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MUSICAL STYLE AND CONTINUITY IN AN ERA OF RADICAL CHANGE

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IN SEARCH OF HANS GÁL (1890-1987):
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A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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Abstract

Born in Vienna in 1890, Hans Gál enjoyed early successes as a composer, conductor, scholar, and teacher. In 1933, he was abruptly removed from his position as Director of the Mainz Conservatory due to his Jewish ethnicity when the Nazi part took over. And in 1938, just days after the *Anschluss*, he and his family fled Austria. With the help of the musicologist Donald Francis Tovey, they arrived in Edinburgh. In 1945, Gál was offered a position on the faculty of the University of Edinburgh, and they remained in the city for the rest of their lives.

Though Gál was active and successful in Vienna and Germany during the early twentieth century, he never took part in the many stylistic trends that defined the era. Despite the many disruptions and radical changes in twentieth-century music, Gál maintained an interesting continuity.

In an era of increasing specialization, Gál stayed active as a composer, scholar, editor, teacher, conductor, and performer throughout his long career. Gál's life is of interest to scholars studying a broad range of topics, such as Jewish studies, twentieth-century opera, Viennese cultural history, and post-war Great Britain. In this thesis, I aim to illuminate Gál's voice as a composer and scholar. However, as he seems to defy definition, this is necessarily a preliminary study.

Introduction

The composer and writer Hans Gál, commonly remembered as an editor of Brahms's Complete Works, has been otherwise forgotten. His successful career lasted almost the entire twentieth century, but was derailed when in 1933, he was abruptly removed from his position as Director of the Mainz Conservatory due to his Jewish ethnicity. He returned to Vienna the same year, and following the announcement of *Anschluss* in 1938, Gál and his family left Vienna for Great Britain. With the help of the musicologist Donald Francis Tovey, he gained a position organizing the music library at the University of Edinburgh. In 1940, he was interned for five months as an enemy alien, first at Huyton and then on the Isle of Man. And in 1945, he received a permanent position as Docent at the University of Edinburgh, where after the most tumultuous years he had known, that he found the ideal environment for putting to use his various areas of expertise.

Immediately evident from Gál's musical life is the impressive and unusual breadth of his experiences. He enjoyed early successes not only as a composer, but also as a conductor, scholar, and teacher. Gál's commitment to these various musical activities is unusual in the twentieth century, and his career seems to be more of a holdover from the nineteenth century than most of his increasingly specialized contemporaries. His music also occupies a not commonly discussed position among the more definitive stylistic approaches of the twentieth century. Neither atonal nor *Neue Sachlichkeit*, Gál's music eludes typical pre-war classification, and maintains this elusiveness until the very end.

After a review of the sources for this study and a biographical summary, I will discuss Gál's achievements chronologically. In my conclusion I suggest how understanding Gál's career can open up new ways of approaching the stylistic trends in twentieth century music.

Gál's life spanned almost the entire twentieth century. He saw the fall of the Habsburg monarchy, two world wars, and, in his career, times of great success and increasing obscurity. Two small biographical books about Gál introduce readers to his life and works. The first of these, *Hans Gál*, was written by Wilhelm Waldstein in 1965 as part of a series titled *Österreichische Komponisten des XX. Jahrhunderts*. The second is a contribution by his daughter titled *Hans Gal: Ein Jahrhundert Musik*. These books both give thorough outlines of his life and career, as well as personal recollections from family, friends, and students.

A review of primary sources reveals Gál's early success. Especially in his early career, his name can be found in journals and periodicals, as both author and subject, and often in advertisements for and reviews of his works. Some of these publications include: *Die Musik*, *Musikblätter des Anbruch*, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, *Neue Musikzeitung*, *Berliner Tageblatt*, and *Signale für die musikalische Welt*.

However, a defining characteristic of the secondary literature about Gál is the lack of it. While his name does come up occasionally (Grove, MGG, Riemann's *Musiklexikon*), he is not mentioned in places that I would expect. For example, there are a number of volumes devoted to twentieth-century opera and operetta. Among these, Gál's name is mentioned infrequently, and when it is, he is typically included in a list of "Other Operas." Roger Oliver and Leo Black commemorated Gál's birth with articles in

Tempo (1985) and *The Musical Times* (2015), respectively. A handful of articles on more specific aspects of his career include contributions from Lloyd Thomas, about Gál's vocal chamber music, and Katy Hamilton, writing about Gál and the Edinburgh Festival.

Much of the above scholarship is quite recent. There have also been recent productions of Gál's operas, most recently a production of *Das Lied der Nacht* in 2017.¹ A number of recordings have been produced in the last few years, as well. This resurgence of interest in his life and works is indicative of his ongoing relevance.

There are relatively few sources which give us a look into Gál's thoughts about his and other music of the time. One is his diary from the months during which he was interned in Great Britain. *Music Behind Barbed Wire: A Diary of Summer 1940*, while written during just these few months, contains a rare glimpse into what Gál was thinking and how he felt about his situation. He shares the details of daily life in the camps, but devotes even more time to the musical activities of the internees.

There is an English language website run by the Hans Gál Foundation. This organization is led by his daughter, Eva Fox-Gál, who has done much of the work and is still alive. Archives and databases of musicians persecuted during the Third Reich have recently become available, and more are under construction.² Gál's papers are not all digitized and not all in one place. His papers are housed in the archive of the Konzerthaus in Vienna, and others are in Edinburgh, overseen by his daughter. This study is necessarily a preliminary sketch, as it is not feasible to do an exhaustive survey

¹ <http://www.theater-osnabrueck.de/spielplan/spielplandetail.html?stid=174>

² One such example is Exil.arte Zentrum, <http://www.exilarte.at>.

of the sources. However, it can serve as a point of departure as new sources become available.

Gál's total number of published works numbers nearly 150, not including many early works which he withheld. His music has been described as light, lyrical, melodic, charming, well-crafted, and elegant (*vornehm*). It is not strictly classical or romantic, yet it is never atonal. Gál does not fit the typical conception of a twentieth-century composer, or that of an émigré. Despite the drastic changes that characterize Gál's life and the time in which he lived, his musical style remained constant. His music, while at times chromatically inventive, always remained tonal. This continuity through the commonly thought of caesuras following World War I and World War II is quite unusual.

There is not much established vocabulary for writing about this style. When discussing twentieth-century music, we have at our disposal words like impressionist, expressionist, minimalist, and realist. In a 1929 review, a critic was already describing Gál's music according to its lack of atonality. About Gál's *Sinfonietta*, Carl Heinzen said: "a very distinguished work, that expands tonal boundaries, capturing the lyrical and humorous moods in a melodious manner with equal certainty, dominating everything orchestral with a brilliant mastery."³ He is not the only to comment on Gál's clear melodies. Michael Beckerman describes an "exquisite and transcendent sound as

³ Carl Heinzen, "Kritik: Düsseldorf," *Die Musik* 21, no. 5 (1929): 384-385, accessed November 28, 2017, http://www.digizeitschriften.de/dms/img/?PID=PPN84623971X_021|LOG_0079&physid=PHYS_0430#navi. "ein sehr vornehmes Werk, das tonale Grenzen weitet, im Melodischendie lyrischen und humoristischen Stimmungskomplexe gleich sicher erfassend, alles Orchestrale mit glaezender Meisterschaft beherrschend."

transparent as it is powerful” in many of Gál’s most well-known works.⁴ Other critics make similar comments throughout Gál’s life, and they do so across all the genres in which he wrote.

Michael Haas devotes time to Gál in his book, *Forbidden Music: The Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis*, as well as an associated blog. He is often given attention for being persecuted by the Nazis, but it seems he did not see his musical identity as specifically Jewish.

My goal is to illuminate Gál’s voice as a composer and scholar. However, he seems to defy definition, maintaining broad musical expertise and eluding common categories used to classify twentieth-century music. Therefore, this is necessarily a preliminary study. By weaving together biographical, musical, cultural, and political details, I will begin to paint a picture of a life in which music-making took many forms. I will highlight different possibilities about his voice, who he was, and what he was interested in.

Early Life

Hans Gál was born on 5 August 1890 in Brunn am Gebirge, a village which is part of present-day Vienna, where his family was spending the summer months. During most of the year he, his parents, and his three sisters, Edith, Margarethe, and Erniste, lived in a cramped apartment on Wipplingerstraße, near the center of Vienna.

