sehe immer durch die GEMA Abrechnungen, die ich jedes Jahr bekomme, wo Schwaens Musik öffentlich gespielt wird. Das sind Japan, Österreich, Belgien, die Schweiz, USA, Rußland. Das sind die Schwerpunkte.

2. Wie ich verstehe, hatte er keine lange professionelle Kompositions-Ausbildung. Wie hat er seine kompositorischen Ideen entwickelt, und woher kommen seine Ideen? Haben andere Komponisten oder nicht-materielle Konzepte auf ihn eingewirkt?

Schwaen ist Autodidakt. Er hat keine Ausbildung in Komposition, bis auf einige Monate noch damals in Kattowitz bei seinem Lehrer Lubrich. Schwaen kommt vom Klavier, und zwar von der Improvisation. Er hat als Junge stundenlang am Klavier improvisiert, ohne auf die Idee zu kommen, diese Noten aufzuschreiben. Er hatte Klavierunterricht; erst bei einer braven Musiklehrerin, dann bei einem sehr guten Mann, eben Herrn Fritz Lubrich, der in Kattowitz eine große Rolle im Musikleben spielte. Er war auch Organist und Chorleiter. Lubrich fragte Schwaen, ob er schon mal komponiert hat. Er bejahte das, aber sagte, er hätte nie etwas aufgeschrieben. Lubrich bat ihn, es aufzuschreiben, und so kam es, daß Schwaen überhaupt etwas in Noten setzte; bis dahin war es nur improvisiert. Später studierte er ja Musikwissenschaft und Germanistik, aber nicht Komposition. Das war sehr ungewöhnlich. Die Frage ist: Woher hat er es nun gelernt? Die erste Partitur die Schwaen sich angeeignet hat, war eine von (Arthur) Honegger. Sehr ungewöhnlich, keine Mozart- oder Haydnpartitur, womit man gewöhnlich Analysen beginnt, sondern eine von Honegger. Das kam, weil Lubrichs Chor ein Werk von Honegger [König David] aufführte, das Schwaen so sehr gefallen hat.

Natürlich gab es viele Einflüsse. Er studierte zunächst Partituren zeitgenössischer Komponisten. Außerdem hatte er einen großen Hang zur Musik von Bach. Als Knabe nicht. Aber als er zu Lubrich kam, legte dieser ihm Bachs Musik vor, und dann merkte Schwaen, daß das eine wunderbare Musik ist. Er hat Zeit seines Lebens Bach und Mozart sehr geschätzt - warum Bach, braucht man nicht zu erklären; Mozart vor allem wegen seiner Klarheit. Wenn Sie sich hier umsehen - er hat von Mozart die Gesamtausgaben, mit vielen kleinen Zettelchen. Er hat standig

in Mozartpartituren gelesen und hat ihn bewundert, und noch auf dem Totenbett hat er von Mozart gesprochen und auch Mozart gesungen. Einflüsse von anderen Komponisten waren da. Von den zeitgenössischen hat ihn besonders Stravinski beeinflusst. Bei Stravinski glaubte Schwaen, daß sich die Musik in diese Richtung weiter entwickeln kann. Fremd war ihm die Musik von Wagner oder von Bruckner. Er liebte es, "durchsichtige" Musik zu haben, ohne große Apparate, und so, daß man die einzelnen Instrumente durchhören konnte, so wie die Mozartpartituren sind: klar und durchsichtig. Bei Mozart hat er sicher viel gelernt, einfach durch das Studium. Man hat oft gesagt, wenn man Partituren von Schwaen sah, "Ach, das ist ja ganz leicht!" Und wenn die Proben begannen, merkte man, daß es nicht leicht war, weil dort jeder Ton wichtig war. Man mußte jeden Ton so spielen, wie er da stand, da konnte man nicht pfuschen. Es ist passiert, daß man sogar große Orchester nach Hause geschickt hat, zum Beispiel in der Staatsoper, weil die Musiker dachten: Schwaen, das ist ja ganz wunderbar zu sehen, klare, übersichtliche Partitur. Aber der Teufel steckt im Detail! Und Schwaen hatte einen Hang, daß er anknüpfte an Bekanntes und das dann „umbog“, und immer eine kleine Falle einbaute. Christian Kaden, der hier lange Zeit Chef des Musikwissenschaftlichen Instituts war, hat es richtig benannt: „Das Umbiegen des Vertrauten.“ Als Hörer bekommt man einen guten Einstieg, und plötzlich kommt etwas Überraschendes. Das kann der Hörer aber verkraften.

3. Gibt es ein bestimmtes Stück oder Genre aus seinem Oeuvre, das ihm besonderes gefallen hat?

Ja, das ist schwer zu sagen. Aber er kommt vom Klavier, und das ist sein Hauptinstrument. Das Klavier ist wie sein Tagebuch, hat er einmal geschrieben. Alles, was er fühlte, vertraute er dem Klavier an. Das Genre Klavier hat die meisten Stücke. Es ist interessant: wenn man sich seine Werkübersicht anschaut, sieht man, daß das Klavier durch alle Jahre seines Schaffens präsent

ist. Die Filmmusik nicht. Die Musik für Zupfinstrumente nicht, die der Streichinstrumente, oder Orchestermusik auch nicht. Die haben immer nur irgendwo Schwerpunkte. Aber das Klavier läuft immer durch. Ein „besonderes Stück“ - das ist schwer zu sagen. Er liebte besonders sein „Nocturne lugubre“. Das ist ein Klavierwerk aus der Nachwendezeit, 1991 entstanden. Es ist so eine Art Biographie, glaube ich. Darüber hat er auch in seiner Autobiographie geschrieben, das können Sie nachlesen. Falko Steinbach sowie drei oder vier andere haben dieses Stück [auf CD] eingespielt.

