

Current of Music

Theodor W.
Adorno

Current of Music

CURRENT OF MUSIC

Elements of a Radio Theory

Edited with an Introduction by
Robert Hullot-Kentor

polity

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Editor's Introduction

Second Salvage: Prolegomenon to a Reconstruction of *Current of Music*

Another way to say the search for reality
is to say the desire for completion.
Clifford Odets

The centenary proceedings in celebration of T. W. Adorno's birth in 2003 were a lugubrious display internationally, but most of all in Germany. There the event was headed up by a harness of three heavily shod biographies trudging in decade-long synchronization toward the publishing occasion, as if the goal were to make sure that no detail of Adorno's life went untrampled. Even Adorno's writing table and chair, in simulacra, were dragged into the Frankfurt ceremonies. Encased in a silicone cube, these mundane furnishings were established as a national treasure to be visited on *Adornoplatz* in hometown perpetuum. Suhrkamp Publishers and the Goethe Institute, working closely with a restaffed and now corporate-minded Adorno Archiv, distributed so absolute a mass of memento, chronology, and photograph – the known antipodes to Adorno's philosophy itself – that even under scrutiny it was often hard to decide whether the topic was the writing of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* or the framing of the *Magna Carta*. The jubilee successfully portrayed the life of the man as if in a single stride he stepped from crib to garlanded tomb, where the philosophy itself was put to rest. The biographical preoccupation, undermining the

philosophy, finally undermined the biographical as well. Thus, one result of these centenary achievements is that now every next mention of Adorno's life only helps steal away from the dictum that 'Life does not live' any sense that the apprehension ever troubled the person who made the dictum the frontispiece to *Minima Moralia*.

This bears directly on the intention of this essay to provide a first introduction to *Current of Music*. For, as is to be explained, Adorno left the manuscripts for this work in fragmentary condition; what is conceptually valuable in them now depends in part on reconstruction. An assumption of this reconstruction has been that, when a work is abandoned in fragments, reference to the life that left them behind can legitimately provide transitions to potentiate tensions of thought that, deprived of their final shaping efforts, would otherwise dissipate. Certainly this assumption might have been more naively pursued prior to the centenary year. The only alternative now – for this introduction in any case – is to look the situation in the face and acknowledge that what is biographical in the transitions established here to provision *Current of Music* with a degree of tensed coherence has recently been woven into something milled out by the mile, with no end in sight. Perhaps in this recognition, what is now lifeless, with the feel of having never lived, will at least half speak of this situation rather than further compound the recently achieved inertness.

New York City, 1938–1941

In 1937, T. W. Adorno had been living in England for three years, having fled National Socialism. Although he was formerly a *Privatdozent* – an independent lecturer – in philosophy at the University of Frankfurt, the Nazis had deprived him of the right to teach, and the hardship of immigration had set him back to the status of a student at work on a dissertation, a critique of Husserlian phenomenology. He was obliged to hope that a DPhil, taken at Oxford, in addition to his PhD, would provide the over qualification that an immigrant would minimally need to secure a position at a British university.¹ In October, however, a telegram from Max Horkheimer caused him to revise these plans. Horkheimer had for some time wanted to bring Adorno to New York City, and the telegram proposed the means if Adorno were interested in participating in the Princeton Radio Research Project, a study supported by a Rockefeller Foundation grant under the direction of the sociologist and Austrian émigré Paul Lazarsfeld.² The next day Adorno wired back his readiness to accept the position, but the decision was hardly made without ambivalence.³ On one hand, Adorno saw that catastrophe was inevitable in Europe; he had no real

expectation of securing academic employment in prewar England; and his wife, Gretel, who was ill, found the English climate hard to tolerate, and it was hoped she might recover in the United States. But now that his plans to depart had become reality and, 'contrary to all expectation', imminent, Adorno expressed in a letter of 27 November to Walter Benjamin what had all along weighed most against the decision. '*Uppermost*' – Adorno wrote – were his thoughts on Benjamin himself, and in this one word he lodged his distress as poignantly as possible between two men who after a decade of close involvement still addressed one another formally, as *Sie*. If Benjamin would realize, Adorno continued – emphasizing this *uppermost* of their friendship with a circumlocution of the greatest urgency for anyone as utterly familiar as was Benjamin with what Adorno held dearest – that *second* on his mind was that parting meant 'the real possibility of never seeing my mother again', Benjamin would be able to 'imagine how I feel about' the decision to leave.⁴ But, Adorno explained, he could not refuse Horkheimer's proposal. He had been assured that fully half his time would be devoted to the Institute for Social Research, then affiliated with Columbia University, and collaboration on projects that he and Horkheimer had long envisioned, most of all a study of dialectical materialism. By early January, Adorno had met in Paris with Lazarsfeld, and by late that month had submitted to him a lengthy memorandum outlining his research plans.⁵ On 26 February 1938, Adorno and his wife arrived on the steamship *Champlain* in New York City harbour. Adorno would remain in New York City until November 1941, when – without renewed funding for his position at the Princeton Radio Research Project – he would again be compelled to move in order to secure his proximity to Horkheimer, who had decided to go on to Los Angeles, where his own fragile health, and the institute's finances as well, could be better maintained. Adorno would not return to Germany until 1949, having spent almost one-quarter of his life as a refugee, a portion of that as an American citizen. He did not embrace German citizenship again until 1955.

Written in English

In his fifteen years as a refugee, T. W. Adorno wrote several major works, including *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (with Max Horkheimer, 1947), *Philosophy of New Music* (1949), and *Minima Moralia* (1951). Their dates of publication belie the years demanded by each of these seminal German texts that no doubt received Adorno's most decisive conceptual energies. Yet, in addition to these and numerous other projects, Adorno in the same period also produced a substantial body of

research written in English. The latter are distinctly secondary works from the perspective of the oeuvre as a whole but are nevertheless, in their own terms, of considerable interest. Among these writings in English are *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas's Radio Addresses* (1943) and *The Authoritarian Personality* (with Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford, 1950). *Current of Music* was the working title that Adorno proposed on various occasions for a volume that would have assembled the majority of the research that he completed during his first four years in the United States while affiliated with Lazarsfeld in New York City. The texts conceived under this title – comprising several thousand pages – constitute far and away Adorno's most extensive work in English.

Yet Adorno did not succeed in his own lifetime in publishing this work whose topic and language were adopted under compulsion in the land to which its author fled. The study itself was rejected by a series of editors in the United States and was ultimately left incomplete among the many materials housed at the Adorno Archiv in Frankfurt. This essay intends to explain what Adorno meant to achieve in the book and why his efforts failed. It should be remarked at the outset, however, that this introduction in no way seeks pathos in defence of a work lost to history, as if deserving in reconstruction the rank of *texte maudit* or *Bürgerschreck*, for it is neither. If passages of *Current of Music* – both published and unpublished – did once antagonize and have the capacity to raise hackles again, it was not only ill will and happenstance that got in its way but just as much and more the work's own deficiencies. It is in full cognizance of the limits of these writings that *Current of Music* is now to be imagined into existence. This requires broad recognition and explanation of the complex situation in which this work in its many parts was written. In alliance with its own thinking, however, this reconstruction is certainly not undertaken here with the intention of setting the past back on its feet like a Golem conjured to walk the streets of another millennium, but rather by wanting to spark what is significant in that past when it is known self-consciously from the perspective of the present.

Music, electricity, and cultural hunger

The current of *Current of Music* is electricity. In the 1920s and still in the early 1930s, electricity had yet to be used on a vast scale for the reproduction of musical sound. The technology of radio transmission had been developed during World War I in the United States by a government that, in need of reliable means of communication with its European troops, seized by eminent domain the patents and work of

private inventors. Only in the following decades was this technology exploited for the literal capacity evident in Adorno's electrical metaphor – the current that powers radio – to produce music in streams and even floods of sound across any quantity of space simultaneously.⁶ The desire to receive this *current of music* produced the early momentum in radio sales: where only ten thousand families owned sets in 1922, 27 million families – out of 32 million in the United States – owned sets by 1939.⁷

If it is easily imagined that the introduction of radio music would motivate the rapid distribution of the device, it is not as easily guessed that a large proportion of the music heard in the United States on those radios was art music of the European classical tradition. Many stations broadcast live classical music exclusively: in 1921, for instance, the Chicago station KYW broadcast 'all performances of the Chicago Civic Opera, afternoon and evening, six days a week – and nothing else'.⁸ WQXR in New York City played classical music 80 per cent of the time and in the other 20 per cent talked primarily about it and the other arts. The more expensive radio sets were themselves advertised as having been built for distinguished music; they were fine 'instruments' that the listener faced as they 'played' and the listener was expected to be interested in its proper 'tuning'. No less a figure than Leopold Stokowski gave instruction for bringing the equipment up to pitch: 'In tuning-in on the wave length desired there is a central point of maximum clarity and truth of reception.'⁹ The skill of 'perfect tuning' was extolled as an optimal capacity, akin to perfect pitch. Radio stations that transmitted serious music portrayed themselves as conservatories: 'A visit to station WMAQ [in Chicago] is like entering a music conservatory. You enter a reception room . . . then on into the studio . . . artistically furnished in brown tones . . . here and there, a large fern . . . and a Mason and Hamlin grand piano.'¹⁰

This image of early radio devoted in significant proportion to European art music might prompt an enduringly fixed and real resentment in contemporary American readers, as if that was a moment when *high* still thought it could lord it over *low*. But in the early and genuinely class-conscious decades of American radio, when questions of the equitable redistribution of wealth and privilege were actually discussed – as they now are not – and an end was sought to much openly acknowledged resentment, the broadcast of European art music was a model of possible democratization. Contrary to what might be guessed at today, the distinction between *popular* and *classical* was loosely synonymous with what in those decades was discerned as the distinction between *light* – or *light popular* – and *serious* music. In the manuscripts of *Current of Music* Adorno himself regularly deals with these two sets

of categories as being easily interchangeable in the assumptions of the age. The significance of this is in what the now mostly forgotten pair *light* and *serious* music contributed to the synonymity. The distinction it drew indicates that the idea of amusement had not yet subordinated music entirely. Although the exclusivity of music as amusement was ascendant, a contrary seriousness of listening was commonly acknowledged as legitimate and valued. When *high* and *low* were invoked, the thinking involved was complex in a way that is now unfamiliar, since in the minds of many what was *high* was often valued as what ought to become the possession of all.