Both of Gál’s parents, Josef Gál and Ilka Alt, had roots in the Hungarian portion of the dual monarchy. His father arrived as a young man to study homeopathic

⁴ Michael Beckerman, “Hans Gál,” The OREL Foundation, Accessed April 4, 2018, http://orelfoundation.org/composers/article/hans_gal#top.

medicine. His grandfather on his mother's side also moved to Vienna to study homeopathic medicine.

Gál's upbringing was not a particularly musical one, and his earliest significant musical experiences came not until he was a teenager. His father often took him and his sisters to the opera. Gál did not attend his first orchestral concert until he was fourteen years old. A special performance for children, the program consisted of the Overture to Wagner's *Meistersinger* and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9.

Encouraged by his aunt, Jenny Fleischer-Alt, an opera singer in Weimar who noticed his perfect pitch and saw some talent in the young Gál, his first musical training began at age 8 with piano lessons.⁵ He showed some promise, but did not enjoy practicing. At age ten, he began studying at the Gymnasium, an experience which in later years he recalled with little kindness. He described memories of “depressingly uniform classrooms, badly heated, badly ventilated, corridors smelling of disinfectant and lavatories, where we spent the ‘respirum,’ [and] a harsh, forbidding impersonal treatment by overworked, sullen teachers.” The school, surprisingly, did not put much focus on music education. Gál wrote: “Music? None whatever. There was some wretched class singing which was not compulsory, and we hardly attended it any longer than perhaps the first term. It looks odd that in a country usually regarded as one of the most musical in the world, music was practically non-existent in the higher school.”⁶

⁵ Eva Fox-Gál and Simon Fox, *Hans Gál: Ein Jahrhundert Musik* (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich Verlag, 2012), 12.

⁶ This was written in a letter to John Russell, the editor of the biography of Gál's friend Erich Kleiber. “About Hans Gál,” *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*, Last modified 2014, accessed April 4, 2018. Hansgal.com/hansgal.

His classmate was Erich Kleiber, who also became a great musician despite this background.

Despite the sparsity of his musical experiences, they seem to have had a lasting effect on Gál. His daughter writes that “there were opera outings, a few that Gustav Mahler conducted, which he could very clearly remember, even at eighty years old.”⁷

It is helpful to put Gál's formative years in historical context. He came of age in fin de siècle Vienna, a period which has fascinated scholars for decades. It was the city of psychoanalytic theories, innovative arts, and disintegrating social and political structures. It was the city of Mahler, Freud, and Klimt. He was fifteen when *Salome* premiered and Freud published his *Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. Carl E. Schorske suggests that it was a period of breaking ties with the past.⁸

Four Careers

Gál spoke of having four separate careers across his life, each representing a moment in his life and career when he faced serious upheaval or had to start over. I will organize my discussion according to these periods. The first of these begins with his education and continues through his early career in Vienna. The second corresponds to his move to Mainz in 1929, when he became the Director of the Mainz Conservatory. His third career begins in 1933 when he was released from his position at Mainz and returned to Vienna. The final, and longest, of his four careers takes place in Edinburgh, after his family fled Austria following the *Anschluss*. At each stage of his career, however, there do not seem to be corresponding changes in artistic style, but instead a

⁷ “About Hans Gál,” *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*.

⁸ Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), xviii.

continuity from his earliest compositions to his last. After a description of each stage, I will turn to a piece of music which exemplifies it.

First Career: Pre-War Vienna

Gál's first career was a largely academic one. At age fifteen, he began studying piano with Richard Robert (1861-1924), who was the director of the New Vienna Conservatory, and, Gál's daughter writes, "one of the most respected teachers in Vienna."⁹ His sister Erna, Georg Szell, Clara Haskil, and Rudolf Serkin also studied with Robert.¹⁰ Though performance was not his main focus later in life, he often wrote for the piano. In 1909, he began studies in counterpoint and form with Eusebius Mandyczewski (1857-1929), who was a student of Brahms and the archivist for the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. They maintained a close relationship for the rest of Mandyczewski's life, later editing the complete works of Brahms together (1926-7).¹¹ In the same year, he began studying with Guido Adler at the University of Vienna. Also in 1909, he took the test to teach piano, and shortly thereafter gained a position at the New Vienna Conservatory. There he taught piano, as well as harmony and counterpoint.

In 1913, Gál completed his course at the University of Vienna with a dissertation titled: "The stylistic peculiarities of young Beethoven and their connection with the style of his maturity," which was later published in *Studien zur Wissenschaft*.¹² At this point it seems like Gál's career trajectory would place him in academia.

⁹ Fox-Gál and Gál, *Hans Gál: Ein Jahrhundert Musik*, 14. "einem der angesehensten Lehrer Wiens."

¹⁰ Monika Kornberger and Elisabeth Th. Hilscher, "Gál, Geschwister," in: Oesterreichisches Musiklexikon online, Accessed April 6, 2018, http://www.musiklexikon.ac.at/ml/musik_G/Gal_Geschwister.xml?frames=no.

¹¹ "About Hans Gál," *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*.

¹² "Die Stileigentümlichkeiten des jungen Beethoven und ihr Zusammenhang mit dem Stil seiner Reife."

As a prominent musician and teacher in Vienna, Gál maintained a large network of fellow musicians. He attended *Gymnasium* with Erich Kleiber. Georg Szell was a classmate in the piano studio of Richard Robert, and he would later conduct the premier of one of Gál's most famous works.

Op. 1, Von ewiger Freude

Von ewiger Freude, Gál's opus 1, was written in 1912. It is a cantata scored for two soprano soloists, two alto soloists, two female choirs, organ, and two harps. The text, which is on biblical themes, describes escaping earthly troubles for heavenly joy. It has not been attributed to any person, and it is likely that Gál wrote and/or compiled the texts himself. The text begins with a unison chorus: "Oh poor soul, how do you like living here? Why are you moving out today? You have a bad throne, you have a bad throne, it is only an ossuary." Then a soprano soloist begins the next line of text: "Look out from the valley into Heaven's hall."¹³

The work was premiered on 16 February 1913 in Vienna. The concert was put on by the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde and performed by the Choir of Albine Mandyczewski, with her husband Eusebius Mandyczewski conducting, and Alois Kofler at the organ.¹⁴

Gál had a lifelong attachment to vocal music, as both a composer and conductor. In this early composition, one can already hear Gál's choral voice: clear, contrapuntal, and rooted in the past. The music is also often only lightly accompanied, putting the

¹³ Hans Gál, *Von ewiger Freude*, (Wien: Universal Edition, 1916), accessed March 1, 2018, <https://archive.org/details/VonEwigerFreudeOp.1>. *Ach arme Seel' wie magst hier wohn? Warum ziehst mit noch heut' aus? Wohl hast du einen schlechten Thron, wohl hast du einen schlechten Thron, es ist doch nur ein Beinhaus./ Sieh' aus dem Tal in's Himmels Saal.*

¹⁴ "About Hans Gál," *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*.

focus on the voices. He wrote vocal across his entire life, with no particular vocal period. His vocal music spans a variety of genres, including Lieder, madrigals, cantatas, and part songs. In 1928, fifteen years after his opus 1, Gál founded the Vienna Madrigal Society (*Wiener Madrigalvereinigung*), and continued to be involved with similar groups for the rest of his career.

Two short articles by Gál from the following decade give us a glimpse into his thoughts on the genre of vocal music. The main argument in “Vokale Kammermusik” (1928) is that there is a boundary between those who create vocal music and the large majority of singers who are not professional. He advocates for artful music that is also accessible. In particular, he points to the sixteenth-century madrigal as having rich possibilities for contemporary music making.¹⁵ Later, he even published madrigals of his own.

In “Chortechnik und Chorstudium” (1928), Gál begins by discussing the lack of a capella singing on concert programs. He attempted to address this problem with the Vienna Madrigal Society, by programming unaccompanied works.¹⁶ Though *Von ewiger Freude* is accompanied by organ and harp, there are many sections which sound a capella because of a light, slow-moving accompaniment or no accompaniment at all. At the very beginning, following an eighty-measure organ introduction, the choir comes in and the organ takes on a secondary role, almost inaudible at times. Many of his other vocal works also have this a capella quality.