Bei anderen Genres legte Schwaen großen Wert auf ein Stück, das er mit Brecht zusammen geschrieben hat: „Die Horatier und die Kuriatier“. Das ist ein Lehrstück, das übrigens in Belgien im vorigen Jahr nach 50 Jahren das erste Mal im Ausland aufgeführt wurde. Und Schwaen wollte unbedingt dabei sein. Also sind wir noch im April vorigen Jahres, also ein halbes Jahr vor seinem Tod, nach Belgien gefahren, um uns das Stück anzuhören.

#### 4. Wie hat Bertolt Brecht auf ihn eingewirkt?

Die Einwirkung von Brecht ist ganz entscheidend. Es war ja mehr ein Zufall, daß die beiden sich kennengelernt haben. Es kam durch die Schriftsteller Wera und Klaus Küchenmeister, die Meisterschüler bei Brecht waren und Schwaen kannten. Bei irgendeiner Begegnung haben sie Brecht empfohlen, Schwaen sollte doch einmal kommen und etwas für ihn komponieren. Schwaen erzählt das auch in seiner Autobiographie. Warum waren die beiden sich so sehr sympathisch? Ich glaube, sie waren beide richtige Arbeitstypen. Brecht setzte über alles seine Arbeit, und bei Schwaen ging über alles die Musik. Bei allem - auch in den Tagebüchern von Schwaen ist das zu erkennen. Es waren die Musik und die Politik, die ihn erfüllt haben, bis zuletzt. Und ich glaube, das war eine starke Basis.

Außerdem kam die Art wie Brecht arbeitete und wie er dachte der Schwaens sehr nah. Er hat von der ästhetischen Anschauung Brechts vieles übernommen. Es gab nach diesem Lehrstück "Die Horatier und die Kuriatier" ja immer wieder Stücke, für Kinder vor allem, die so eine Art Lehrstück-Charakter haben.

Er wollte immer etwas bewirken. Er wollte nicht, daß die Leute sich einnebeln lassen von Musik oder von einem Stück; Brecht wollte das ja auch nicht. Sie sollten nicht ihren Kopf mit ihrem Hut in der Garderobe abgeben, wie Eisler gesagt hat, sondern sie sollten mitdenken, sie sollten Stellung beziehen. Das war eigentlich die Grundlage beider Künstler, und der Verlust Brechts hat Schwaen sehr getroffen. Er sagte, als Brecht gestorben war, das sei einer seiner größten menschlichen Verluste gewesen und er bedauerte, nicht länger mit Brecht zusammengearbeitet zu haben.

5. Könnten Sie seine Persönlichkeit beschreiben? Wie sehen Sie seine Persönlichkeit in seinen Kompositionen?

Diese Frage ist auf mehreren Schichten zu beantworten, da ich ja nun seine Frau bin. Ich kenne ihn schon über sechsunddreißig Jahre, und ich kann nur sagen, er war ein außerordentlich liebenswerter Mensch. In der Gedenkrede wurde gesagt: "Er war ein nobler Mann." Er war in seiner Art mit Menschen umzugehen sehr rücksichtsvoll. Er war sehr ehrlich und sagte seine Meinung ziemlich unverblumt, aber er wollte niemanden verletzen. Wenn Leute hierher kamen und ihm etwas vorspielten, dann machte er keinen Schmus, sondern er sagte: "das und das gefällt mir nicht." Sie mußten ja auch nicht unbedingt Schwaen spielen; auch, wenn sie Beethoven spielten. Er sagte seine Meinung offen, und die Leute nahmen es ihm nicht übel, weil er es nicht verletzend sagte. Man kann ja jemanden beleidigen und sagen: "Was du spielst, ist Mist!" Oder man kann das auch anders ausdrücken.



Ich als seine Frau kann nur sagen: Er war ein wunderbarer Mann! Wir waren sechsenddreißig Jahre zusammen, und waren siebenundzwanzig Jahre verheiratet. Er war zweiundsiebzig, als wir heirateten. Ich bin sechszwanzig Jahre jünger, also das ist schon ganz schön verrückt! Wir haben unglaublich viel miteinander erlebt, und ich muß sagen, er hat mich auch sehr geformt. Als wir heirateten, war ich schon eine promovierte Frau von der Universität, und eigentlich müsste man sagen: sie müsste ja schon einiges wissen. Ich wußte eigentlich gar nichts! Literaturkenntnisse und bildende Kunst - das kam eigentlich dadurch, daß wir verheiratet waren und daß ich auch die Leute kennenlernte und Literatur kennenlernte. Also hat er mich unglaublich gebildet, und nicht nur mich.

Wie sich seine Persönlichkeit in seinen Kompositionen ausgewirkt hat? Er hat immer gesagt: "Was ich nicht mit Worten sagen kann, sage ich mit Tönen." Das ist natürlich bei jedem Komponisten so. Wenn er es mit Worten sagen konnte, würde er nicht komponieren müssen. Eigentlich war mein Mann ein lyrischer Typ, und das geht oft unter. Man glaubt immer, das rhythmische Element in seinen Werken wäre das dominierende. Das stimmt aber nicht. Er hat es oft selbst gesehen, daß z.B. bei CDs Stücke fehlten, die die andere Seite von Schwaen zeigten - die lyrische, die leise Seite. Er war eigentlich ein leiser Mensch. Er mochte es auch in der Musik intim. Er mochte keine großen Orchester, das war ihm viel zu undurchsichtig, zum Teil auch zu verlogen. Das hat auch etwas mit Politik zu tun, denn er hat die Nazi-Zeit erlebt, als diese Musik benutzt wurde, um den Faschismus zu verherrlichen.