The evidence for this goes far beyond what can be derived from sets of terms. For the idea of culture itself had not yet suffered the catastrophic implication of World War II; culture was still thought to be a human privilege marked by, but no less distinguishable from, class privilege. When – for instance – Barnett Newman ran for mayor of New York in 1933, his manifesto was titled, ‘On the Need for Political Action by Men of Culture’. If his candidacy stood in minority and beleaguered opposition, he all the same had enough support to write confidently that ‘culture is the foundation of not only our present society, but of all our hopes for all future societies to come.’¹¹ This was characteristic of the expression of democratically minded individuals and institutions of various kinds and – in the ‘red decade’ – especially those many on the wide spectrum of the left who readily encouraged and fought for the broad distribution of art music. In Manhattan, for instance, the City Center for Music and Drama was established by the city government in alliance with trade union organizations to present symphony, ballet, and opera inexpensively to working-class audiences. The center was vigorously capable of supporting its own ballet and opera companies. In its own day, when the accomplishments of the City Center were discussed, its success was generally acknowledged not in terms of bringing *high* to *low* but in the fact that unlike the Metropolitan Opera, which was segregated, its opera house was not.¹²

Radio was acknowledged above all other institutions in this period as having the pre-eminent capacity to universalize performances of a human culture that was previously restricted to the wealthy. Its diffusion was civic policy. In 1937, New York’s mayor, Fiorello La Guardia, appeared on what was then the city’s proudly municipally owned radio station, WNYC – then under the directorship of the former head of the Socialist Worker’s League Morris Novik, whom La Guardia had appointed – to comment as a ‘music lover’ on Beethoven. The mayor provided ‘little stories about all the composers represented on the program and the music being played . . . He had the appearance of a man tackling an important job with great

earnestness.¹³ It only makes the same point to note here, with the mention of Morris Novik, that it was his office that two years later would engage Adorno in plans to present a lecture series as a citywide educational introduction to modern music on Sunday afternoons, the station's most listened-to hours. Although those plans were only partly realized, their existence is representative of a forward-looking orientation to radio and music that could not now be conceived on a major American radio station.

In these first decades of radio, those who had hopes for it expected it to wipe away the stigma of class privilege borne by art music, and this expectation met with success. As one commentator observed, 'Until the past few years such music was the rather expensive privilege of the inhabitants of a few large cities.'¹⁴ This observation was confirmed by statistics assembled in the late 1930s and reported in a 1938 article in *Harper's Monthly Magazine*: for though quantitatively all economic classes listened more to *light music* than to *serious music*, as a result of radio a majority of Americans, African American and white, came to like and listen to serious music. Four-fifths of the homes in the nation heard at least one symphonic or operatic broadcast a week.¹⁵ Even in rural areas, where radio most dramatically changed life but where interest in classical music was predictably less than in cities, there were stations such as WOI in Ames, Iowa – much studied by the Princeton Radio Research Project – that combined farm news and market reports with its most popular programme, *The Music Shop*, a daily broadcast of short symphonic pieces, chamber music, and music education.¹⁶ These broadcasts were especially directed to 'the farmer's wife', who, as Adorno mentions repeatedly in *Current of Music*, became a mythically invoked figure in discussions of radio's democratizing cultural potential. The invention of radio, it was said, would enable her to go about her household chores while attending Carnegie Hall and the Philharmonic gratis alongside the well heeled and mink clad. And in some regions of the country this mythical intention found reality. A characteristic letter from a female listener to WOI reads: 'The more I hear good music, such as you give us, the more I love it, and the more I hear that kind the more I dislike the other kind.'¹⁷ What rings of another age in this woman's comment is the apparently naive desire for self-improvement to be gained through familiarity with music held to be objectively superior. It is to be emphasized that she figures here as part of a movement. A now discredited idea of culture implicitly provided individuals such as herself with a critical stance toward their own perceptions and directed them with substantial expectation toward the promise of radio. Again, in the voice of *Harper's*: 'Millions are haunted by such

feelings of hunger for learning, for acquiring new arts, for self-improvement. And radio today makes an earnest effort to satisfy that hunger.¹⁸

Radio pedagogy

The *Harper's* statement vividly insists on the power of radio to nourish an age urgently beset by the need for educational self-improvement. And to rid this hunger, radio institutions of several kinds had been established, including 'schools of the air' to which Adorno occasionally refers throughout *Current of Music*. It was possible, for instance, to obtain a 'broad though simplified education in the arts and sciences . . . by sitting in front of your loudspeaker' at WNYC's *School for Listeners* or by following programmes at the University of the Air, broadcast by 'The Voice of Labor', the Eugene Debs memorial station WEVD. The latter presented complete classes in history, philosophy, labour, literature, and economics.¹⁹

But the single most significant pedagogical effort by radio in those decades, and in fact the most substantial pedagogical undertaking ever in the history of American broadcast media, the *NBC Music Appreciation Hour*, was a result of the success of radio in making European art music available nationally. It was a programme for the cultivation of musical knowledge and taste, and it is of specific interest here because in *Current of Music* Adorno devotes a lengthy essay to it and conceived the plan of his own educational broadcast in critical relation to it. For more than a decade, from 1928 to 1942, the programme was led by the conductor of the New York Symphony Philharmonic, Walter Damrosch. At its height it was heard weekly as required curriculum throughout the academic year in more than 70,000 schools nationwide, by more than 7 million students.²⁰ Educational materials coordinated with the nationally broadcast concert season in New York City were printed in the hundreds of thousands and distributed to classrooms in yearly editions; teachers received accompanying pedagogical instructions and test blanks to administer. Reviewing the pedagogical achievements of Damrosch's programme in the context of the reported demographics of national listening habits, even now it is easy to share spontaneously in the expectations widely sensed by many at the time that the interest in serious music produced by radio had led the masses of Americans to the verge of a cultural coming of age. In the words of *Harper's Monthly Magazine*: 'A sound and deep appreciation among the masses of our people is growing first in music and will draw after it, but more slowly, a love of the best in the other arts. . . . The American people, in the mass, are at the *threshold of a cultural maturity*.'²¹

Statistical inner ear: results

This passage was built out of the rhetoric of high hopes, certainly, but was founded, too, on developments in technology and an analysis of listenership in a major segment of American society. The reality it carried compellingly in its own moment heightens the acuity of the statistical riposte it receives in its encounter with how things today have in fact turned out: in 2003 there were 14,392 'formatted' radio stations in the United States – 50 per cent of which played the same songs – with 147 classical stations, 34 of them commercial.²² These statistics are not reported here as if they might reveal to anyone in North America or elsewhere what has occurred in American music. The world as a whole is in all things more familiar with the United States than the reverse, but its international presence has been foremost in the music it exports, up until very recently by means of radio as its primary vehicle of distribution. Any number of American songs named here might ineluctably provoke their playing in an inner ear that is worldwide. Since music is the most binding and involuntary form of neuro-cultural memory, every mind busy with this essay is obliged to acknowledge to itself that it is to some degree an artefact of what has transpired musically in the United States. If this seems provokingly self-evident, this is the feeling that the distinguished jazz historian, conductor, and composer Gunther Schuller touches on in his analysis of the situation of music as it had developed in the United States by the 1980s: 'We have here an essentially victimized American population whose freedom of choice in matters musical is virtually denied them.'²³

From Schuller's perspective and the available statistics, then, the expectations of 1938 expressed in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* would seem to have received a broadside from the historical development. But this is not the case, and, on second look, what that 1938 article presents turns out to have been more prescient than not as a harbinger of the situation Schuller portrays. For what carried the high hopes of 1938, the wave that can be felt coming up under its cultural anticipations, is perceptible as the statistical realities cited, themselves becoming statistics as reality. These depression-era statistics, in other words, not only reported a situation but increasingly became functional elements in the commercial manufacture of music; they participated in the elimination of music that owed its quality to having been made on another basis than in response to the needs and opportunities of industrial entertainment. Given the significance of the rise of radio market research for the history of music in the United States, therefore, it is of central importance for understanding the conflicts that would shape *Current of Music* to note that a pre-eminent institution for the development of market research in radio

in the 1930s and early 1940s was the Princeton Radio Research Project, whose statistics, as it happens, the *Harper's Monthly Magazine* article relied on.