¹⁵ Hans Gál, “Vokale Kammermusik,” *Musikblätter des Anbruch* X, 9-10 (1928): pp.355-356, accessed September 12, 2017, <http://www.hansgal.com/storage/writings/vokalekammermusik.pdf>.

¹⁶ Hans Gál, “Chortechnik und Chorstudium,” *Pult und Taktstock*, Oct-Nov (1928): 88-92, accessed September 12, 2017, <http://www.hansgal.com/storage/writings/chortechnik.pdf>.

Figure 1 *Von ewiger Freude*, op. 1, vocal part, mm. 83-95, Wien: Universal Edition, 1916.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the vocal part of 'Von ewiger Freude'. It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The vocal line is written in a soprano, alto, and tenor range. The piano accompaniment is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *aus*, *p*, and *cresc. sempre*. The lyrics are: 'Ach arme Teel' wie magst hic wohnen! Warum ziehst nit noch heet', 'Wohl hast du einen schlechten Thron,', 'wohl hast du einen schlechten Thron, es ist doch nur ein', 'Bein-haus, ein Bein-haus, ein Bein-haus! Ach arme'.

World War I

Gál had just finished his doctorate in 1913, and won awards for his compositions in 1914 and 1915 when, like many, had to put things on hold during the war. He was 24 when World War I began, and so he had to serve in the Austrian army. His assignments, beginning in 1915, took him from Belgrade to the foot of the Carpathian Mountains to Italy. He had very poor vision, and so his assignments were never on the front lines. He worked mostly in an office setting and was able to spend his free hours composing.

A small handful of his compositions around this time were influenced by the music that he heard while serving. In particular, his *Serbische Weisen*, op. 3, for piano duet, were inspired by the music he was exposed to while stationed in Belgrade.¹⁷

Second Career: Interwar Period

Gál's second career begins with the end of World War I. He returned to Vienna in 1918 and began to seriously look for work as a composer, teacher, and conductor. One year later, he was awarded the Rothschild Prize and became a docent at the University of Vienna, where he taught harmony, counterpoint, form, and orchestration.

In the 1920s, Gál's circle was a wide and impressive one, full of big name conductors, performers, and composers. His music was played by the best performers, published by the best publishers (Universal Edition, Simrock), and performed all over in Vienna and Germany. His sister Erna was in a relationship with the violinist Rudolf Kolisch (1896-1978) during this time, and Gál remained friends with him after they were all forced out of Vienna. Kolisch, as well as the violinist Adolf and conductor Fritz Busch, performed his music many times.

In 1922, he married Hanna Schick, who came from a distinguished and cultivated Jewish family. She lived the first six years of her life in Prague before her family moved to Vienna.¹⁸ She was a music lover and had already heard several of his compositions. They met through a mutual acquaintance, the pianist Louise Wandel. He was twelve years her senior, and her mother, though she liked Gál, objected to the union, even hiring a graphologist to analyze his handwriting to help make her case.

¹⁷ "About Hans Gál," *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*.

¹⁸ Fox-Gál and Gál, *Hans Gál: Ein Jahrhundert Musik*, 21.

Their first child, Franz, was born in 1923, and their second son, Peter, just one year later. Their daughter Eva would be born 20 years later in 1944. When Gál died in 1987, they had been married for sixty-five years when Gál died in 1987; Hanna died two years later.¹⁹

The most prominent works of this “second career” period were the comic operas which he composed between 1917 and 1933. The first, *Der Arzt der Sobeide*, was completed in 1917-18 and was premiered and published in 1919. The libretto for this first opera was written by Fritz Zoref, and is set in sixteenth-century Granada. The plot revolves around the courtship of a princess. And Gál’s setting is full of Spanish musical idioms.

Die heilige Ente

Gal’s second opera was his biggest success. *Die heilige Ente: Ein Spiel mit Göttern und Menschen* is a comic opera consisting of a prelude and three acts. It was completed in 1920 and was premiered in April of 1923 in Düsseldorf, under the direction of Georg Szell (1897-1970).

The libretto was written by Karl Michael von Levezow (1871-1945), with the assistance of Leo Feld. Though not a huge name, Levezow was a significant choice. Strauss once commented that if he had not collaborated with Hofmannsthal, he would have chosen Levezow.²⁰ Wilhelm Waldstein writes: “In this eccentric [Levezow], Gál found, for a number of years, what he needed in his quest for stage effect.”²¹ When Gál

¹⁹ “About Hans Gál,” *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*.

²⁰ Wilhelm Waldstein, *Hans Gál* (Wien: Verlag Elisabeth Lafite (Österreichische Bundesverlag), 1965), 40. “Hätte ich nicht Hofmannsthal gefunden, so hätte ich gerne mit Levezow gearbeitet.”

²¹ Waldstein, *Hans Gál*, 40. “An diesem Sonderling [Levezow] fand Gal für eine Reihe von Jahren, was er in seinem Streben nach Bühnenwirkung brauchte.”

and Levezow met in 1920 at a concert, he was not yet known as a librettist. Levezow had rejected his aristocratic heritage and background in law at the University of Vienna in favor of leading a Bohemian lifestyle and writing poems and theater pieces.²²

Levezow also wrote libretti for the “Zeitoper” works of contemporary composers Ernst Krenek, Eugen d’Albert, and others. Schoenberg, whose *Zwei Gesänge*, op. 1 was a setting of one of his texts, had met Levezow while writing for the Überbrettl theater in Berlin.²³ Though Gál’s music was different from that of these others, he was nonetheless connected to them by working with this progressive writer. Gál wanted very particularly to work with Levezow and went to great lengths to do so. He and his family even spent a holiday in Corsica, after Gál discovered that Levezow was living there, in order to track him down.²⁴ Even after, the libretto for *Die heilige Ente* received bad reviews due to the libretto, he continued to work exclusively with Levezow.

The plot follows a servant (*Kuli*) named Yang who is in charge of the duck which will be served at a feast honoring the “Bonze.” The duck escapes and the main portion of the plot unfolds. The Mandarin is furious, calling for the death of Yang as punishment for his action (or rather, inaction). The gods intervene, everyone falls into an opioid-induced sleep, and the Mandarin realizes he is wrong to have been so harsh on the underling. This story is almost Dadaistic in its sensibilities. Like Mona Lisa’s mustache in Duchamp’s *L.H.O.O.Q.*, nonsensical elements seem to be affixed to what might otherwise be a more typical plot.

²² Cornaro, B., “Levezow, Karl Michael Frh. Von” from *ÖBL 1815-1950*, (1970, 165), accessed April 11, 2018, http://www.biographien.ac.at/oebL/oebL_L/Levezow_Karl-Michael_1871_1945.xml.

²³ Waldstein, *Hans Gál*, 40.

²⁴ “About Hans Gál,” *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*.

Following the successful premier in Düsseldorf, the opera was staged in a number of cities, including: Breslau, Weimar, Aachen, Chemnitz, Kassel, Königsberg, Berlin, and Prague. Walther Hirschberg, in a review for *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, commented on the text:

As it is not possible hereto follow all the twists and turns of the very complicated texts, only the important parts will be reported. Gods and men, dream and reality, deceit and truth feature in the plot, which is located in sacred China.²⁵

Most of the poor reviews for the work focused on the faults of the complicated libretto; the music was generally praised.

The music emphasizes the Chinese setting. The prelude begins with the notes of a pentatonic scale made vertical, resulting in quartal harmonies. This was a popular subject at the time, with other librettists and composers drawn to the exotic setting and music of China.²⁶ Though there is no recording of the work, midi files of the prelude and love duet have been made available by Gál's grandson, Simon Fox-Gál. The music brings to mind, perhaps unsurprisingly, contemporary works by Strauss.

²⁵ Walther Hirschberg, "Hans Gal 'Die heilige Ente,'" *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, no. 38: 1428-1430. Accessed September 25, 2017. [http://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/annoplus?aid=smw&datum=19250138&query=\(\(text:heilige+text:ente\)\)&ref=anno-search](http://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/annoplus?aid=smw&datum=19250138&query=((text:heilige+text:ente))&ref=anno-search). *Es ist hier nicht möglich, allen Wendungen und Windungen des sehr komplizierten Texts zu folgen. Nur das Wesentlichste soll berichtet werden. Götter und Menschen, Traum und Wirklichkeit, Trug und Wahrheit spielen in die Handlung hinein, deren Staette das heilige China ist.*

²⁶ Puccini's *Turandot* premiered in 1926.