Diese Frage ist eine schwere, aber interessante Frage, und ich kann sie so im Gespräch nicht gänzlich beantworten, sondern denke, man mußte sich damit länger befassen und eine Antwort schriftlich niederlegen.

6. Ich finde es bemerkenswert, daß er nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg geholfen hat, Musikschulen zu erneuern. Konnten Sie mir mehr darüber erzählen? Wer hat ihm geholfen? Und wie hat das der nächsten Generation geholfen?

Nach dem Krieg war in Deutschland eine große Aufbruchsstimmung. Der Faschismus war endlich zerschlagen. Schwaen hatte dafür gebüßt, diesen Moment herbeigesehnt zu haben. Er war ja in der Kommunistischen Partei aktiv gewesen, war verhaftet worden und wurde zu drei Jahren Zuchthausstrafe verurteilt, Gott sei Dank nicht KZ, sondern „nur“ Zuchthaus. Was das für einen Menschen bedeutet, drei Jahre eingesperrt zu sein, kann man wahrscheinlich nur wissen, wenn man es einmal selbst erlebt hat. Dann war er nach dem Zuchthaus längere Zeit nicht als „wehrwürdig“ angesehen, weil die ehemaligen politischen Gefangenen an der Front ihr Gewehr auf die andere Seite hätten richten können. Anfangs hatte Hitler solche Leute nicht in die Wehrmacht eingezogen. Aber als es zum Ende des Krieges kam, gab es nicht genügend gesunde Soldaten. Da wurden nicht nur die Knaben von vierzehn und fünfzehn Jahren eingezogen - wie auch mein erster Mann mit fünfzehn Jahren - sondern auch die alten Männer, sowie die „nicht-wehrwürdigen“. Und er (Schwaen) wurde „bedingt wehrwürdig“, wie das hieß. Aber er kam nicht in ein normales Batallion, sondern in ein Strafbatallion, in die „Strafdivision 999“ (das kann man bei ihm nachlesen [in der Autobiographie] – dorthin wurden diese unsicheren Kandidaten eingezogen. Oft kamen diese Leute nicht von der Front zurück, oft wurden sie beim Minensuchen oder bei anderen sehr gefährlichen Aktionen eingesetzt.

Schwaen hatte Glück. Er hatte solche Erlebnisse nicht, und er überlebte diese Zeit. Warum er solches Glück hatte, weiß ich nicht; er hatte immer einen Schutzengel. Er hat vieles riskiert - das kann man auch nachlesen, hat sich an manchem einfach nicht beteiligt. Es gab zum Beispiel den Befehl, zu einem Erschießungstag zu erscheinen, wo Kameraden erschossen wurden. Er ist nicht hingegangen, und es ist ihm nichts passiert. Es ist sehr unwahrscheinlich,

daß so etwas so ausgeht! Normalerweise werden die Rausgehenden dann auch erschossen. Er hat es riskiert, und er hat damit sein Leben nicht beschmutzt. Nun kam das Kriegsende, und viele - nicht nur er - hatten das Gefühl: "Jetzt machen wir etwas Neues." Und der Gedanke des Sozialismus lag ja schon in ihm als Kommunist: Das endlich diese Ungleichheit aufhört, daß die Menschen nicht in arm und reich, in solchen Kategorien geteilt werden, wie es früher war, und daß natürlich erst einmal am Grunde angefangen werden muß. Als Künstler lag ihm die Kunst am meisten am Herzen. Er wurde also gefragt vom Magistrat von Groß-Berlin (damals gab es noch ein einheitliches Groß-Berlin, obwohl schon in Zonen eingeteilt), ob er sich daran beteiligen wolle, die Musikschulen wieder aufzubauen. Da hat er sehr gern zugesagt. Es gibt heute noch Musikschulen, z.B. die in Neukölln, die sich gern daran erinnern, daß er einer von denen war, die dort versucht und erreicht haben, daß wieder Musikinstrumente und Noten dahin kamen. Es war ja alles kaputt. Es gab keine Bibliothek, es gab keine Literatur. Instrumente gab es höchstens in Privatbesitz. Das mußte alles wieder organisiert werden, und unter unglaublichen Bedingungen. Es gab keine Heizung, es gab wenig zu essen. Wenn ich in den Tagebüchern dieser Jahre nachlese. . Man kann sich nicht vorstellen, was diese Menschen damals gemacht haben! Schwaen war nicht der einzige, der Musikschulen wiederaufgebaut hat. Es gab viele, aber er war dafür als Leiter eingeteilt. Aber er ist überall hingelaufen; er hat sich nicht gescheut zu fragen: "Habt ihr Papier? Wir wollen etwas aufschreiben." *Aufschreiben*, denn an Drucken war nicht zu denken. Und da hat ihm einer geantwortet: "Papier? Bist du verrückt? Wir haben nicht einmal Papier, um die Totenscheine auszustellen!" So etwas kann man sich heute nicht mehr vorstellen.

Anschließend wurde Schwaen ja gebeten, als Leiter der Volksbühne zu fungieren. Auch das kann man bei ihm nachlesen. Die Volksbühne war eine Vereinigung, in der Laien, Chöre und Ensembles zusammengefaßt wurden. Diese Leute mußten angeleitet werden. Oft waren die

Leiter im Krieg geblieben. Es gab keinen guten Dirigenten, die Chöre waren überaltert, die jungen Leute waren nicht mehr da. Vor allem mußte nach guter Literatur gesucht werden. Dabei war Schwaen sehr aktiv und reiste in ganz Deutschland herum - damals schon mehr in Ostdeutschland - und hat Tagungen und Weiterbildungen organisiert. Es war nicht immer einfach, die Leute dazu zu bringen. Sie hatten andere Note: "Woher bekomme ich Brot und Kartoffeln?" Da hat er sich sehr als Agitator für die Neue Kunst engagiert, und hat auch viele Menschen angesprochen: "Schreibt etwas für die Proben! Schreibt Neue Musik! Schreibt Musik, die sie verstehen, die sie aufführen können. Schreibt für ihr Instrument, wofür es sonst nichts gibt, außer vielleicht "Zupfgeigenhansl." Für kleine Instrumente wie Gitarre, Mandoline gab es keine gute Literatur. In solchen Dingen war er sehr vorbildlich, aber es gab sehr viele andere Komponisten, die da mitgewirkt haben.