Third-party listening and academic tycoon

Lazarsfeld himself initially provided the offices for the Princeton Radio Research Project in vacant factory space in Newark, New Jersey. The rundown, haphazard location was an implication of the fact that this was a privately held research venture that solicited contracts from public, commercial, and philanthropic sources. A brilliant statistician, single-mindedly pragmatic and by his own statement prepared to be ruthlessly so, Lazarsfeld developed a talent for transforming the practical problems of commerce and public interest into research projects undertaken in conjunction with university services, which he facilitated and supervised. His considerable significance in the history of sociology, beyond a group of skilfully conceived research projects, was for the invention in the late 1930s of an organizational structure that put the new science of sociology at the service of commercial interests. This innovation would complete his transformation from a young Austrian intellectual, passionately devoted as a Marxist activist to the implementation of 'a psychology of imminent revolution', to the author of a valuable study of unemployment, to a professor at Columbia University in Manhattan who in later life would be an academic tycoon.²⁴

If the Princeton Radio Research Project was situated at the turning point in Lazarsfeld's career, it was located at a significant moment as well in the history of the sociology of radio. Prior to its research there were few sources of information not only about the listenership of radio music but about all aspects of radio audition, including attention span, listening preferences and habits, general programme satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and local, regional, and national variables. According to the terms of its grant, under the title 'The Essential Value of Radio for All Types of Listeners', the Princeton Radio Research Project established itself as a major undertaking for the collection and analysis of radio audience information. It was to develop the tools for audience measurement along many parameters and demonstrate the usefulness of these measurements for the improvement of radio. By learning more about what audiences wanted and how radio succeeded or failed to provide for these needs, it would help make radio as valuable and useful to its listeners as possible. The philanthropic nature of this project would have been unmistakable in the decades when radio was not only looked to as a source of

education and cultural good but lived in the national imagination as the voice of social cohesion itself, as the one ready means of society-wide communication and vigilance. In the iconography of the age, radio's high, beaming towers radiated a masterful charisma and, especially during the war years, were as much beacons of safety as thought to be key targets for enemy plots. The broadcast industry itself, having won the privatization of the broadcast system and the right to advertise, in a series of much-disputed legislative struggles then still within living memory, was piously careful to emphasize radio's performance of social services and its contributions to national moral integrity.

This context certainly emphasized the philanthropic claim of a project to research 'The Essential Value of Radio for All Types of Listeners'. But if this title is held up to the light and examined a second time, it did once refract other potentials, and still does. It might well name an undertaking to assemble information about what listeners most valued in order to provide the data to some third party with heteronomous purposes for this 'essential value'. Once this is noticed, it is hard to decide what the title was about. It could, of course, have carried both meanings, as seems to be the case, but, if so, this ambiguity does not need to remain cloaked in lasting obscurity. An otherwise rarely acknowledged hermeneutical device, a dinner party, is available in historical documentation to solve the question. This particular supper, an award ceremony scheduled for the night of 15 February 1940, elucidates the definitive kinds of alliances at work at the Princeton Project: Frank Stanton, soon to be the president of Columbia Broadcasting System, wrote to John Marshall, the grant supervisor at the Rockefeller Foundation, to announce with pleasure that on that February evening Paul Lazarsfeld would be honoured by the advertising industry as the individual who had revealed 'the *educational significance* of radio programs'.²⁵ But what does this mean? Lazarsfeld might be credited with some contribution to education and radio, but not for discovering the educational value of radio, for which radio had long figured so broadly in the social imagination. On the contrary, Lazarsfeld had been chosen as advertising's man of the year in the area of research for having brought together people from commerce and academia and thus having succeeded at demonstrating the economic significance of radio's educational potential for advertisers. The award read: 'By integrating research efforts of individuals affiliated with both commercial and academic organizations, a significant beginning was made in 1939 to . . . interpret the social aspects of radio in terms of the economic pertinence to the commercial user of the medium.'²⁶ The dates are coincidental, but it represents

an actual convergence of realities that, within days of this announcement, further funding of Adorno's position at the Princeton Radio Research Project was denied by John Marshall at the Rockefeller Foundation, and Lazarsfeld himself learned that he had been hired as a professor of sociology at Columbia University.

Historical accuracy

Deference to historical accuracy has required that the end of Adorno's employment at the Princeton Radio Research Project be indicated prior to a word being said about his part in the project, for in every regard the alliance was over before it started. Initially, however, the collaboration did have certain plausibilities. Lazarsfeld shared with Adorno an interest in the development of the possibility for qualitative research and experimentation in sociological research. This collaborative concern resulted in the broad latitude of investigation granted Adorno when he was appointed the director of the Music Study division that, on the basis of its research, was to provide proposals for the qualitative improvement of the reception of broadcast music. This responsibility was among the foremost in urgency to any success of the entire Princeton project, since music comprised 50 per cent of broadcast time and, as already discussed, the programming of classical music in particular enjoyed indisputable national esteem. And here again, Lazarsfeld must have presumed Adorno's willing participation in this goal of the project. Given the moment's broad expectations for what radio broadcast of serious music might contribute to masses at the 'threshold of cultural maturity', Lazarsfeld would have assumed that, if anyone, Adorno would have affiliated himself energetically with the project's stated aims as part of the cultural movement of the democratic left in the United States in seeking ways to ameliorate broadcast reception. As a *Kulturphilosoph*, as a distinguished music critic, as a composer and a musician, Adorno combined a devotion to serious music with the capacity for the technical musical discernments to address what was then the central problem of the reception of broadcast music: the divergence between the audition of live musical performance and its reproduction on radio.²⁷

But if this approximates Lazarsfeld's estimation of Adorno's combined talents for the project, it was a complete misunderstanding. Adorno was not about to cast in his lot with a movement to spread musical culture. He carried no torch for culture, and least of all for musical culture. When he arrived in the United States what was fresh to his mind was the memory of a *Bildungsbürgertum* – the culture-prizing bourgeoisie – that was right at that moment to be found in the

streets of the 'homeland of culture' carrying real torches. This capitulation of German culture had not been any kind of surprise to him. On the contrary, German culture had failed to ward off the worst just because, as Adorno once wrote, it had long been the ally of the worst. Adorno had seen disaster coming in the deep perspectives of the opposition to bogus culture of all radical art since Romanticism. The music with which Adorno was fundamentally allied, the idiom of free atonality in which he composed, was the direct heir of that jagged radical tradition in which artists rejected once and for all any claim to being of a kind with their own audiences and, almost as summarily, to attributing to their work any pragmatic emancipatory social function even at the insistence of their own political allies. It is in these terms that the concerts of the Second Viennese School found their own legitimacy confirmed in the outrage, catcalls, and whistlings brought down on them by audiences sworn to higher things. Adorno's own account of trying to console Alban Berg after a concert premiere that had won direct, spontaneous public acclaim, of walking Berg through the streets of Berlin for much of an evening, may seem a charming tale of eccentricity until it is realized that, given what was on the horizon, Berg was right to be distraught – as he would be to this day. In the absence of a culture worthy of the name, culture for Adorno was what it was for Flaubert, namely, the power to resist it, and as such synonymous with art that is genuinely art.

Thus, in a catastrophic moment, the aims of the Princeton project could not have combined with the impulses of Adorno's own thought in a more tense, austere view of culture. There is no sense trying to imagine anyone less ready than Adorno to be enthused by cultural boosterism of any kind. In the United States, he perceived no masses prompted by a new familiarity with great music to the verge of cultural maturity and, if he had, he would have found it a specious achievement. The woman in Iowa who wrote to WOI with an enthusiastic tale of self-improvement in a quest for the better things would not have thrilled Adorno; he would have wanted to study the event more closely. For Adorno, music, when it is music, is a power to shatter rationalizing visions of transcendence and the normative order of life that these rationalizations support. *Music appreciation*, inculcated by radio, to him epitomized all that he opposed as instilling the opposite of a capacity for musical experience. It would present important music as an object of worshipful illusions, rather than as the quintessence of a capacity to make ruins of illusion. Thus, alongside his later essays addressed to Stravinsky and Heidegger, his study of Walter Damrosch's *NBC Music Appreciation Hour* (chapter 4 in this volume) is the most sustained, vituperative attack in the whole of his oeuvre and, like those

other essays, perhaps hobbled by the intensity of the siege. And just as Adorno could not in any way value the largest effort of musical education in the history of the United States as a value of radio, Lazarsfeld had probably selected the person least likely to be of any plausible use to him in completing a study on improving radio reception. And indeed, in the letter that he would eventually write Adorno to bring his participation in the project to a close, Lazarsfeld would accuse him of having given him what 'is definitely a black eye for me'.²⁸ Just months into their association, Lazarsfeld already sensed his faux pas and that Adorno was a danger to the project. In December 1938, Lazarsfeld wrote Frank Stanton, to begin to register formally his disassociation from Adorno: 'I have to decide: whether W. A. [Wiesengrund Adorno] has just a queer way of behaving of which he might be cured or whether he has a basically wrong attitude which might disqualify him in spite of his other abilities.'²⁹