Figure 2. Hans Gál, *Die Heilige Ente*, Prelude, Wien: Universal Edition, 1923.

The image shows the first page of the musical score for 'Die Heilige Ente' Prelude by Hans Gál, Op. 15. The title is prominently displayed at the top, followed by the subtitle 'Ein Spiel mit Göttern und Menschen' and the names of the librettists, K. M. Levetzow and Leo Feld. The score is for piano and includes directions such as 'Lento maestoso. (sehr breite d)', 'Un poco animato.', and 'Poco rit.'. It features dynamic markings like 'pp' and 'mf sostenuto'. The score is published by Universal Edition, 1922, with the number 7206.

A 1925 advertisement for the Städtische Oper²⁷ in the *Berliner Tageblatt* lists “Die heilige Ente” between “Lohengrin” and “Die Meistersinger,” which were being performed the same weekend.²⁸ Its popularity and the string of performances all over Germany suggest that the work was, at the time, just as important as operas with a more

²⁷ Now the Deutsche Oper.

²⁸ “Städtische Oper,” *Berliner Tageblatt* 54, no. 442 (1925): 20, accessed May 10, 2018, <http://zefys.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/index.php?id=dfg-viewer&set%5Bimage%5D=20&set%5Bzoom%5D=default&set%5Bdebug%5D=0&set%5Bdouble%5D=0&set%5Bmets%5D=http%3A%2F%2Fcontent.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de%2Fzefys%2FSNP27646518-19250918-0-0-0-0.xml>.

steady position in the repertory. In 1929, *Die heilige Ente* was the first opera broadcast by Vienna Radio.²⁹ It remained in the repertoire in Germany until 1933.

One of many articles Gál contributed to Universal Edition's *Musikblätter des Anbruch* was titled "Zum Problem der komischen Oper" in a 1928 issue. Though short, it gives us a look at how Gál thought about opera. In the article, he states that opera has been on a downhill-slide since *Rosenkavalier*. Gál wrote here that good opera requires subject matter which is more human. He thought that good music could not arise from the poor materials with which so many of his contemporaries were working.³⁰ He probably was referring to the "Zeitoper" phenomenon. These sensationalist, aggressively modern works appeared around the mid-1920s, and he wrote the article in 1927, the same year of Weill's *Johnny spielt auf* and Hindemith's *Hin und zurück*. Gál's operas, while written around this time, did not fall into this category.

His third opera, *Das Lied der Nacht*, with a libretto by Levezow, was written in 1924-25, with the premier on 26 April, 1926. The opera is set in Sicily in the twelfth century, and the mythical plot follows young Leonora who must find a husband to be the next king. Following the Breslau premier, it received positive reviews and was subsequently performed in Düsseldorf, Königsberg, and Graz.³¹

His final opera, *Die beiden Klaas*, another Levezow collaboration, was completed in 1933. It is based on Hans Christian Anderson's "Big Claus, Little Claus,"

²⁹ "About Hans Gál," *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*.

³⁰ Hans Gál, "Zum Problem der komischen Oper," *Musikblätter des Anbruch*, no.1-2 (1927): 90-93.

³¹ "About Hans Gál," *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*.

but also includes satirical commentary on contemporary ideas of morality.³² Its scheduled performances were all canceled and Gál never saw the work performed.

Interwar Opera

Comic opera and operetta were wildly popular, and successful, genres in the 1920s. While the most famous operas were Berg's *Wozzeck* (1925), Weill's *Die Dreigroschenoper* (1928), and Strauss's string of successful operas, the scene was even more rich, with many operas which were not performed again after the 1930s and have since fallen into obscurity. Some of these contemporaries include Krenek and d'Albert. Some better known examples from this time include Hindemith (*Cardillac*, 1926) and Busoni (*Dr. Faust*, 1925).

Universal Edition published Gál's operas, and those of many other composers, shortly after they premiered. Contemporary opera composers also published by Universal include Max Brand, Ernst Krenek, Kurt Weill, and others. In an advertisement of "successful comic operas" by the Universal Edition in *Musikblätter des Anbruch*, Gál's name is listed alongside those of Felix Weingartner, Rudolf Siegel, and Hermann Noetzel.³³

³² "About Hans Gál," *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*.

³³ Universal Edition Advertisement, *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 2, no.1 (1920): 84, accessed November 28, 2017, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.c2701249>.

Figure 3 Advertisement for Universal Edition, *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 2, no. 1 (1920): 84.

ERFOLGREICHE KOMISCHE OPERN

HANS GÁL:
Der Arzt der Sobeide

Komische Oper in einem Vorspiel und zwei Akten. — Dichtung von Fritz Zorel
U. E. Nr. 6250 Klavierauszug mit Text Mk. 15.— U. E. Nr. 6251 Textbuch Mk. 1.—
Gáls „Arzt der Sobeide“ gelangte am 2. November 1919 am Breslauer Stadttheater mit großem Erfolg zur Aufführung. Der Komponist konnte am Schlusse für mehr als ein Dutzend Hervorrufe danken

HERMANN NOETZEL:
MEISTER GUIDO

Komische Oper in drei Akten. — Dichtung vom Komponisten
U. E. Nr. 6260 Klavierauszug mit Text Mk. 20.— U. E. Nr. 6261 Textbuch Mk. 1.—
Durchsdl. Erfolg des Karlsruher Hoftheaters! Bevorstehende Aufführungen München (Nationaltheater), Kassel (Staatl. Schauspiel), Bremen (Stadttheater)

RUDOLF SIEGEL:
HERR DANDOLO

Komische Oper in drei Akten nach einer italienischen Komödie
U. E. Nr. 6295 Klavierauszug mit Text Mk. 12.— U. E. Nr. 6296 Textbuch Mk. 1.—
Bisher glänzende Aufführungen in Essen (Tonkünstlerfest), Stuttgart (Landestheater), München (Nationaltheater), Mannheim (Nationaltheater). — Zur Aufführung angenommen für Weimar (Landestheater)

FELIX WEINGARTNER:
DAME KOBOLD

Komische Oper in drei Akten nach Calderon
U. E. Nr. 5695 Klavierauszug mit Text Mk. 15.— U. E. Nr. 5696 Textbuch Mk. —80
U. E. Nr. 5824 Ouvertüre, Klav. 2 hdg. Mk. 2.50 U. E. Nr. 5698 Walzer, Klav. 2 hdg. Mk. 2.—
U. E. Nr. 5692 Kavatine, Gesang und Klavier Mk. 1.—
Diese geistvolle, melodisch reizende Schöpfung Weingartners ist bisher an zahlreichen Bühnen mit stärkstem Beifalle gegeben worden. Aufführungen derselben haben bisher u. a. in Darmstadt, Leipzig, München, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, Charlottenburg, Chemnitz, Graz stattgefunden

Verlegerzuschlag 50 Prozent. — Zu beziehen durch jede Buch- und Musikalienhandlung

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Many Viennese composers found more opportunity and success in Germany than in Austria. Guido Heldt writes: “the musical scene in Vienna proved more conservative than that of Berlin after 1918, the second Viennese school notwithstanding, of whose operas only Schoenberg's *Die glückliche Hand* was premiered in Vienna, in 1924.”³⁴ One reason that there were relatively few performing ensembles, each of which put on relatively few concerts/productions. These Viennese ensembles were also quite devoted to older repertoire, leaving little room for the new.

³⁴ Guido Heldt, “Austria and Germany: 1918-1960” from *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-century Opera*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 146.

Other Activities

From 1926-27, Gál worked with his former teacher and friend Eusebius Mandyczewski to edit the complete works of Johannes Brahms. The two remained close for the rest of the latter's life. In 1989, Hanna Gál recalled their relationship:

At the time when the two of them were preparing the Brahms Complete Edition, and Hans was constantly busy in the archives of the Gesellschaft für Musikfreunde, which were looked after by Mandyczewski, they met almost every day, and Hans, who otherwise hated swallowing the dust in archives, was so entranced by Mandyczewski's intelligence, his knowledge and his rich store of memories, that the collaboration nevertheless gave him great pleasure.³⁵

Beginning in 1924, Gál received a monthly salary from Simrock for the license to his new works. In 1928, his first symphony was awarded a Columbia Schubert Centenary Prize. The work was then published by Simrock in 1929 and performed widely.