7. Warum denken Sie, daß seine Kompositionen in den USA wenig bekannt sind? Wie sollte sie bekannt werden?

Er war ja kein Hanns Eisler, ist ja nicht emigriert, er war nicht druben. Zu Zeiten des Kalten Krieges wußten wir nichts von den USA, und die USA wußte von uns nichts, und vielleicht wollte man auch nichts voneinander wissen, leider. Nach der Wende wurde alles durch die Technik viel leichter. Sicher konnte man vorher schon Noten austauschen, doch das war kein Vergleich! Durch das Internet kann man nun herausfinden, wer hat für die Besetzung Gitarre und Zupforchester, Klavier oder Violine geschrieben? Da kommt man notgedrungenerweise auf den Namen Schwaen, auch wenn man ihn vorher nicht kannte.

Jetzt kommt man auf die Homepage [von Schwaen] und sieht dann, daß er ja noch viel mehr für andere Besetzungen komponiert hat. Und so wird das im Ausland gewesen sein, daß sie durch die Technik, das Internet auf diesen Komponisten aufmerksam wurden und dann

sehen: es gibt auch CDs. Im Rundfunk wird ja sehr wenig von neuen Komponisten gesendet. Früher war das sehr anders. In der DDR wurde sehr viel zeitgenössische Musik produziert und auch gesendet. Es gibt kein wichtiges Chorwerk von Schwaen, das nicht produziert worden wäre. Das hat sich, muß ich sagen, sehr verschlechtert. Vom Staat wurde sehr viel Geld in die Kultur gesteckt. Man kann reden was man will von der DDR, aber das Kulturleben war außerordentlich reich. Und man hat begriffen, daß man von der unteren Klasse her Musikschülern fordern muß, daß man da hohe Anforderungen stellen muß, aber ihnen auch Möglichkeiten geben muß

Aber warum Schwaen in den USA und in anderen Ländern nicht bekannt war, weiß ich nicht genau. Ich denke, daß es dort kein Wissen von ihm gab. Ich denke, daß ist der Hauptgrund. Ich höre von vielen Leuten in den USA, daß die Musik Schwaens dort sehr gut ankommt. Ich weiß, daß die Amerikaner, die sich für zeitgenössische Musik interessieren, Schwaens Musik gut verkraften. Das ist eine zeitgenössische Musik, die die Leute nicht vor den Kopf schlägt, die nicht verrückt klingt, in sich logisch ist und die eigentlich auch Spaß macht.

8. Die Musik in der DDR (und Musik im allgemeinen) hat sich während seines Lebens sehr entwickelt. Wie hat er mit den wechselnden musikalischen Trends Schritt gehalten?

Ja, das ist richtig. Es gab immer Phasen im musikalischen Leben von Schwaen. Ich hatte ihnen vorher schon angedeutet, wenn man die einzelnen Genres als Liste einmal nebeneinanderstellt – so etwas habe ich einmal gemacht – dann sieht man, daß in manchen Phasen manches nicht vorkommt. Zum Beispiel: das Kantatenschaffen und das einfache Liedschaffen waren nach dem Krieg ganz forciert. Da gab es – ich weiß nicht wie viele – Kantaten, sagen wir einmal: zehn. Die wurden gebraucht. Dann ging das Chorwesen – jedenfalls das Laienchorwesen – in der DDR zurück. Es begann die Singebewegung. Es kam also eine neue Bewegung auf, und die Chore

führten keine Kantaten mehr auf. Sie wollten eine lockerere Form haben, auch eine mehr politische. Bei Schwaen verschwindet die Form vollständig. Es treten andere Formen auf.

Als zum Beispiel (das sind auch manchmal politische Forderungen gewesen) bei Kulturkonferenzen politische Forderungen gestellt wurden, z.B. daß das zeitgenössische Opernschaffen mehr in den Vordergrund gebracht werden soll, da hat bestimmt mancher Komponist gemeint: Oh ja, jetzt werde ich Opern schreiben. Bei Schwaen traf das nicht zu. Er hat seine erste Oper einfach aus Interesse an dem Text von Georg Büchner geschrieben. Andere Genres sind typischer, und zwar die Volksmusikgenres. Die waren nach dem Krieg sehr gefordert und gefördert und möglich, denn große Orchester gab es nicht mehr. Die Leute waren nicht mehr da; ja, die Philharmonie hatte ihre Mitglieder nicht einziehen lassen, aber Mitglieder anderer Orchester waren im Krieg und kamen nicht von dort zurück. Also am Anfang waren es hauptsächlich Volkslieder, die gefordert und gefördert wurden, und da gab es auch Literatur. Nach einer Weile merkte man, daß die Volksinstrumente nicht mehr so wichtig sind, sondern daß man für die vielen Orchester, die gerade in der DDR entstanden, Musiker brauchte, man brauchte die klassischen Instrumente, die Streichinstrumente.