Mechanical reproduction and musical abstraction

Lazarsfeld's emphatic normality would have provided exclusively thin ice as grounds for cooperation with Adorno, both personally and intellectually. He could not have made any sense of Adorno's conception of musical experience, in the post-Romantic tradition, as a potential for disintegrating and shattering the beautiful illusions of normality. Whatever Lazarsfeld had in mind for Adorno to do in the Princeton Radio Research Project had nothing to do with what was most on the mind of the newly appointed director of the Music Study. Whether the steamship *Champlain* had steered into dock in Tokyo or the Bay of Bengal, 'uppermost' for Adorno would have been exactly what it was prior to his departure from England: the pursuit of the conflictually dynamic group of ideas that had taken definitive shape for him in knowing Walter Benjamin. And at that moment of departure acute differences had emerged between them, most of all in Benjamin's 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1935). In this essay Benjamin had forced the self-antagonistic struggle in the concept of culture to its limit. In aggrieved opposition to the art-religion of an elite who held their eyelids shut tight under the consoling magic that art spread over a foundering society, he sought to demolish that glow, to tear art away from its spell-binding semblance and, at the price of art itself, achieve a societal-wide power of critical observation that would once again restore both art and the artist to its people under the red banner of the *peuple*. Benjamin's messianically conceived essay was a programme for valuing art in its utmost subjugation to its industrial antagonist, the machinery of mechanical

reproduction, as the one hope of an art that would achieve art's aim in its utter self-renunciation.

Anyone half attentive to history's pathos for the isomorphic, that paradox in which extremes do not just touch, but embrace and fuse as one, may already have noted that, however antithetical their reasoning, however opposed the asserted purposes, Benjamin's thesis of the mechanical emancipation of art from art in the service of the masses and Lazarsfeld's institution committed to the facilitation and measurement of broadcast culture in the service of a waiting nation were identical. Jointly, they presented a programme for the reproduction of art as an ideal. This convergence of views was self-evident to Adorno. To his mind, the United States broadcasting system, which Lazarsfeld was promoting, had effectively set out to put the cognate intentions of Benjamin's essay to a nationwide test. In this context, Adorno conceived his work as the director of the Music Study division at the Princeton project as a responsibility to comprehend the ways in which the results of this test would criticize and require the transformation of every one of Benjamin's theses. Adorno would use the results of this criticism to build a case for arguing strenuously and ingeniously against the plans that Lazarsfeld's project embodied for the promotion of cultural treasures on radio. This double-edged critique, how Adorno would argue at once against Benjamin and Lazarsfeld and where this critique would lead in the development of Adorno's thinking, is what is fascinating in *Current of Music*. It defines the terms in which the manuscript to this day continues to draw into itself, into its own thinking, the most contemporary issues of aesthetics, perception and politics.

It is, however, important to realize at this point, as much as it was emphasized at the outset of this introduction, that Adorno was not in any way determined to defeat Benjamin's work. The alliance in the thinking of the two men was what motivated their conflict, and to the end Adorno's work remained a devoted critical transformation of Benjamin's thought in an effort to make good on it. If, all the same, a reader, having understood something of the complexity of this relationship, still needs to see what transpires in *Current of Music* as a tug of war unto death, there is a degree of truth to perceiving Adorno's wanting to recover what was prodigious in Benjamin's insights from its paradoxical entanglement in the social tendencies of which Lazarsfeld was the plenipotentiary.

It is also true that the examination to which Benjamin's essay was involuntarily subjected by the American radio broadcasting system came at it from a tangent for which it was ill-prepared. Benjamin's thesis that the mechanical reproduction of art would extract art treasures

from the aura of their politically burdensome authority by demolishing their claim to being one-of-a-kind – by annulling the spell they cast from their perpetually sacred distance – had been conceived exclusively in terms of print media and the visual arts, most of all cinema and photography. The Music Study of the Princeton project, however, under Adorno's directorship, examined the claims of Benjamin's seminal essay with regard to the reproduction of music. And the results of this study illuminated it in an altogether new way. Adorno had observed in listening to radio music that the humanizing content of the music that he had spent his life composing, reflecting on, and studying had vanished. Radio music, to Adorno's ears, was no longer *that* music. But, this was not because, as Benjamin had claimed, reproduction had made art music slough off its auratic cocoon. On the contrary, radio reproduction, Adorno would show, subjects the broadcast remnants of the artwork to a new spell; the remaindered husk becomes a new fetish. Mechanical reproduction does not destroy the primacy of the original, as Benjamin asserted, but rather it changes music into nothing but the search for an original to be possessed.

In terms of the development of his own thinking, this critical metamorphosis of Benjamin's thesis would allow Adorno to import the model of the reproduction of art from the visual arts, as Benjamin had developed it, into the discussion of music on a compositional level. Previously, Adorno had only considered reproduction in regard to music in terms of the question of techniques of distribution.³⁰ But his argument with Benjamin allowed him to incorporate the question of reproduction into the problematic of musical structure itself. This would provide him with a framework in which the entire modernist debate over the questions of abstraction and representational and non-representational forms could be developed in the analysis of music. Thus Adorno effectively carried out an exchange of aesthetic motifs with Benjamin, almost an exchange of sensorial capacities since, as any review of the topics chosen in his *Collected Writings* demonstrates, Adorno was least involved in and responsive to the visual arts. By acquiring for music the critical perspectives of the art form of the vanguard of aesthetic revolution, he wanted to introduce into Benjamin's late aesthetics, which had nothing to say about music, the imagelessness of music as a fundamental critique of a theory of reproduction that, in its messianic espousal of the reproduction of art, had itself failed to grasp the radical content of aesthetic modernism in the visual arts. Thus, although *Current of Music*, the work in which he would carry out this thinking, would not be published, it did function as a kind of lens through which Adorno's early thinking was focused and, transformed, projected forward.

Looking through this reassembled lens even now, it is possible to discern for the first time in Adorno's writings the cardinal ideas of the *Philosophy of New Music* and *Aesthetic Theory*.

Unmusical music and spatialization

Within months of arriving in the United States, along with finishing his monograph *In Search of Wagner*, Adorno had written a full-scale theoretical memorandum on radio broadcast music. In letters to colleagues and friends, he announced the completion of the memorandum. To Benjamin he wrote,

My major report on the radio research, in effect a small book, has also been completed in the meantime, and it has also been decided that the results of my work on music and radio should appear as an independent and probably substantial volume with Princeton University Press, and that means prominently too. In this connection I am also thinking of a shorter piece in German on the regression of listening and the fetish character in music.³¹

From the tone of this letter, Adorno – whose prolificness was reputed – seems to have impressed even himself with the more than 160-page single-spaced, marginless study, finished so soon after his arrival and written in English. The pace of the writing, however, in combination with work on the Wagner study, indicated not only an intensity of labour but also that, at such an early date, this focal involvement would have precluded almost anything beyond the writing itself. The manuscript on radio could hardly have been based on substantial experience of the United States, about which the immigrant had not known much to begin with. It was the result of a set of ideas that had taken shape substantially prior to immigration and long held in preparation to converge in the problem that Lazarsfeld's institute presented to him. The memorandum that resulted, *Music in Radio* – drafted in two large sections, with an eponymously titled first part, the second part entitled 'Radio in Music' – would become the working manuscript for *Current of Music*.

As often happened in his work, Adorno began the study by completing a long draft that collected the material for the project. Much could happen to this draft: it could be radically condensed, reorganized, and sometimes expanded again as a final text. In the case of *Music in Radio*, however, the capacious manuscript was developed in several different directions, then broken up again and reworked in a group of overlapping variants. In the first stage of his plans for *Music*

in Radio, as Adorno indicated to Benjamin in his letter, the text would be the primary source for the essay 'On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening',³² which would be written during the summer of 1938. Then, in response to a request from Lazarsfeld to summarize and clarify the long, initial memorandum, Adorno presented its central ideas to his colleagues at the Princeton project in a lecture-essay in January 1939 entitled 'Music and Radio'.³³ This essay once again reoriented and refocused the material of *Music in Radio*. The reconceived memorandum was then rewritten and much transformed during the following year in two drafts: as *Radio Physiognomics*³⁴ and as *Current of Music: Elements of a Radio Theory, Section II: The Radio Voice*,³⁵ a text for which no other sequentially numbered sections seem to exist. Adorno also prepared a much-transformed and abbreviated version of the latter text, titled 'The Radio Voice: An Experiment in Theory', dated 1 September 1941.³⁶

Although the initial draft involved several permutations, Adorno carried through the central thesis of *Music in Radio* with complete consistency. From the outset, and with increasing distinctness, the text is a physiognomical study that seeks to decipher the general social tendencies in the phenomena of radio broadcast music. The tendency discerned in the phenomena is a mode of production that, Adorno shows, characteristically imitates nature rather than fulfilling its own productive potential. The aim of the study is to demonstrate in detail the depredations that music undergoes when it is subjected to this mode of production: when broadcast artifice endeavours to appear as pristine nature, when sonic copy lays claim to origin, when music on the air acts as the reproduction of an original.