Mainz

A new stage of Gál's second career began with the prospect of career stability, when in 1929, he accepted a position as the Director of the Mainz Conservatory. There, he taught classes and continued to compose. His appointment was a considerable recognition of his work during the preceding decade, and suggests that his contemporaries respected him as a musician and educator. He received a recommendation from Strauss and a second from Wilhelm Furtwängler, in which the conductor names Gál "one of the best-educated and highest-achieving musicians that I know." He goes on to call Gál an "excellent pianist" and "excellent music

³⁵ "About Hans Gál," *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*.

pedagogue.”³⁶ This is high praise from such a respected member of the international music world.

While in Germany, Gál was on the committee of the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Verein*, which promoted contemporary music. Alban Berg and Ernst Toch were also on the committee.³⁷ He worked most closely with Berg, as they were in charge of choosing Austrian compositions for new music festivals sponsored by the society. Though their own music was aesthetically different, the two worked well together and often agreed on which compositions to choose.³⁸ Other members from this time period included well-known composers such as Hindemith, Pfitzner, Zemlinsky, Weingartner, and Strauss.

On January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany. The effects were felt almost immediately. On March 4, 1933, an article denouncing Gál was published in the *Mainzer Zeitung*. It read: “With the arrival of the Hungarian Jew Gál as the director of the conservatory, a spirit has come in which corresponds to what the National Socialists understand as ‘Jewish cultural decomposition.’”³⁹ The article was published again on March 22, and on March 29, he was released from his position at the

³⁶ “Photos,” *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*. Last modified 2014. Accessed April 4, 2018. hansgal.com/photos. “*einer der gebildesten und hochstehenden Musiker, die ich überhaupt kenne.*”

³⁷ Michael Haas, *Forbidden Music: The Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 160.

³⁸ Michael Fend, “Hans Gál,” in: *Lexikon verfolgter Musiker und Musikerinnen der NS-Zeit*, Claudia Maurer Zenck, Peter Petersen (Hg.). Hamburg: Universität Hamburg, 2012, accessed February 16, 2018, https://www.lexm.uni-hamburg.de/object/lexm_lexmperson_00002570.

³⁹ “About Hans Gál,” *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*. “*Mit dem Einzug des ungarischen Juden Gál als Direktor der Musikhochschule ist hier ein Geist eingezogen, der durchaus dem entspricht, was der Nationalsozialismus unter ‘jüdischer Kulturzersetzung’ versteht.*”

Conservatory. The note he received, brief as it was, turned his world upside down: “I hereby suspend you with immediate effect.”⁴⁰

His final opera, *Die beiden Klaas*, had been scheduled for two performances: one in Dresden and one in Hamburg. Both performances were cancelled, but a performance was then scheduled at the Vienna Konzerthaus, to be conducted by Bruno Walter. This performance was also cancelled in 1933.⁴¹ After the success of his first three operas, and the expected success of this one, these cancellations must have been an endlessly frustrating experience. Gál and his family remained in southern Germany for several months, expecting that he might regain his post. Then in August or September, they returned to Vienna.

After 1933, Gál never wrote another opera. However, this is more complicated than just his change in location and circumstance. 1933 was a more global juncture in the history of opera. According to Richard Taruskin, “the thriving operatic economy of the Weimar Republic was the last truly thriving—that is, consumption-driven—economy in the history of opera.”⁴² Gál’s career in the public eye also came to an end at this time. In the coming years, his home and career were unstable. And though he continued to compose in the proceeding decades, it was simply never the same again.

⁴⁰ “About Hans Gál,” *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*. “Ich beurlaube Sie hiermit mit sofortiger Wirkung.”

⁴¹ Michael Beckerman, “Hans Gal,” *The OREL Foundation*, accessed March 7, 2018, http://orelfoundation.org/composers/article/hans_gal#top. The opera finally received its premier several years after Gál’s death.

⁴² Richard Taruskin, “The Death of Opera?,” *The Oxford History of Music Online*, accessed April 8, 2018, <http://www.oxfordwesternmusic.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/view/Volume4/actrade-9780195384840-div1-009011.xml?rskey=ngE7c0&result=1>.

Third Career: Back to Vienna

Gál and his family returned to Vienna in 1933. In his view, this break was big enough to call the beginning of his third career. Gál, like many others, struggled to find work. However, he and his family managed. It is astonishing that he was able to remain involved in music at all, and this speaks to his reputation and skill a great deal.

During this time, he conducted the Wiener Konzert-Orchester and, once again, the Wiener Madrigalvereinigung.⁴³ Though Gál's music, like that of most Jewish composers, was no longer published in Germany after 1933, his works still appeared in advertisements by Breitkopf and Härtel in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*.⁴⁴ His final opera had been cancelled three times over, but his smaller works continued to be performed on less visible stages. A 1933 issue of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* lists a performance of Gál's String Quartet No. 2, op. 35 at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, with the comment: "a very good work."⁴⁵

In 1936-37, Gál completed his second cantata. Titled *De Profundis*, the work is a setting of some seventeenth-century texts inspired by the Thirty Years' War. These texts, which are at times apocalyptic, are an eerie choice for the time. His dedication, "To the memory of this time, its misery, and its victims," suggests a connection in Gál's mind between the texts and the turbulent time in which he compiled and set them. The title of the work, which means "from the depths," also suggests a biblical connection to

⁴³ "About Hans Gál," *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*.

⁴⁴ Breitkopf & Härtel Advertisement, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 101 (1934): 227, accessed April 4, 2018, <https://archive.org/stream/NeueZeitschriftFuerMusik1934Jg101#page/n289/mode/2up/search/Gal>.

⁴⁵ Alfred Heuß, "Musik in Leipzig," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, vol.100 (1933): 44, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://archive.org/stream/NeueZeitschriftFuerMusik1933Jg100#page/n0/mode/2up>. "ein sehr gutes Werk."

Psalm 130.⁴⁶ In liturgical prayer, this is a lament for the departed, in which the psalmist cries out to God for mercy. It is about ascension from a low point, which only God can deliver.

Though Gál's Jewishness must have been a part of his whole life, he does not seem to have wished to talk about it. Even in the 1920s, anti-Semitism was becoming louder and more pronounced than ever before. With the formation of political parties focused on the subject, it would have been forced into the mind of any Viennese citizen.⁴⁷

Fourth Career: Edinburgh

Within two days of the announcement of *Anschluss*, Gál and his wife fled for Great Britain. Their sons, who were in school, joined them a few months later. Gál's sister, Erna, also emigrated to Great Britain.⁴⁸ Their original plan was to continue to the United States; however, this never came to fruition. With the help of Donald Francis Tovey, and at the recommendation of Adler, Furtwängler, and the conductor Fritz Busch, he gained a temporary position at the University of Edinburgh cataloguing the music library. In a letter to Tovey, Busch lists Gál's many musical activities and ensures him that Gál is "a man and musician after our own hearts."⁴⁹ As early as his first months in Great Britain, Gál also performed quite a bit. He played piano for concerts at the

⁴⁶ *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2006).

⁴⁷ Bruce F. Pauley, "Political Antisemitism in Interwar Vienna" from *Jews, Antisemitism and Culture in Vienna*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), 152-173.

⁴⁸ She worked for the Glyndebourne Opera House as a singing coach. Michael Haas says: "from her emigration to the UK up until her death, she was regarded as one of Glyndebourne Opera's most ancient and fearsome institutions." Michael Haas, "Hans Gál and his Sacred Duck," accessed March 29, 2018, <https://forbiddenmusic.org/2014/03/05/hans-gal-and-his-sacred-duck/>.

⁴⁹ "About Hans Gál," *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*. "ein Mensch und Musiker nach unserem Herzen."

University of Edinburgh and often joined other émigré musicians for performances in London. His works were also performed occasionally at the University of Edinburgh.