Und es wurde gefordert, man sollte mehr für diese Instrumente komponieren. Heute klingt das komisch „es wurde gefordert...“, aber damals war das eng mit der Praxis verbunden. Ich weiß, daß zu meinem Mann die Lehrer von den Musikschulen kamen und sagten: „Schwaen, wir brauchen für Geige der Schwierigkeitsstufe 3 Kompositionen.“ Oder: „Wir brauchen etwas, wo der vierte Finger gestarkt wird.“ Ganz spezielle Aufgaben. Also wurden die Forderungen „von oben“ durchgesetzt dadurch, daß die Musiklehrer „von unten“ das unterstützten. Es war nicht so, daß man sagte: Jetzt sagt die Partei „schreibt Streichinstrumentenmusik“ oder „schreibt Opern oder Sinfonien“, sondern es war schon in der Zeit drin; man spürte, es muß etwas anderes, etwas Neues kommen. Und es war das Bedürfnis für unsere vielen Orchester. Die DDR

hatte fast in jeder Stadt ein Orchester, das war eigentlich irre! Doch das war erst nach einiger Zeit, nicht nach dem Krieg, später.

9. Ist seine Musik auf ein allgemeines Publikum gerichtet, oder auf ein spezielles Publikum für neue Musik?

Er schrieb eigentlich nie Musik für ein spezielles Publikum. Er schrieb Musik, die gebraucht wurde. Ich sage das mal so wie Werner Klemke, ein berühmter Gebrauchsgrafiker, immer sagte: „Ich bin kein Künstler, ich bin Gebrauchsgrafiker!“ Er wollte – und natürlich darf man das nicht abwerten, denn das waren künstlerisch hochwertige Stücke – aber er wollte sein Publikum haben, wollte *für* die Menschen schreiben und nicht gegen sie. Nicht, daß sie rauslaufen und sagen: „Scheußliche Musik!“ Er wollte ja, daß die Musik etwas bewirkt. Er glaubte an die Funktion der Musik. Die Marseillaise zum Beispiel hatte politische Funktion, rüttelte die Leute auf – ein wunderbares Lied, übrigens, das er sehr schätzte und später auch oft gesungen hat. Er war der Meinung, Musik hat eine Funktion, und wenn ich komponiere, tue ich das für die Hörer, nicht für das Schubfach, nicht für irgendwelche Spinner. Das lag ihm nicht

Es gibt aber auch Stücke, die nicht leicht verständlich sind. Ich muß auch zugeben, daß ich manche Stücke erst verstanden habe, nachdem ich sie öfter gehört habe, aber das ist in der Musik normal. Der Trick bei ihm ist, wie ich vorher schon andeutete, daß er an der Tradition anknüpft. Auch an der Tradition seines Heimatlandes. Er stammt ja aus Kattowitz, und da sind die Beskiden [Berge in Oberschlesien] in der Nähe. Die polnische Volksmusik, die Musik der Goralen (das sind Bergbewohner) spielten bei ihm früher als Kind eine Rolle, das hat er gehört. Er knüpft an solchen Traditionen an, und das Publikum hat dadurch einen Zugang, denn es steckt ja selbst in dieser Tradition. Aber dann bringt er seine Biegungen, seine

Weichenstellungen ein, und würzt seine Musik durch Dissonanzen, durch Bi-Tonalität und anderes, das ein Musikwissenschaftler erklären muß. Das Detail ist bei ihm unglaublich wichtig.



APPENDIX 9: Interview with Nico Schuler, conducted on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009

1. How would you describe the general reaction of people when you say you come from the GDR?

I get the question all the time from where in Germany I come from. I usually describe it geographically: I am from the city of Greifswald, which is in the north-east of Germany, on the Baltic Sea, close to the Polish border. I am not sure what people think at that point, but I don't think they are imagining "East Germany". It is usually after I add "from former East Germany" that people say "oh" or "ah". Then they usually ask me how I came to the US, and / or how it was during East German times or when the wall came down. Anyhow, I think most people are usually surprised to meet someone from the former GDR, but they are usually very open-minded, interested, and kind.

2. Would you say these reactions are based on solid facts or a misguided perception?

I am not sure what the reactions are based on, but there is an element of exoticism when I say I am from the former East Germany. That exoticism is probably a result of not knowing much about the GDR, but possibly – maybe to a small degree – also a result of some misguided perception of an 'awful' communist country. I only get to know people's perceptions when I have longer conversations with them. In those cases, I often realize that their perception is based on some movies that they may have seen, knowing the stories of people being killed while trying to escape from East Germany to the West. And, of course, all of those stories are true, but those are stories of a very tiny percentage of the East German population, and the

stories people may have heard and movies they may have seen usually don't at all reflect the every-day life in East Germany. But I must say that just about everyone I have ever talked to about East Germany was very open-minded and interested in hearing some of the not-so-dramatic true stories that I can tell.

### 3. How would you describe your everyday life during the years of the GDR?

I was 19 years old when the wall came down. So, we are here mainly talking about my childhood. About that, I can say that I had the most wonderful childhood that I could ever imagine. I do not regret having grown up in East Germany. But that was, in part, thanks to my parents who shielded me from some of the politics and some of the 'truths'. My family was not rich, but no family around me was rich, or better: I didn't even know what 'rich' was. Most people had a similar living standard. People in East Germany had to work hard for little money, but the most essential things that people needed for living, such as food and apartment rent, was cheap. Prices were government-regulated. The same piece of butter, for example, cost the same everywhere in the GDR. And the people were usually very kind and friendly to each other. A free market-economy makes people having to compete for everything; but we didn't have a free market economy. We didn't need to compete. This was good for the every-day life, as life was smooth and friendly, but, of course, this was not good for the economy. Anyhow, I only have the best memories of my childhood, despite the fact that I didn't like to go to school.

### 4. How does it feel to have the country in which you grew up not exist anymore?

That is a very odd feeling, and I have thought about this very, very often. It feels as if there is some emptiness. You know, people like to have a 'home'. But not just a 'home' as a house or apartment, but also a 'home' in terms of nationality and country. Although I feel attached to the

united Germany, that 'home'-feeling is somewhat diminished. Things look different, food tastes different, and so on. It may sound funny, but it's true.