Radio music in its early decades offered itself to such an interpretation in a way that it no longer does, or certainly not so insistently. Contemporary radio music today is almost exclusively the broadcast of recorded sound, and in popular music that sound is itself predominantly electronically sampled sound to start with. It is now the exception that radio music presents itself as the sound of an original, in the sense of the reproduction of live voices and acoustic instruments that are of a qualitatively different nature from the transmission itself. But prior to the early 1940s, the broadcast of recorded music on phonograph discs occurred only on avant-garde radio stations, and even then only by way of exception. Otherwise, all radio music presented performances of live vocal and instrumental music from either the studio or the concert hall. Radio, in other words, most of all staked its claim on the degree of its achieved ability to reproduce live music as natural sound, ostensibly every bit as immediately alive in the home as if the radio mechanism itself was transparent in transmission and played no

part at all in the sound. But, as Adorno would meticulously demonstrate, radio sets in the 1930s could achieve this illusion only very imperfectly: they were limited to the reception of AM transmissions that excluded substantial parts of the upper and lower frequency ranges; they could not balance the instrumental sound that they did register; and monaural reproduction further diluted orchestral dynamics. To the attentive listener, this music seemed to have been projected against a broadly warped mirror of background noise from which it infiltrated with the hissing electricals of signal drift and vacuum tube. Adorno ingeniously named this ever-present background surface of sound, against which the performance seemed projected, the 'hear-stripe' – a kind of sound that is now hardly to be heard except in the split-second ionization when, for instance, a TV set is switched on.

Adorno's own expert familiarity with the sound of vocal and acoustic instruments could not have been more exacting or self-conscious, and he, if anyone, could document with exactitude the divergence between live performance and broadcast music. But while Adorno was thorough in his critique of radio reception, his approach was the exact opposite of the finickiness of an audiophile. He had no doubt that the distortion impinged on the performance, and he demonstrated how it fragmented the work and undermined perception of the composition as a whole. Yet Adorno was not concerned to find ways to wipe out these degrees of distortion any more than he would have wanted to take paint brush in hand to set the eyes level in a Picasso portrait. In a sense, he was more the ally of the distortion than of 'classical music' transmission. And, in any case, he did not think that any degree of technical improvement would exclude the distortion of broadcast radio music. The distortion was implicit in the fundamental problem, that of the structure of broadcast itself, and it was this structure, not the distortion, that Adorno argued was directly opposed to the form of music. Music, he claimed, in utter disagreement with the aesthetic assumptions of Benjamin's thesis, has no original. To exist, it must be performed. In the performance of music, origin truly is the goal – the last step, so to speak, not the first.

Radio broadcast, in contrast with a live performance, transforms music into a relation between original and reproduction. The original necessarily becomes a fetish that the reproduction seeks to achieve, but without possible success, for the original that has been posited is an illusory origin whereas the object of the musical performance, what it makes, what is there conceivably to experience, has vanished. Adorno was able to explicate just what could no longer be experienced by showing, in an analysis of a Beethoven symphony, that the

form of music is the process in which it consumes its own extension in time. This process, he argued, is what was no longer audible in the broadcast of a Beethoven symphony, and not only because of the distortion and interference that damages the dynamic conflicts of the music but because, ultimately, in radio broadcast, music is spatialized. This spatialization is what is heard in the projection of the performance against the hear-stripe. The music thus obtains an image quality that puts in place of the consumption of its own musical time something akin to watching a movie. In broadcast reproduction, then, the music becomes an image, a picture of the music that is antithetical to the inherent imagelessness of its temporal dynamic. While the broadcast immanently lays claim to the sound of nature in the sense of providing what listeners presumed to be occurring behind the microphone, music necessarily surrendered its power over time and was no longer a Beethoven symphony. The depotentiated and fragmented object thus came to exist as an object of exchange, a standardized commodity that served as a reservoir of secondary, infantile satisfactions and magical authority, the very qualities that Adorno would show in other sections of *Current of Music* to be those of a conformist popular music. Adorno cast this argument with Benjamin as a fundamental criticism of the Princeton Radio Research Project's assumptions of the cultural and educative value of broadcast music. If the music could not be experienced, in what sense could it be said that 'cultural treasures' had been brought to the masses? If the music in every sense failed to arrive in anyone's home in such a way that it could be heard for what it is, how could this music fulfil the educative and humanizing aim that was said to be its content?

Adorno did not see any solution to this deficiency in radio reproduction. He assumed that there would be improvements to transmission, such as were soon enough brought about by FM and, later, stereo, but he held that ameliorations in one area would be paid for in other dimensions of sound. Contemporary experience confirms this: the superseding of the phonograph record by the compact disc intensified the clarity of sound but conspicuously simplified it; the compact disc circumvented the crackling background screen against which the phonograph performance was projected, but replaced it with a background screen that differs only by its total silence, without dissolving the image quality of the sound itself. This can be confirmed by walking around an acoustic piano in performance and comparing that sound with what comes out of any number of speakers.

But whether today the problem of musical reproduction has or has not been resolved, Adorno thought that the structure of the problem was insuperable. Since this knot could not be untied, it must be

severed. The performance of music on radio would no longer struggle against the unnatural quality of faulty reproduction or the image quality of the hear-stripe if it surrendered the claim to being an imitation of nature in the first place. 'Radio could succeed at this if, instead of broadcasting the reproduction of music, it played on the radio itself: The idea is that we should no longer broadcast over the radio but play on the radio in the same sense that one plays on a violin.'³⁷ This would transform every dimension of radio: Freed from a delusive goal, technique would no longer be preoccupied with ameliorating transmission and consolidating the illusion that radio music is the broadcast of the pristine nature of an original performance; radio studios would not aspire to the conjuration of phantasmagorical conservatories filled with potted ferns; radio design would not have reason to imitate chassis in the likeness of acoustic instruments. Radio would become a musical instrument. Its technique would engage the full productive range of the instrument's electrical phenomena. Distortion would not vie with normality of sound and the hear-stripe itself would become a compositional source. Instead of struggling to present itself as a transparent device of exchange and functioning to transform art into neutralized cultural goods, radio would explode the commodity relation and its shallow spell and present the human object of experience itself. Emancipated from the reproduction of an illusion of nature, radio music would potentially achieve the sound of a veridical second nature. Adorno cited the Theremin as an instance of a productive power that, when utterly emancipated from imitation, becomes the expression of a new nature: 'A feature which should be remarked . . . is that the more the Theremin instrument emancipates itself from any instrumental models, the more it approaches the sound of the singing voice – certainly without trying to come to any *vox humana effect*.'³⁸

The thesis of playing on radio rather than broadcasting over it is intriguing for itself, for its many implications, and not least of all because it would not turn out even if all nations banded together to work on the project. And then too, if it did somehow work, it would have the nightmarish quality of kitchen appliances swaying and singing to themselves. It is important to know, however, that, while Adorno pursued the logic of this speculation, he had no illusions such music existed and was plainly sceptical that such radio music could exist. Neither was he averse to the contradiction in his argument. On the contrary, he freely stated the need for such radio music even while debunking its possibility. Thus, in the lecture 'Music and Radio' of January 1939, after condensing the central ideas of *Music in Radio*, and restating the thesis that radio must emancipate itself from the reproduction

of sound, he went on to say that even the relentless optimist could not be optimistic about the attempts that had so far been made to compose specifically for radio; the whole idea, in fact, of producing music to suit the construction of a tool was, in his words, 'funny and paradoxical': 'We confess our utmost skepticism as far as the creation of so-called positive contents out of the tool is concerned.'³⁹

But why would Adorno be both the proponent and so severe a sceptic of the thesis? If he did not think that radio could be the instrument of its own sound, if he saw a need to distinguish tool from spiritualized musical instrument – as, for instance, John Cage would not – why did he assert the thesis in *Music in Radio*, restate it in his lecture even while confuting it, and return to assert the idea of 'playing on radio' in the last complete draft that that text would take, *Radio Physiognomics*? The contradiction is not an oversight. It is a summary formulation of what Adorno undertook to demonstrate in the Princeton Radio Research Project but stated as radio's antinomy. It expresses what radio must be and cannot be: the self-manifestation of its own content. No doubt the thesis, immediately coupled with its denial, bewildered his colleagues. The pragmatic Lazarsfeld would have thought Adorno ridiculous to present a plan and in the same breath dismiss its goal.