In 1940, the British government arrested 24,000 men and 4,000 women and sent them to internment camps in Britain, Canada, and Australia. On Whit Sunday, Gál and his son were arrested.⁵⁰ Gál went first to a holding camp at Huyton and then to the central camp on the Isle of Man. In an introduction to his published diaries, his daughter writes that the four and a half months that he was interned “probably represented the worst period of his life.”⁵¹ The internees were powerless in the face of the “mindless bureaucracy,” and Nazi prisoners were housed with those who had fled persecution.⁵²

While interned, Gál continued to compose. As instrumentation was limited in the camps, his Huyton Suite is written for flute and two violins. On June 12, his diary reads:

In sober moments, it is clear to me that I am mad. Here I am, writing music, completely superfluous, ridiculous, fantastic music for a flute and two violins, while the world is on the point of coming to an end. Was ever a war more lost than this one now? What shall we do if peace is now concluded? What if none is concluded? Each possibility seems as hopeless as the other. I must, so often in my life, think of the ‘Man in the Land of Syria’ in the parable by Rückert. I hang over the abyss eating berries. How wonderful that there are such berries! Never in my life have I been as grateful for my talent as I am today.⁵³

For Gál, music seems to have been an escape from the horrible events taking place around him. This is something his daughter reiterates.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Hans Gál and Eva Fox-Gál, *Behind Barbed Wire: A Diary of Summer 1940*, (Toccata Press, 2014), 20.

⁵¹ Gál and Fox-Gál, *Behind Barbed Wire: A Diary of Summer 1940*, 21.

⁵² Gál and Fox-Gál, *Behind Barbed Wire: A Diary of Summer 1940*, 21.

⁵³ Gál and Fox-Gál, *Behind Barbed Wire: A Diary of Summer 1940*, 76.

⁵⁴ “About Hans Gál,” *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*.

Gál was released about five months later, due to a worsening skin condition, and he returned to Edinburgh. Though still without stable employment, he was active in the city's musical life. He continued to participate in concerts at the university, playing piano and having his works played. From 1940, he worked with the Edinburgh Madrigal Society, even composing madrigals some years later.⁵⁵

Since Gál moved to Great Britain in 1938, his time there accounts for around half of his life. As this is such a long expanse of time, it is helpful to demarcate a number of "periods" within this final of his four careers. Though Gál does not separate the war years from the rest of his time in Edinburgh, it is worth drawing a distinction. This conception glosses over a time which seems markedly different from the surrounding years. He left his home, was interned, and suffered unimaginable loss. It is hard to believe that this period did not have more and special meaning.

It is also hard to imagine that his circumstances during these years did not affect his compositions. Understandably, he wrote relatively fewer compositions in the years between 1938 and 1945. And his interment in 1940 affected such details as the instrumentation he chose to write for. A case in point is his *Huyton Suite*, written for flute and two violins, and more specifically a flautist and two violinists who were also in the camp. In order to provide a more in-depth analysis of a war-time work, I will turn to his Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, written in 1944. The work premiered in 1950 in

⁵⁵ Michael Fend, "Hans Gál," in: *Lexikon verfolgter Musiker und Musikerinnen der NS-Zeit*, Claudia Maurer Zenck, Peter Petersen (Hg.). Hamburg: Universität Hamburg, 2012, accessed February 16, 2018, https://www.lexm.uni-hamburg.de/object/lexm_lexmperson_00002570.

Gothenburg, Sweden, and received many subsequent performances in Edinburgh throughout the 1950s and 1960s.⁵⁶

Concerto for Cello and Orchestra

By 1944, when he began work on the Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, Gál's life, like that of countless others, had been turned upside down. In 1942, Gál's mother died and his two sisters committed suicide in expectation of their inevitable arrival at Auschwitz. At the end of that year, his eighteen-year-old son committed suicide. It goes without saying that this is a grievous load for a person to carry. Two years later, Gál and his wife celebrated the birth of another child. During the nine months in 1944 which he spent writing this piece, Gál had much to celebrate, as he was always quick to point out. But he also had much to grieve.⁵⁷

I will offer a brief narrative analysis, highlighting certain musical and biographical details. In this abstract narrative reading of Gál's piece, an initial memory, a splinter if you will,⁵⁸ is presented and eventually fragments and colors new material, permeating the entire piece. In the end, the memory remains. It has changed, perhaps becoming fainter with time, but it remains. I will draw from a poem by the German poet Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866) as a possibility for understanding the treatment of thematic material in this piece. I argue that Gál's life and memories as an émigré composer, caught between the home he fled and the new country he is learning to embrace, is one way in which to read this work.

⁵⁶ Eva Fox-Gál, Preface by Eva Fox Gál from Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, op. 67, Breitkopf & Härtel, 2015.

⁵⁷ Michael Fend, "Hans Gál," in: Lexikon verfolgter Musiker und Musikerinnen der NS-Zeit.

⁵⁸ Florian Scheding, "'The Splinter in Your Eye': Uncomfortable Legacies and German Exile Studies," from *Music and Displacement: Diasporas, Mobilities, and Dislocations in Europe and Beyond*, (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2010), 119.

In the aforementioned poem, which Rückert, a nineteenth-century poet, orientalist, and professor of East Asian cultures, titled “Parable,” a man is on a trek through the Syrian desert. Perhaps he is on a journey or maybe he is lost. His camel becomes alarmed and he finds himself running and then hiding in a well. He is surrounded by danger on all sides, with no route available for escape. As his racing mind panics, he spots a branch full of small berries and takes pleasure in the sweet escape from his troubles. This moment occurs toward the middle of the poem:

Und da er also um sich blickte,
 Sah er ein Zweiglein, welches nidte,
 Vom Brombeerstrauch mit reifen Beeren:
 Da konnt' er doch der Lust nicht wehren.
 Er sah nicht des Kameeles Wut,
 Und nicht den Drachen in der Flut,
 Und nicht der Mäuse Tückespiel,
 Als ihm die Beer' ins Auge fiel.
 Er ließ das Tier von oben rauschen,
 Und unter sich den Drachen lauschen,
 Und neben sich die Mäuse nagen,
 Griff nach den Beerlein mit Behagen,
 Sie däuchten ihm zu essen gut,
 Aß Beer auf Beerlein wohlgemuth,
 Und durch die Süßigkeit im Essen
 War alle seine Furcht vergessen.⁵⁹

But as he looked around him so,
 A twig he spied, and on it grow
 Ripe berries from their laden stalk;
 Then his desire he could not balk,
 When these did once his eye engage,
 He saw no more the camel's rage,
 Nor dragon in the underground,
 Nor game the busy mice had found.
 The beast above might snort and blow,
 The dragon watch his prey below,
 The mice gnaw near him as they pleased
 The berries eagerly he seized;
 They seemed to him right good to eat;
 A dainty mouthful, welcome treat,
 They brought him such a keen delight,
 His danger was forgotten quite.⁶⁰

Though Gál was not walking through a desert, and his music never references such a story, this text's importance to Gál at this time in his life provides an intriguing parallel with the music. Gál himself set his wartime works apart from the rest of his oeuvre. His daughter recalls that he fondly referred to them as his “war children.” In the preface to his Cello Concerto, she wrote: “For him personally they undoubtedly had an

⁵⁹ Friedrich Rückert, *Gedichte*, Frankfurt Am Main: J.D. Sauerländer's Verlag, 1868, 109-12.

⁶⁰ Friedrich Rückert, “Life and Death: A Parable from the German of Rückert,” from *The Story of Justin Martyr and Other Poems*, London: Parker, Son, and Bourn, West Strand, 1862, 218-21.

existential importance, enabling him to maintain his mental, emotional and spiritual balance.”⁶¹ One can hear in the music, I argue, an existential peace as well as a harsh reality. And in the composer’s life, a hope for a kinder future. The lesson of the *Parable* is told again in the Concerto as Gál relates the perspective of the poet’s protagonist.

The first movement of the Concerto for Cello and Orchestra is scored for a small ensemble of flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, horn, trumpet, timpani, and strings. The form is loosely rondo, characterized by altered returns of the original theme. The piece begins with a series of ascending fifths, starting in the bass and climbing upward through the woodwinds until the cello melody begins. Repetitive triplets in the bass, also in fifths, create a static harmony (E, B, F-sharp). Both the melody and harmony are built on a pentatonic set, with non-pentatonic tones treated like non-harmonic tones. This lack of movement lends a sense of temporal stasis and contemplation (See figure 1). This harmonic line continues for the first ten measures of the piece. In this opening phrase, meter is not discernable until around m. 3 or 4, after the cello comes in. Time does not strictly apply and a sense of memory seems to be pulled from thin air. When the harmony does change, the triplets remain. As do the fifths, though fewer in number as they fade away. The harmonic rhythm moves slowly at first and then gains momentum. It is as if the music is entering into real time gradually.