5. As someone from the former GDR living in the US, how would you describe the reception of East German music here? Would you say that the music is perceived for its own value, or judged by the politics?

I personally have hardly encountered any East German music in the US. Actually, I have never heard any East German music in any concert in the US. If I would have known about one, I probably would have attended the concert. Of course, I have not lived in big culture centers in the US, so there might very well be some East German music being performed, but that is very limited. While this limitation may have been caused through politics in the late 1940s and 1950s, it is today a result of the lack of information and the lack of cultural exchange. Yes, you still hear people talking 'funny' about communism (which we didn't have – the GDR was a 'socialist' country, and there is a big difference between communism and socialism), but I don't think that this would be the main reason for the poor perception of East German music in the US. But, of course, there is a historical aspect to this: after the years when the lack of reception was politically caused, musical life continued the path of performing and not performing certain kinds of music. So, while the deficiency in the reception of East German music nowadays is not necessarily politically influenced, it is politically influenced historically. But this is probably the music historian in me talking . .

6. Would you say that the politically-influenced music from the early years of the GDR permanently compromised its outward perception? How would you suggest that this perception be changed?

So, yes, this is exactly the point. But it is very difficult to change a mass perception, and it may not even be desired. That is related to the fact that the GDR does not exist anymore. The music that has not “resisted the destructive power of time”, as Riemann once phrased it, can only be brought back with major initiatives and only with the help of a lot of people and money. I don’t think that those human and financial resources are available to revive the performance of East German music. But there will always be some people who are interested in the music of the GDR, so there will always be (at least for the next several decades) a few people who might initiate some performances. Those initiatives will be local and have no effect on a broader audience. But I would be happy if I am wrong on this.

7. If you could teach a survey course entitled “Music from the GDR”, what would be the main points you would want students to know about the music?

I would want students to know that there was a very rich musical life in the GDR, with all genres and kinds of music, with involvement of *all* people in one way or another, and with music as a source of happiness. Of course, most historians are interested in new musical developments; and looking at music from this perspective, one will discover that there were many new developments in music from the late 1970s on. The doctrine of socialist realism was largely left behind, and composers and musicians were able – and even encouraged – to experiment. Since music, as culture in general, was financially well supported by the government in East Germany, we had a lot of very good, interesting, and musically sophisticated music at a very high quality level. And so was the musical life in general.

8. Why do you think there is a growing interest in American musicology of music from the GDR?

This may have to do with the aspect of exoticism, but also with the discovery of the fact that the musical life of the last couple of decades of the GDR was of very high quality. And it also has to

do with the fact that relatively little has been published – in English – on music from the GDR. Americans are very good in finding a niche, and music of the GDR is definitely an interesting niche

9. Why would you say that the literary field has more studies of GDR literature than the musicology field has of music from the GDR?

This may have to do with the fact that there are more German literature scholars in the US – and all over the world, for that matter – than German music scholars. German is an important international language, and many of those who teach German also do research on German literature. But in general, language is more important (at least in the Western world, I think) than music, so the field of literature is usually larger than the field of music

10. Do you feel that music from the GDR still needs to be studied? Why or why not?

Yes, there is a lot to discover and re-discover. There is a lot of music that is attractive to musicians, attractive to audiences, but also attractive to scholars. Historically, we are talking about a very small period of one – or better: half – a century. It was just 40 years, which is very little, historically. So, the number of studies, just as the number of performances, will be low, but should not cease for several decades. Hopefully they won't cease for more than that.

APPENDIX 10: Interview with Falko Steinbach, Conducted on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009

1. As someone who performs works by Eisler and Schwaen in the US, is there a specific context in which you perform their music, or do you perform their works alongside works of other prominent composers?

I perform their works alongside other prominent composers, since it is my practice for years to perform mixed programs. I was one of the first performers to take care of Eisler's and probably the first performer to take care of Schwaen's music in West Germany and now in the USA and occasionally in Asia. I was never an "ideological" artist but believe in humanity and in its various aspects. For me, there is only good music that needs to be performed and bad music that I do not care for. Of course, the reasons why I consider Eisler's music and Schwaen's music good are very different. For me it was also important to set a sign for cultural unity, coexistence, tolerance and understanding after 1989. I always argued with my dearest friend Kurt Schwaen about politics and religion. At the same time we always shared our mutual respect for each other and a deep friendship, which is one of the most important experiences of my life as an artist. I always felt and feel that we share the same cultural heritage and Kurt was the first to take care of it! Anyways, he had a fascinating personality.

2. When teaching students certain works of Eisler or Schwaen, do you teach them in a purely stylistic manner, or do you provide them with a historical and / or cultural context of their compositions?

I provide the students with historical, cultural, biographical, and stylistic information. I also make them contact Ina Iske, Kurt's widow. I want them to have as much information as possible.

As a German living in the US, how would you describe the reception of East German music here?

Would you say that the music is perceived for its own value, or judged by the politics?

The music is clearly perceived on its own value. Politics has nothing to do with it and the meaning of the political dimension of the music is also completely differently perceived in the USA. I always try to give a little background information when I perform the pieces but it does not make a difference on the perception, which is always positive if not enthusiastic.

3. Would you say that the politically-influenced music from the early years of the GDR permanently compromised its outward perception? If so, how would you suggest that this perception be changed?

Yes, the political approach probably has compromised the success of its outward perception as well as it does promote it now. Americans are very interested in historical connections and personalities, rather than being involved in politics, so the perception does not need to be changed.

4. If you could teach a survey course entitled "Music from the GDR", what would be the main points you would want students to know about the music?