Adorno could have helped his colleagues make sense of his thesis had he provided the reasoning of the conundrum. But throughout his work at the Princeton project he hesitated genuinely to explain himself. This hesitation was not emotional but structural. As he wrote to Ernst Krenek right at the beginning of the project,

In the last few days I finished my large memorandum for the Radio Project (a small book), in which the *concept of new music* – in our sense – plays a substantial role, without of course my having been able in the framework of this memorandum to define exactly what I mean by that.⁴⁰

Thus, the concept of new music itself, atonal music, defined the perspective of the memorandum in general and the antinomy of radio in particular. This concept was not included in the memorandum for the Princeton project because it took shape in opposition to radio music so completely that it would have effectively expressed Adorno's actual non-participation in the goals of that project. It is not only – as Adorno wrote years later – that the work for the Princeton project 'contained the core of the Philosophy of New Music that was completed only in 1948'.⁴¹ The Princeton project came to contain this core of the work in the philosophy of music that marks the boundary of Adorno's mature aesthetics through the working out of

an antagonism. The two developed in inverse relation to each other. Presented here in their actual antagonistic juxtaposition, the limit of the former is seen to carve out the boundary that defined what the latter sought to fulfil: the limit of radio music – its inability to be the self-manifestation of its own content – is in the latter work presented as the achievement of new music. As Adorno wrote in *Philosophy of New Music*, what made new music new, its revolution, was that it no longer reproduced human emotion but became the immediate deposition of its own impulse in corporeal shocks and traumas:

The genuinely revolutionary element in his [Schoenberg's] music is the transformation of the function of expression. Passions are no longer faked; on the contrary, undisguised, corporeal impulses of the unconscious, shocks and traumas are registered in the medium of music.⁴²

An enormous body of thought is condensed here. Adorno's claim is that the atonal revolution in new music was fundamentally the critique of reproduction in the sense of the rejection of art as the imitation of subjectivity. And in the *Philosophy of New Music*, this formulation of the radical rejection of the replicative function in music derives from a comprehension of the history of the revolution of abstraction that had transpired in the visual arts. Just as painting was driven to non-representational forms under the pressure of photography, music is said to have become new music out of the need to defend itself against the commercial intrusion under the pressure of mechanically reproduced music:

That aversion of modern painting to figurative representation, which in art marks the same breach as does atonality in music, was an act of defense against mechanized art merchandise, primarily photography. In its origins, radical music reacted no differently to the commercial debasement of the traditional idiom. It was the antithesis to the spreading of the culture industry into its own domain.⁴³

Had Adorno found place in this statement of the origin of new music in opposition to the 'commercial debasement of the traditional idiom' to have added that new music would need to continue to assert this resistance against radio broadcast technology, the camera of musical photography, he would have documented the route by which he developed his thinking in the first place. *Philosophy of New Music* would throughout present the ideas that first emerged in Adorno's study of radio. In 'Stravinsky and the Restoration', for instance, the second part of *Philosophy of New Music* – a critique of

neo-classicism – Stravinsky is shown to compose ‘music about music’, a duplicative and spatialized music that seeks authenticity by aspiring to the sound of the original, the first, the primordial, essentially the sound of ‘Stravinsky the great composer’ of masterpieces – rather than of music as the unfolding object of emphatic experience.

Aesthetics and radio music

Current of Music is a sociological critique of radio broadcast music in terms of the question of the possibility of emphatic musical experience, and by that measure it is most of all an aesthetics. This sets it apart from almost the whole of media, communication and popular culture studies that are what universities primarily have to contribute to a situation, well characterized by Gunther Schuller, that hardly lets anyone, least of all students, catch a breath away from what is most of all for sale. Because *Current of Music* is keyed to aesthetic experience, it has something other to do than rake the loamy soils of industrial entertainment for traces of an oppositional culture that are hardly to be found there other than as reflections dramatized in a looking glass. As an aesthetics, *Current of Music* provides indications for shaking loose the kind of interest in its topics and the material it covers that otherwise broadly subordinates people to them. In the texts assembled here, Adorno listened in critical alertness for what was not to be found in radio music and industrial entertainment. This listening scrutiny was motivated on behalf of music in which he thought there was a great deal to be found. The most provocative aspect of his writings on music is his conceptualization of this distinction, one that he held ultimately concerns the question of art as knowledge.

‘Our desire lacks knowledgeable music’ – (Rimbaud)

It is worth momentarily putting the question of this distinction in the larger context of Adorno’s philosophy as a whole in order, after that, to be able to approach it again more closely. In this larger context the questions of reproduction, identity, mechanism, and spatialization as they arise in *Current of Music* turn out not to be independent critical motifs but rather to cohere in a single problematic. One way of stating the dialectic of enlightenment, approaching it specifically from the perspective of mechanism rather than, as Adorno would, in terms of the structure of the commodity, is to say that it poses the question of how it is possible to restore to nature a qualitative dimension that it surrendered in its spatialization. It was the development of mechanism in the domination of nature that translated nature into space by excluding as

real any but quantitative determinations, faced by a dimensionless thinking self.⁴⁴ It is simplistic, but nevertheless revealing, especially with regard to what was at stake in Adorno's critique of Benjamin's mechanism of messianic woes, to see that Adorno's philosophy has nothing to do but seek to translate space back into nature. And it can only do this by somehow recovering the temporal dimension that mechanism – most of all, sociologically, the mechanism of the market – excludes by formulating identity between origin as the cause and all subsequent phenomena as reproductions of that origin. The assertion of this origin is the false authenticity that Adorno was concerned to criticize in radio music under Damrosch's baton as much as in Stravinsky's primordiality. Aesthetics becomes key in Adorno's thinking, as throughout twentieth-century philosophy, because aesthetic experience condenses in itself the temporal dimension that is otherwise held out of mind in the mechanical mastery of space. Adorno's approach is conceived as *physiognomical* precisely in opposition to mechanism, and this physiognomy is ultimately directed to art as the unconscious transcription of historical suffering. Art thus potentially mediates the translation of mechanical space into nature. This historical content constitutes the potential difference between having and not having the qualitative object of experience.

With this larger context in mind, the aesthetic question, as the qualitative differential itself, is seen to depend ultimately on the possibility of making qualitative distinctions between artworks: how they do or do not consume the time that is or is not stored up in them. This establishes, as Adorno understood it, the affinity between art and knowledge: it is what artworks know about us – critically know about us – that is more than we otherwise know ourselves. Other than in art we have no other way of experiencing ourselves on this level. If this seems intellectualistic, it is also the only alternative to intellectualism. It is just what anyone means in saying, 'I love that song', which insists on a sense of having been understood better than could have been imagined and predicates an object that can be entered as nothing else can be. Adorno held, however, that there is a difference between music in which one feels absorbed into its own interior likeness, and new music, music such as Schoenberg's later compositions, in which this becomes an experience of being recognized by what comports itself explicitly as an object of knowledge and sloughs off any resemblance to the self. The critical question, then, that makes it possible to research aesthetic quality without any kind of dogma or conceit is research into the extent to which that understanding – music's own – is feigned or real. This is the qualitative distinction that can be made in music between one work and

another, though hardly in the sense of sitting down to single out the good ones from the bad ones; there is no such list anywhere in the whole of Adorno's writings – and neither does he ever try to divide the true from the false as a difference between 'popular music' and 'classical music', a rigid categorization that he summarily challenges throughout the whole of his writings and that can only be found there, so to speak, in the eye of the beholder.⁴⁵ But the discernment of the qualitative distinction in music is what would continue to define the direction of Adorno's thinking as he left *Current of Music* behind for *Philosophy of New Music*. In this sense *Current of Music* is itself, perhaps for readers today, a prolegomenon to being interested in a great deal other than this volume's own stated topics.

Exact listening

After losing his job with the Princeton Radio Research Project, Adorno wrote proportionately little specifically about industrial musical entertainment. It did not concern him compared to works that significantly engage the question of composition. But Adorno had other reasons as well for leaving *Current of Music* behind. He realized that the work was faulty in various regards. Not only had transformations in radio reception made several of its theses obsolete, not only was its theory of musical spatialization questionably conceived, but it lacked any adequate theory of listening. Adorno wrote,

The reason for this shortcoming may well have been that I did not succeed in making the transition to listener research. That transition would be absolutely necessary, above all else in order to differentiate and correct the theorems . . . It would be simply naive to presume an equivalence between the societal implications of the stimuli and the 'responses,' though, no less naive to regard the two as independent of each other.⁴⁶

This is certainly a fundamental and overarching criticism. It is apparent, for instance, that, however intriguing Adorno's claim that a Beethoven symphony could not be adequately heard on the radio, many did hear it and with some kind of comprehension. While limitations of radio reproduction were commonly acknowledged, and Adorno was after all brought onto the staff of the Princeton project to help find ways to improve reception, still a considerable number of people heard more in radio music than Adorno heard, even if, in important regards, they also heard considerably less than a composer whose auditory acuity would have been able to distinguish separately

and recall twelve notes sounded simultaneously. And while there is no doubt that Adorno's study of the degradation of acoustic musical experience through its electronic reproduction has much to teach and urgently deserves further study, and while meaningful listening cannot be presumed, still it cannot be claimed that those who were awestruck by symphonic music on the radio were all naive or duped with cultural goods and electrical fetish. One does not, for instance, have to go far in the memoirs of the age to come across the likes of musically sophisticated listeners, such as Clifford Odets, who rushed home on Saturday afternoon, 9 March 1940, to hear a broadcast of *Figaro* and later that afternoon was glad to be able to listen to the NBC Symphony – on just the kind of radio that Adorno held to be fundamentally deficient.⁴⁷ Of the millions of others who were also listening to those Sunday broadcasts, many were probably edified by the heroic if crackly sound of 'cultural treasure', but they would not have kept listening if that was all they heard.