⁶¹ Hans Gál, Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, op. 67, Preface by Eva Fox Gál, Breitkopf & Härtel, 2015.

Figure 4. Gál, Concerto for Cello and Orchestra (piano reduction)/I, mm. 1-7.

The musical score for measures 1-7 of Gál's Concerto for Cello and Orchestra is presented in a piano reduction format. It consists of three staves: Violoncello (Cello), Klavier (Piano), and Orchester (Orchestra). The tempo is marked *Allegro moderato* with a quarter note equal to 116 beats per minute. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The Violoncello part begins with a heavy, open-fifth entry. The Klavier part features a piano introduction with triplets and a dynamic marking of *pp*. The Orchester part includes strings (Str.) and an oboe (Ob.) with a dynamic marking of *p espr.*

Another interesting aspect of this theme is that while the key of E is rather clear, the quality, major or minor, cannot be discerned until m. 4. With the G-natural, E minor is established. Though it feels, in a way, foretold in the cello's heavy, open-fifth entry. This ambiguity seems appropriate as Gál was at a point in his life in which he had memories of a happy distant past and a painful recent past.

Turning to Rückert's poem, I liken this original theme to the man walking through the desert. As he looks around at the endless expanses of sand, time fades away. The unchanging landscape has no markers of passing time. As he pushes forward, his footsteps are erased by the wind. In Gál's life, this is the memory of his past, both close and distant. The ambiguity present in the first few measure highlights that this static memory can have varied qualities.

Though the ascending fifth is prevalent throughout the work, the original theme never returns in its entirety. It comes back in fragments, sometimes in the cello, sometimes not. It is occasionally passed between instruments in a single iteration. It is changed to major and then returns to minor. New material is added. We hear shards of the splinter, if you will. Even the final statement of the theme, in the home key, only recalls the first two measures of the original statement.

The original theme first comes back at m. 66 as a full orchestral *tutti*. The melodic line proceeds as expected, beginning in the bass and climbing upward. But in the third measure, modal mixture occurs with the appearance of a raised third in the supporting harmony. Coupled with the ambiguous opening bars, this moment is important, for any change in mode is quickly heard and interpreted. This once again creates some ambiguity about the nature of the memory. Is it good, bad, happy, tragic? Or perhaps it lies on a continuum, somewhere in between?

A second mood in this work is characterized by faster rhythms, louder dynamics, and more intricate, dense harmonies. The key area is constantly shifting, sometimes the music existing outside of any particular key (See figure 2). I liken this almost developmental section to the running, hiding, and escaping in Rückert's text. In Gál's life, I associate this section with the turmoil in his life brought on by war. He had lost countless family members, friends, and acquaintances. He lost his job, his right to publish music, and finally his home. The years from 1933 until 1944, when the piece was written, involved large-scale unsettlement in the world and his own life.

Figure 5. Gál, Concerto for Cello and Orchestra/I, mm. 84-96.

The image displays a musical score for the first movement of György Gál's Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, measures 84 through 96. The score is presented in four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is B major, indicated by two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 4/4. The first system (measures 84-86) begins with a tempo marking of *ff* and features a cello line with a triplet of eighth notes. The second system (measures 87-89) includes a *Blechbl.* (clarinet) part and continues the cello triplet. The third system (measures 90-93) shows the cello line with a *ff* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth system (measures 94-96) concludes the passage with a *ff* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The score is characterized by dense harmonic textures and complex rhythmic patterns.

After a first tumultuous interlude, at m. 111, the piece modulates to B major (See figure 3). Marked *molto tranquillo*, this section portrays a new, lighter character. The harmonic language is less dense than in the preceding section. This lyrical, major section (and its varied returns) can be likened to the berries in the poem. A respite, perhaps.

Figure 6. Gál, Concerto for Cello and Orchestra/I, mm. 111-122.

14

6 **Molto tranquillo** (♩ = 88-96)

111

p dolce

Str. *pp*

Hn.

Ob. *espr.*

Va.

Vc.

115

p

119

dim.

p

A second example of the main theme fragmented even further, and more interestingly, occurs at m. 207. Here, the ascending-fifth theme and the *molto tranquillo* section discussed just previously are combined. They are not layered on top of one another, but rather one becomes the other, incorporating the different character into its restatement. The first four measures are reminiscent of the *molto tranquillo*. But then,

following the F-sharp in m. 210, material from the original theme appears (See figure 4).

Figure 7. Gál, Concerto for Cello and Orchestra/ I, mm. 206-213.

The final iteration of the original theme, at m. 321, begins as expected (See figure 5). After two measures, it starts to wind down. Then, in the third-to-last measure of the cello melody, something strange happens. The final five notes are F-sharp, C-sharp, D-sharp, E, and C-natural. The C-sharp and D-sharp lend a major feel. And then the melody ends on scale degree six in minor. As this fades away, the orchestra's final progression is VI-E-flat Major-V7-i. This is an ending that raises new questions, rather than answering the original ones.

Figure 8. Gál, Concerto for Cello and Orchestra/ I, mm. 324-331.

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (measures 324-331) shows the cello line in the upper staff and the piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *dim.* (diminuendo) and *pp* (pianissimo). The tempo marking *rall.* (rallentando) is indicated above the first measure. The second system (measures 327-331) shows the cello line in the upper staff and the piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *pp*. The score ends with a double bar line and a small graphic element at the bottom right.

To summarize, the music suggests a narrative through the presentation of three distinct emotional states. The first, associated with the original theme, represents temporal stasis, memory, and contemplation, the “splinter” through which the rest of the work is heard. The second, associated with the fast, harmonically dense sections of the music, represents intense movement, panic, loss, and suffering. The final, associated with the lyrical, major theme, typically marked *molto tranquillo*, represents hope or an existential peace, a respite from everything else that is happening. This section is to the music what the berries are for the man in Rückert’s poem. For Gál, the berries are music itself. The three emotional states trade off, becoming stronger or fainter, combining, placing themselves in dialogue until the piece ends with a final, uncertain statement of the original memory or sense of contemplation. It has been greatly affected by what it went through following its original iteration.

I argue that this is a piece of music about music. It is a child of war. It remembers. The memory permeates the piece. But it does not dwell on its own darkness. In fact, it ends in the relative major. The first time that I heard this piece, I was struck by the way that a piece with such a heartbreaking opening melody was at the same time such an uplifting one. The narrative I have provided is one way in which to animate this work through historical and hermeneutic interpretation.

Later Years

In Edinburgh, amazingly, Gál found what seems like a perfect environment in which to utilize all of his training and interests. In 1945, Gál was offered a job as docent at the University of Edinburgh, and he remained in this position until 1965. Here he taught, conducted, performed, and maintained a large musical circle, much like his life before the war. The continuity which I argue for in his musical style can also be seen in his career. The years between 1933 and 1945 were characterized by massive upheaval, but when looking at his career as a whole, I can see continuity.

After the war, Gál had the opportunity, by way of an invitation to teach at the Vienna Academy, to go back to Vienna. Not wishing to uproot his family once again, he decided to stay in Scotland.⁶² And this is where he and his wife stayed for the remainder of their lives.

For so many émigrés, the decision to return “home” or not was a serious marker of identity. Others, like Gál’s former student Georg Knepler, chose to return to German-speaking lands as soon as the opportunity arose. And many, like Adorno, felt from the beginning that they must return.

⁶² “About Hans Gál,” *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*.

Gál remained in Scotland, even as Vienna was always home for him. In an obituary in the *Österreichische Musikzeitung*, the author says about Gál: “He always described himself as Viennese.”⁶³ His music and career also point back to Vienna and its rich past in a number of ways. Michael Beckerman points to Gál’s “identification with the music of his native Vienna, and his love for Brahms, Schubert and Johann Strauss.”⁶⁴ He had a lifelong relationship with vocal and choral music, much of it with a Bachian, contrapuntal quality. This is partly due to his training from Mandyczewski, but is also a result of his attachment to the city’s rich musical past. In 1948, he wrote a book about the musical city’s past, titled: *The Golden age of Vienna*. He also wrote books about composers such as Schubert, Brahms, and both of the Strausses.