I can only fully answer this question with a considerable amount of research. One important point would of course be "Lieder", religious and political. (My friend Prof. Dr. Noll from the University of Cologne recently gave an important lecture on religious Lieder in the former GDR.)

5. Why do you think there is a growing interest in music from the GDR in American musicology?

I am not aware that there is a growing interest. If so, it is because of what I already mentioned:

The Americans are very interested in historical connections and personalities; they do not want to be involved in a political dispute. Now that the political aspect of the former GDR seems to be history, the interest in its culture is growing.

6. Do you feel that music from the GDR still needs to be studied? Why or why not?

Yes, it needs to be studied, because there are some great treasures still to be discovered or rediscovered. Nowadays, who cares about the political aspect of Beethoven's, Schumann's, Chopin's, especially Romantic music?



APPENDIX 11: Interview with Anonymous Female from the former GDR, conducted on March  
16<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

1. What is the general reaction from people, when they find out you come from the GDR?

In general, the reactions are positive. They are interested in life in the GDR. Those people who had never had any interactions with the GDR often have odd ideas. This goes as far as them thinking we had passed by progress, are unworldly, had lead a very unsatisfied life, had an insufficient education, regularized upbringing at home and in children's and educational facilities

During my work I have repeatedly encountered arrogant behavior from West German supervisors. Reasons for this were often the aforementioned opinions and conceptions.

2 Do you believe these reactions are based on facts or through false perceptions?

Most times it's misconceptions that are barely based on facts. Even those West German citizens who had previous contact with the GDR often make excessive judgments without substantiated background knowledge. When they hear facts, however, they are surprised, sometimes incredulous, too Oftentimes, people are of the opinion that everyone suffered under the Stasi (state security service, i.e. secret police) Sure, there were things that are not at all justifiable and that have to be called inhumane Still, fortunately I don't know anyone among my friends and relatives who has suffered from reprisals.

3. How did politics affect the everyday life? Was it an all-consuming influence, or could one lead a balanced and normal life?

We led a balanced, normal life and were content. Sure there were things that we would have liked to change. Still, these days I am experiencing that changing things hasn't become easier under the current conditions. Politics now influence our life just as much as it did before; oftentimes it does so in ways we do not agree with.

4. How does it feel that the land in which you grew up does not exist anymore?

At the moment, things are getting even more distressing than after the "Wende."

Unfortunately, many societal achievements of the GDR were regarded as unworthy and were not adopted by the united Federal Republic of Germany. This pertains especially to health care, job security, the support of working women (and also of men), the care for and mentoring of pre-schoolers and school kids, the education system, the providing and securing of employment, and the provision of general security for the population. Politicians these days are often no more honest than those during the GDR; oftentimes they are more corrupt and have even less credibility.

5. Would you say that the politics of the GDR permanently compromised its outward perception of its people? How would you suggest that this perception be changed?

It did certainly influence our reputation, but it didn't permanently compromise it. When we were abroad, we often found that we were respected more than West Germans. There should be more differentiated reports about life in East Germany; not just about things that were bad. There should not be such a preponderance of "black or white" thinking. Former GDR citizens ought to be accepted without bias by West German employers.

6. What would you like people to know about your growing up in the GDR? Are there positive

aspects of which people might not be aware?

I was happy and content growing up. I was able to train for the profession that I wanted to have: a teacher. However, at this point I have to say that free speech was not always possible. For the most part, however, we were open and honest to each other amongst ourselves and with students and their parents. We were willing to discuss things and criticize. We did not force anybody. We adopted issues and problems that the children and their families had. We had a well-ordered and happy family life. Everyone could afford a vacation – not anywhere they wanted to go, but still to desirable places. We kids did not feel envy as much as kids do these days. Perhaps school uniforms might alleviate this issue some. People were much more open and honest with each other. Nowadays you tend to discuss difficult issues only with very few people. That's especially true for the work life. If you admit weaknesses, your colleague will often use that knowledge to their personal advantage. And, sadly, this behavior is already apparent in Elementary School kids. Such things were unheard of in East Germany. Secondary education and the promotion of talented people were not a question of money. I do detect a positive development in the renaissance of full-time mentoring nowadays (which was already fully established in the GDR). In this area, at least the promotion of talented students and mentoring of challenged students, as well as the guided development of talents could be pursued at the school level.

7. Do you feel there is a need to still study the culture of the GDR? Why or why not?

There is certainly a need, since there have been valuable literary, musical, artistic and athletic developments that are holding their own to this day.

The GDR era presents a stage of development that cannot and must not be negated, simply because it *existed*, because it produced many good things, and because it is indispensable for our current development

APPENDIX 12: Interview mit einer anonymen Lehrerin aus der fruheren DDR Ausgefuhrt am 16.

Marz 2009.

1 Wie reagieren Leute generell darauf zu erfahren, daß Sie aus der DDR stammen?

Generell positiv. Sie interessieren sich für das Leben in der DDR. Menschen, die vorher keinen Kontakt zur DDR hatten, haben oft sehr skurrile Vorstellungen. Das geht soweit, daß sie glauben, wir wären an der fortschrittlichen Entwicklung vorbeigegangen, wären weltfremd, hatten ein sehr unzufriedenes Leben gehabt, eine unzureichende Schulbildung, eine sehr reglementierte Erziehung im Elternhaus, in Kindereinrichtungen und Bildungseinrichtungen

Im Arbeitsleben habe ich wiederholt arrogantes Verhalten von westdeutschen Vorgesetzten erlebt. Hintergründe waren oft die vorgenannten Denkweisen

2. Sind Ihrer Meinung nach diese Reaktionen durch Fakten motiviert oder durch falsche Vorstellungen?

Meist sind es falsche Vorstellungen, die kaum durch Fakten unterlegt sind. Auch westdeutsche Bürger, die vorher Kontakt zur DDR hatten, urteilen oft überzogen, ohne fundiertes Hintergrundwissen. Wenn man ihnen dann die Fakten nennt, sind sie überrascht, manchmal auch ungläubig. Es besteht oft die Meinung, daß alle unter der Staatssicherheit gelitten haben. Sicher, es gab da Dinge, die in keiner Weise zu rechtfertigen sind und auch unmenschlich genannt werden müssen. Ich kenne jedoch in meinem Bekannten- und Verwandtenkreis nicht eine Person, die Repressalien erlitten hat, zum Glück!!!