Adorno's failure to understand the place of the listener in his work was, in part, correctly identified by Lazarsfeld and others in the objections they raised to his work: he claimed to know more than he did about technical aspects of radio acoustics and the structure of audition.⁴⁸ Adorno, for instance, could have consulted the distinguished Sir James Jeans's *Science and Music* (1937), which noted the technically common observation – partially familiar to anyone who has wondered at how air conditioners sing in their several voices – that even rudimentary radio speakers effectively transmit sound beyond their own frequency range because the ear itself produces the missing tones. Jeans wrote,

Many are designed deliberately to cut out all frequencies below about 250, the frequency of about middle C, and so transmit no bass or tenor tones at all. Yet we hear the double bass strings, the basses of the brass, and male voices with absolute clearness. The explanation is, of course, that all these sources of sound are rich in harmonics. Out of these our ears create the missing fundamental tones and lower harmonics as difference tones, and the combination of these with the higher harmonics, which come through unhindered, restores for us the tone played by the orchestra.⁴⁹

Lazarsfeld would not be the last to criticize Adorno for asserting that he knew more than he did on a number of topics. However, the failures of *Current of Music* have a further source, probably not unrelated, but one that is reciprocal with every strength of *Current of Music* as an aesthetics of radio whose immanent measure was conceived as the

most advanced music of the age. When held to the measure of music that longed for an 'illusionless self-declaration', radio became for Adorno the object of a radically modernist listening. The quality of this listening is illuminated by its comparison with Kandinsky's decisive experience of seeing one of Monet's haystacks turned upside down and, being unable to recognize the motif, for the first time perceiving the potential for fully non-objective painting; it is a kind of listening matched by the extraordinary acuity and locked focus of Giacometti's eye when as a youth he sketched several pears set on a table across the room, and appalled his academically trained father with a drawing of three miniature pears – as miniature as are all things when deprived of the illusion of perspectival compensation. This radical aesthetic comportment, in its hostility to any illusion of meaning, seeks an object that is as illusionless as the thing-in-itself because it will tolerate nothing less than the thing-in-itself; it is a cultivated and dissatisfied stance that was once bewildering to everyday perceptions.

It was as an object of this kind of attention that the Beethoven symphony vanished from the audible in Adorno's study of radio sound. Adorno approached the study of the radio listener as an immediate subsidiary of the thesis of the primacy of the object: 'We are dwelling on the phenomenon [of radio sound] because it is actually the phenomenon which determines the reaction of the listeners, and it is our ultimate aim to study the listener', he writes in *Current of Music*. While this logic can be followed, it is also a non sequitur. It is a statement of an approach that would circumvent the listener. An unexamined claim to an immediate primacy of the object functions to dismiss any real interest in the listener and, in its literalism, verges on a kind of behaviourism of the mind. Its own will to abstraction misconceives the primacy of the object by narrowing it to the factual radio phenomena, much of which is in any case fortunately indistinguishable to untrained ears and not necessarily significant compared with the importance, for instance, of what was actually in the experience of those ears as experience. Auditory experience itself shapes sound and compensates as much for its limitations in reproduction in radio as it does, for instance, in the objectively impoverished sound of a cell-phone voice. And it is just this experience of actual listeners that is missing, virtually on principle, from *Current of Music*. There is no mention, for instance, of what institutions of the day, such as the previously cited City Center for Music and Drama, provided to the listening experience of large segments of the radio audience in New York City. Neither is there any consideration of the kind of question that a historian would think to ask, for instance, of the proportion of

American radio listeners for whom the listening tradition of European music was a familiar presupposition of radio perception since they were themselves of that origin. Instead of this audience research, and on the basis of little familiarity with the country to start with, Adorno effectively isolated himself with the radio, as if every aesthetic, psychological, and sociological dimension could be learned from its immediate sound.

First salvage

A year before his death, thinking back on his radio studies in a lecture, Adorno concluded that the absence of any adequate theory of the listener struck fault lines that irremediably undermined his research. For this reason, he said: 'I did not succeed in presenting a systematically executed sociology and social psychology of music on radio.'⁵⁰ Adorno felt obliged to revert from German to English to capture his sense of regret that, instead of a completed theoretical statement, the best he could make of it was '*a salvaging action*'. From the substantial work he had accomplished, only individual sections could be rescued. In this effort, during his years in the United States, he succeeded at publishing three essays: 'On Popular Music' (in *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, 1941), 'The Radio Symphony: An Experiment in Theory' (in *Radio Research*, 1941), and 'A Social Critique of Radio Music' (in *Kenyon Review*, spring, 1945).

But while Adorno was critical of his work, there is no doubt that he valued it. From his first year in New York City he sought publishers for it through the Princeton project. Later, living in Los Angeles, he was gratified that his radio essays had begun to make a reputation for themselves, though it also pained him that it had taken almost ten years for even limited interest in them to develop.⁵¹ Right up to the months before his repatriation he sought contact with an American editor in renewed efforts to see the volume in print as a whole.⁵² On his return to Germany this philosopher – whose primary trait may well have been his faithfulness to whatever his life, intellectual or otherwise, had once touched on – did not forget about his radio studies. He succeeded in incorporating sections from the 'Analytical Study of the *NBC Music Appreciation Hour*' into 'Die gewuerdigte Musik'⁵³ [Appreciated Music], and parts of the 'The Radio Symphony' were adapted in the essay 'Über die musicalische Verwendung des Radios'⁵⁴ [On the Musical Utilization of Radio]. These essays became the first and last chapters of *Der getreue Korrepetitur* [The Faithful Repetiteur]. And the essay 'On Popular Music' was edited into Adorno's *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*.⁵⁵

Second salvage

Adorno did not have occasion to reconceptualize his New York City writings as a whole or to collect them, but there is every reason to suppose that students of these texts will find much to pursue in them. The more one becomes familiar with these writings, the more the conviction grows that a great deal is at stake in them that will find considerable contemporary attention both for their many achievements and for what can be learned from their stark limitations. And it has turned out to be possible to return to the ponderous files of Adorno's research for the Princeton project and reconstruct something along the lines that the manuscript of *Current of Music* might have taken. This work is a second salvage. As a reconstruction, it is guided less by the intention of returning the pieces to where they might once have belonged – as an act of historical safekeeping, as if history were safekeeping for anything – than by the aim of collecting what Adorno himself prepared for publication and supplementing this body of work with writings and drafts that were abandoned in the convergence of many pressures.

The starting point for this reconstruction has been several letters in which Adorno described to colleagues in various detail his plans for the volume.⁵⁶ All three letters were written after Adorno's official relation with the Princeton project had broken off and he had turned to full-time though inadequately remunerated work with the International Institute for Social Research. Though some possibility for further funding through the Princeton project remained, and while Lazarsfeld felt a continued responsibility for Adorno's welfare and financial support, Adorno no longer had expectations for the publication of a book under the auspices of the Princeton project and had begun to pursue publication of his work on his own. The most important of these three letters, the one that caused Rolf Tiedemann, the general editor of Adorno's collected writings, to discover the existence of the project in the first place, is that of 17 May 1940 to Philip Vaudrin, an editor at Oxford University Press:

Dear Mr. Vaudrin:

In addition to the three sections of my book, *Current of Music*, which I have already sent you, I am listing below a provisional table of contents:

1. Introduction (paper on the elements of a social critique of radio music).
2. The Radio Voice (effect of electric transmission on serious music).

3. Analytical Study of NBC's Music Appreciation Hour.
4. What a Music Appreciation Hour Should Be (based on my WNYC material).
5. Likes and Dislikes in Light-Popular Music.
6. Theory of Jazz.
7. Hit Analyses.
8. Program Making: The Future of Music on the Air.

Adorno mentions here three sections of this work in progress that Vaudrin already had in hand, and these are identifiable. The first, described as 'Introduction', was a draft essay, 'On a Social Critique of Radio Music'.⁵⁷ This text was initially presented as a lecture on 10 October 1939 to an assembly of the Princeton project along with invited guests. Though the lecture's thesis of the commodification of music on radio found some support in this audience, it was met largely with bewildered outrage and contributed early on and decisively to undermining Adorno's hopes of continued funding from the Rockefeller Foundation.⁵⁸ The second section of the proposed volume in Vaudrin's hands would have been 'The Radio Voice', a text that has already been mentioned as the June 1939 draft, more fully titled, of Section II of *Current of Music* and perhaps had that title in conjunction with Vaudrin's reading. The third text was the 'Analytical Study of NBC's Music Appreciation Hour', the Damrosch study, which was complete by 19 December 1939.⁵⁹

Vaudrin reviewed these materials and rejected the proposal. Though the correspondence has not survived, Adorno did mention in a letter to Hans Eisler that Vaudrin adjudged the book excessively 'erudite' for what narrow interest the topic might attract.⁶⁰ That hardly begins to say it. What would even a sophisticated American editor have made of Adorno's allergic critique of the lowbrow Damrosch programme, for instance, in a country where, without it, schoolchildren would otherwise never have heard the words *string quartet* – a country where knowing such words and their traditions might be something good, but hardly a highest good, the one perspective from which Adorno's impassioned criticism is credible? The United States is, after all, a country that in its everyday imaginings knows its origins in Bible and Constitution, not in a poet, Homer; this nation would have its precious tunes, but never a body of music of an overwhelming dignity; neither would there exist in the United States – perhaps ever – a broadly sustained and deeply reasoned oppositional culture of any kind, least of all of the sort that Adorno himself represented, itself inextricable from the experience of the most advanced, radical art.