Especially important to Gál were masters of melody: Brahms and Schubert. And Gál passed this love of Vienna’s past and its strong vocal tradition down to his own students in Vienna, Mainz, and Edinburgh. One such student was Peter Williams (1937-2016), the organist and Bach scholar who went on to have a long and successful career first at the University of Edinburgh, and later at Duke University.

During the 1940s, Gál assisted Rudolf Bing in the founding and subsequent running of the Edinburgh Festival. Bing, a Viennese-born impresario who had worked in Darmstadt, Berlin, and London (Glyndebourne), wished for a performance event that

⁶³ Christian Heindl, “Hans Gál Obituary,” *Osterreichische Musikzeitschrift* 42 (1987): 602-603. “*er selbst bezeichnete sich stets als Wiener.*”

⁶⁴ Michael Beckerman, “Hans Gal.” The OREL Foundation. Accessed March 7, 2018. http://orelfoundation.org/composers/article/hans_gal#top.

might rival Bayreuth and Salzburg.⁶⁵ The Festival became an important musical event in Great Britain.

While Gál enjoyed a successful career in Edinburgh, working well past the typical age of retirement, his music had been out of fashion for decades. Across Europe, composers were experimenting with music like never before. The increasing presence of the new, the atonal, and eventually the electronic left little room for an old-fashioned composer with strong nineteenth-century Viennese roots.

During his Edinburgh years, Gál continued to receive awards and honors for his musical activities. In 1948, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Edinburgh. In 1956, the city of Mainz honored Gál with a performance of his cantata: *Lebenskreise* (after poems by Friedrich Hölderlin, Theodor Fontane, Goethe, and Hrabanus Maurus). This gives us a glimpse of how important Gál was to the musical community there during his short time as Director of the Conservatory. In 1958, he was once again awarded the Austrian State Prize.⁶⁶

The final composition I will discuss is Gál's Symphony No. 4. This work is evidence of the continuity in his output and also his popularity at the time, as it was performed shortly after he completed it. The symphony has also been recorded recently by Orchestra of the Swan/Kenneth Woods for Avie Records (2015).

Symphony No. 4

Gál's Symphony No. 4 (Sinfonia Concertante) for Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Violincello, and Small Orchestra was completed in 1974, when the composer was 84

⁶⁵ Katy Hamilton, "Hans Gal and the Edinburgh Festival," *Brio* 50, no. 1 (2013):39-52.

⁶⁶ "About Hans Gál," *The Hans Gál Website: Music for Generations*.

years old. The four movements are titled: I. Improvvisazione, II. Scherzo Leggiero, III. Duetto, and IV. Buffoneria. The symphony was premiered by the Reid Orchestra in Edinburgh in 1975. Gál provided the following program note:

This work is akin to a concerto grosso, combining a symphonic structure with the brilliant display and competitive spirit of four soloists who act both as a group and as individuals, emulating each other. In the first movement (*Improvvisazione*) the main emphasis is on the confrontation of solo and tutti; the following Scherzo leggiero is a burlesque masquerade of Harlequin and Columбина; the third movement (*Duetto*) puts the limelight upon the violin and cello as the protagonists, singing a duet; and the Finale (*Buffoneria*), a rondo with various episodes, is opened, punctuated, and in the end concluded by a kind of wayward harmonic motto.⁶⁷

Though written late in his life, the melodic style is reminiscent of his earlier instrumental works. The 1929 comment about Gál expanding the boundaries of tonality in his first symphony, still holds true. This connection between his first symphony, completed in 1927, and his last is evidence of his early development of a compositional “voice.” During the interceding decades in which modernism reigned supreme, Gál kept steady. In his book *Modernism*, Peter Gay speaks of “A Climate for Modernism,” an age in which the new and revolutionary were practiced and praised. Gál was surrounded by this climate, but somehow less perceptible to it.⁶⁸

The comparison to a concerto grosso points to the traditional, Viennese past which I have argued was an integral part of Gál’s musical identity. The reference hints at a neoclassical sensibility, yet it was written in the 1970s. Coupled with the techniques so similar to his earlier works, a traditional voice is even more evident here, in the second half of the twentieth century.

⁶⁷ Kenneth Woods, *Gál Symphony No. 4*, Avie Records, 2012, Accessed March 23, 2018, <https://uoklahoma-naxosmusiclibrary-com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/catalogue/item.asp?cid=AV2231>.

⁶⁸ Peter Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy from Baudelaire to Beckett and Beyond*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), 1.

As the 1970s came to a close, Gál's compositional activity waned. However, he continued to work, completing his final composition, *Moment Musical* for recorder, in 1986, just one year before his death. The title makes one last connection to his past and that of Vienna and a connection to composers like Schubert, whose melodies he so admired. Gál died on October 3, 1987 after battling cancer. Obituaries from all over Europe and the United States recalled a kind man, devoted teacher, thoughtful writer, and accomplished composer.

Conclusion

For Gál, composing seems to have been not only the thing he enjoyed doing, but also a job; he approached it in that pragmatic manner. He valued professionalism and would have been proud of it in a way that other composers were proud of their greatness or ingenuity. He composed for those around him, often resulting in some unusual instrumentations. Pieces for mandolin orchestra, recorder, flute and viola were inspired by those around him who were in need of music to play. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Gál seemed uninterested in establishing any sort of method or school according to his own compositional method. One of his students from Mainz, Otto Schmidtgen, said:

It is characteristic of Hans Gál's nature that none of us was allowed to study one of his works during his student years and that none of them could ever be found on a program of high school concerts. When once we studied his "Variations on a Viennese Heuriger melody," we had to do it secretly.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Waldstein, *Hans Gál*, 92. *Bezeichnend für Hans Gál's Wesen ist es, dass keiner von uns Schülern während seiner Studienzeit eines seiner Werke studieren durfte und das keines je auf einem Programm der Hochshulkonzerte zu finden war. Als wir einmal seine 'Variationen über eine Wiener Heurigenmelodie' studierten mussten wir es heimlich tun.*

His work as a teacher is one of the most important aspects of Gál's career, and it was also something which he loved very much. It was an essential part of his personal and artistic identity.⁷⁰

The continuity that I see and hear in Gál's life and music is something that he acknowledged: "As long as that [artistic life] was allowed, my work worked most effectively for me. The rift that came into my life as a creative artist in 1933 influenced only the circumstances of my life, not my work, which continued unchecked on its way."⁷¹

One way to highlight this continuity is to compare his output to the common early-, middle-, and late-style model. In short, this model does not seem to apply to Gál. Instead, his music displays the characteristics of "late-style" (balance, concision, retrospection, etc.) very early on.⁷² The simple, reserved melodies that characterize much of his music, from the beginning of his career to the end, seem appropriate for his quietly optimistic personality.

There are a number of possibilities for future research. First, the size of his oeuvre, nearly 150 compositions, leaves plenty of room to do a more exhaustive search for his compositional voice and tracing of this continuity in style. Second, because he lived his life in two very different parts of Europe, it would be interesting to explore the possibility of cultural exchange. How was his music affected by his new surroundings,

⁷⁰ Waldstein, *Hans Gál*, 87

⁷¹ Christian Heindl, "Brillanz und Phantasie," *Wiener Zeitung* (Dec. 28, 2012), accessed April 8, 2018, http://www.wienerzeitung.at/themen_channel/wz_reflexionen/vermessungen/512398_Brillanz-und-Phantasie.html. *So lang es das durfte, hat mein Werk aufs Wirksamste für mich gewirkt. Der Riss, der in mein Leben als schaffender Künstler kam, anno 1933, hat nur die Umstände meines Lebens, nicht mein Schaffen beeinflusst, das ungehemmt weiter seinen Weg gegangen ist.*

⁷² This idea is stated briefly by Michael Beckerman and Leo Black, though neither elaborates.

or was it? And conversely, what sort of musical legacy did he leave behind?

Additionally, his involvement with the Edinburgh Festival might prove revealing.

Another area for further studies is the reviews which Gál wrote for journals in Great Britain and on the continent. These sources might reveal strong opinions which cannot be seen in the more readily available materials. It is only once Gál's more personal thoughts and opinions are uncovered that the compelling issue of cultural identity can be explored further. Gál's public statements about his music politely rejected any complicated or ambivalent relationship to his past. However, future scholarship about his life and work may tell a different story.

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