3. Wie hat Politik Ihren Alltag beeinflusst? War sie eine allumfassende Macht, oder konnten Sie ein ausgeglichenes, normales Leben führen?

Wir haben ein ausgeglichenes, normales Leben geführt und waren zufrieden. Sicher gab es Dinge, die wir gern geändert hätten. Doch erlebe ich jetzt, daß dies unter den jetzigen Verhältnissen nicht einfacher geworden ist. Die Politik beeinflusst unser Leben jetzt ebenso und oft nicht in einer Weise, mit der wir einverstanden sind.

4. Was für ein Gefühl ist es, zu wissen, daß das Land in dem Sie aufgewachsen sind nicht mehr existiert?

Es wird im Moment bedauerlicher als nach der Wende. Leider sind viele soziale Errungenschaften der DDR als unwürdig angesehen worden und nicht mit in die neue Bundesrepublik übernommen worden. Das betrifft u.a. besonders die Gesundheitsversorgung, die Sicherheit des Arbeitsplatzes, die Unterstützung arbeitender Frauen und auch Männer, die Betreuung von Klein- und Schulkindern, das Bildungssystem, die Bereitstellung und Sicherung von Arbeitsplätzen sowie die Sicherheit der Menschen. Die jetzigen Politiker sind oft nicht ehrlicher als die der DDR, oft noch korrupter und unglaubwürdiger.

5. Würden Sie sagen, daß die Politik der DDR das Ansehen ihres Volkes für immer beeinträchtigt hat? Wie kann Ihrer Meinung nach das Ansehen (ehemaliger) DDR-Bürger verändert werden?

Sie hat vor der Wende natürlich unser Ansehen beeinflusst, aber nicht ständig beeinträchtigt. Wir haben im Ausland oft erlebt, daß man uns mehr geachtet hat, als die Menschen der BRD. Es mußte differenzierter über das Leben in der DDR berichtet werden. Nicht nur über die Dinge, die nicht gut waren. Die Schwarz-Weiß-Malerei dürfte nicht so überwiegen. DDR-Bürger müßten unvoreingenommener von westlichen Arbeitgebern akzeptiert werden.

6. Was sollten andere über Ihre Kindheit und Jugend und über Ihr Leben in der DDR wissen?

Welche positiven Aspekte gibt es, von denen man vielleicht nichts weiß?

Ich hatte eine glückliche und zufriedene Kindheit und Jugendzeit, konnte den Beruf erlernen, den ich mir gewünscht habe – Lehrer. Hier muß ich allerdings sagen, daß eine freie Meinungsäußerung nicht immer möglich war. Aber zum großen Teil waren wir untereinander und den Schülern und Eltern gegenüber offen, gesprächs- und kritikbereit, übten keinen Zwang aus, nahmen uns der Probleme der Kinder und Elternhäuser an, hatten ein geregeltes und glückliches Familienleben. Jeder konnte sich Urlaub leisten, zwar nicht überallhin, aber doch in erstrebenswerte Urlaubsorte. Der Neid unter uns Kindern war nicht so ausgeprägt wie heute. Schulkleidung könnte hier eventuell etwas Abhilfe schaffen. Die Menschen waren wesentlich offener zueinander. Heute spricht man über schwierige Probleme nur noch mit sehr wenigen Personen. Das ist besonders ausgeprägt im Arbeitsleben. Wenn man Schwächen eingesteht, wird es vom Kollegen oft schon zum persönlichen Vorteil ausgenutzt. Leider ist dieses Verhalten bereits im Gundschulalter festzustellen. Das gab es in der DDR nicht. Die weiterführende Schulbildung und Talenteförderung war keine Frage des Geldes. Eine gute Entwicklung stelle ich jetzt im Wiederaufleben der Ganztageserziehung fest, die in der DDR bereits etabliert war. Hier könnte wenigstens die Begabtenförderung, Förderung leistungsschwacher Schüler und Talenteentwicklung auf schulischer Ebene erfolgen.

7. Finden Sie, daß es ein Bedürfnis für die Erforschung der DDR-Kultur gibt? Warum oder warum nicht?

Ein Bedürfnis gibt es ganz sicher, da es wertvolle literarische, musische, gestalterische und sportliche Entwicklungen gegeben hat, die auch jetzt noch Bestand haben. Die DDR-Epoche ist

ein Entwicklungsabschnitt, der nicht negiert werden kann und darf, weil es ihn gegeben hat, er viel Gutes hervorgebracht und für unsere jetzige Entwicklung unverzichtbar ist



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## **VITA**

Amy Puett, a native Texan, earned her B A in music history and Germanic studies from the University of Texas at Austin in May of 2007. She likes to incorporate travel in her studies, and during her undergraduate years she studied abroad in Vienna, Austria through IES. She also studied Italian opera in Florence, Italy through the University of Texas at Austin. Her interest in music and Germanic studies continued in her graduate studies at Texas State University - San Marcos, where she studied music from the GDR with Nico Schuler. Her research interests include music from the GDR, the Second Viennese School, pop culture studies, feminist musicology, and ethnomusicology (particularly Indian music).

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