Glancing through the proposal, Vaudrin would have had so many reasons to reject it that there is no need to struggle at guessing what finally decided him. Adorno's written English during his first years in America, though it could be more than brilliant by turns, generally ranged from adequate to capable. Even with the help of devoted assistants such as George Simpson,⁶¹ the early texts could still fail to slough germanism, anacolutha and solecism.⁶² The compromised style would have undermined the credibility of the uncompromisingly critical contents and impeded as well any editor's effort to comprehend the coherence of the proposed volume. For the outline and sample chapters did not fit together in any convincing fashion. The designated 'introduction' did not sufficiently indicate the structure of the book, nor did it unify the other essays that had themselves been written for diverse purposes in the course of Adorno's labours with Lazarsfeld. Though Vaudrin was probably well disposed toward Adorno, he would have needed to share Adorno's own imagination to have guessed at how the writings could have been revised into a coherent whole. If Adorno was aware of this weakness in his proposal and thought he could rely on a contract to use a later opportunity to unify the book, that contract was not forthcoming. And Adorno, as we already know, was thus finally compelled to proceed in publishing the material piecemeal over the next few years as best he could.

Paradoxically, now, in the light of the massively accomplished remainder of his work, any eye generally familiar with Adorno's writings can review the 1940 table of contents for *Current of Music* without feeling disturbingly at a loss as to how these contents might be related. The continuity of his work is so established that all the thousands of pages pertaining to *Current of Music* could be assembled here between heavy bindings, indexically, and still interested readers would finally sort them out. Much speaks for an edition of this kind. It would, however, be destructive to the whole of Adorno's work if what was left behind as drafts and notes, written in a faulty English and abandoned decisively along the way as inadequate, was summarily restored to his published writings, to be quoted up alongside what was fully completed at the highest level. A philosophy keyed to the idea of a second nature, a critique of the primacy of first things, should not be undermined by editors enthused with the licence of returning all things to where they once came from. But helping something along to what it once wanted to be, to set it in relation to what, as such, it might once have become, seems legitimate. Had *Current of Music* been completed, it would have stood as the volume Adorno composed in uncertain English

marking his years in exile from Germany, and the years of the Holocaust itself.

The solution to the implicitly divergent problems of these writings – the need to give the volume a perduring shape but without that shape being so determinate as to lay claim to being more than a collection of documents – has been to rebuild *Current of Music* using the 1940 outline addressed to Vaudrin as the infrastructure for presenting, rather than for wanting integrally to restructure, those materials that Adorno himself published in his own lifetime, as well as those affiliated posthumous drafts that close study has shown to be potentially fruitful for further study. This has provided *Current of Music* with a principle of selection for what is major in these manuscripts and at the same time allows the volume to contain much of what does not exactly fit but all the same deserves to fit somewhere – sometimes in substitution for sections that were planned for the Vaudrin table of contents but never written, sometimes in the large, subsequent division marked 'Other Materials'.

An edition of this kind, incidentally, is not unprecedented. The ancient Greeks provided for the priestly restitution of a sacrificial animal by reconstructing it in miniature out of the remaining skin and bones of the offering.⁶³ This reconstruction of Adorno's *Current of Music* is a negation of every aspect of that ancient act. It is no ritual: it is soberly aware that here is only skin and bone, and it knows perfectly well that nothing has really been put back together again and that, historically, most of all, we are not capable of restitution. This book, in other words, for what it really does contain, its own historical experience which its pages are in no way capable of expressing on their own, is a legitimate reconstruction exclusively to the extent that a reader putting it together is just as much obliged, at every point, to realize that it is being taken in pieces. This volume could only be what it once wanted to be, in terms of the whole of Adorno's thinking, as a critique of history itself as sacrifice.

With these editorial perspectives in mind, and reading from the 1940 letter to Vaudrin, the first text is: 'Introduction (paper on the elements of a social critique of radio music)'. This essay, as mentioned, was initially presented as a lecture, 'On a Social Critique of Radio Music', and was later published in 1945 as 'A Social Critique of Radio Music', Vaudrin having had in hand the former. The reader is aware that this text was an inadequate introduction to the book to start with; but the later version, in the *Kenyon Review*, rightly edited out the remnants of this broader function so that it is even less useful for this purpose. Since it would be absurd and destructive of a finished text somehow to unravel it into an earlier draft to make it serve

slightly better in an unwritten book, 'A Social Critique of Radio Music' has been displaced as the introductory essay to this volume and is now the second entry. The excised material of the initial draft, however, what Adorno edited out of the text in preparation for the *Kenyon Review* article, is provided in asterisked footnotes.

Current of Music now begins, instead, with 'Radio Physiognomics'. This text is by far the most interesting and best written of the several main drafts drawn from *Music in Radio*, which, as mentioned earlier, was the source from which all the subsequent studies written for the Princeton project derived.⁶⁴ As a result 'Radio Physiognomics' provides an overview of the radio theory as a whole and, if read first, will completely orient the reader to much of the rest of what follows in the volume. This organization may seem to exclude *The Radio Voice*, the second entry in the Vaudrin outline, but this is not the case. Adorno transformed the entire centre of that text into 'The Radio Symphony: An Experiment in Theory', and published it in 1941. That published text is presented here in full as the third section. This results in some unfortunate overlap with the contents of 'Radio Physiognomics'. Tolerance of this repetition, however, was preferable to impinging on the integrity of the two texts, which are well completed each in their own terms.

The reconstruction of the next five sections of *Current of Music* posed few problems. The 'Analytical Study of the *NBC Music Appreciation Hour*', with which the reader is already familiar, is followed by 'What a Music Appreciation Hour Should Be', a text dated 13 March 1940. It is a fervently steadfast proposal for an extended sequence of radio programmes designed to be anything but a course in music appreciation. The essay was written as a memorandum addressed to Morris Novik, the previously mentioned director of WNYC,⁶⁵ and presents a general statement of approach and procedures for the course along with an outline description of twelve broadcasts, to which Adorno intended to add two more, the entire sequence to be followed up by another series of radio classes.⁶⁶ The sketches for the two additional classes do not seem to have been written and none at all were written for the second series.⁶⁷ The programme was expected to address a Sunday afternoon audience estimated at 100,000 listeners, mostly between the ages of sixteen and forty, all of them serious concert-goers and radio listeners, 25 per cent of them music students, and largely lower middle and middle class; the younger group of listeners was said to have an 'average musical awareness' somewhere on the level of Schubert's music.⁶⁸

Novik accepted the proposal, in some fashion, but the course itself did not go beyond its first or perhaps second instalment. This must

have been a considerable disappointment for Adorno, who had hoped that the radio programme would compensate for the income lost from the Princeton Radio Research Project. But although these plans for the memorandum were hardly fulfilled to the letter, Adorno was involved at WNYC on numerous occasions, both before and after the brief experiment with his course series.⁶⁹ Along with transcripts of these programmes, his posthumous papers include his initial WNYC broadcast, given on 22 February 1940, as well as transcripts from a short series of concert introductions that was decided upon after the plans for the large music education programme were abandoned.⁷⁰ Adorno wrote all of these programmes first in German and then – for most of the texts – did rough translations that George Simpson helped revise. For the purposes of this reconstruction of *Current of Music*, it was sometimes difficult to choose between these versions, since the German version was sometimes more complete and more interesting than the reduced English draft, which all the same had the importance of presenting the actual broadcast event. In the instance of Adorno's first broadcast in his educational series, the Gordian knot was solved by embracing it. Both versions have been included, with the strange result, however, that in this edition there is an 'α English version' and a 'β German version', where it will be noted that this 'German version' – an epithet worthy of substantial reflection on the relation of languages and the nature of translation – is now in English.

As a group, these transcripts provide a series of situations in which it is possible to observe what Adorno thought music education on radio could and ought to be. There is a great deal waiting to be said about Adorno as educator, of music and otherwise. The radio transcripts are therefore included in this fifth section to provide further dimension to this otherwise schematic memorandum on music appreciation, a text that of course remains considerably less than a completed chapter. Note that the radio drafts and transcripts in this collection that are undated, including the final one marked 'Draft', were probably not broadcast. Readers will also be interested to know that, after he returned to Germany, Adorno remained an active presence on radio in interviews, lectures, and discussions and participated in at least one discussion (on Schoenberg) at the BBC.

In the Vaudrin table of contents, the entry after the writings on music education is 'Likes and Dislikes in Light-Popular Music'. When Adorno submitted this proposal he was referring to an essay of 250 pages, 'Listening Habits: An Analysis of Likes and Dislikes in Light Popular Music', which he intended to edit down to seventy pages.⁷¹ The long draft no longer exists and the latter may never have taken the exact shape planned. But by 28 May 1940 Adorno did have a

reduced 103-page draft of the study that he and George Simpson had worked on together.⁷² It is an entirely complete and consistent essay. From a note on the manuscript, this draft was submitted to the distinguished *American Sociological Review*, which rejected it.⁷³ Adorno again edited the essay down for *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, the house organ of the Institute for Social Research, which published it as 'On Popular Music'.⁷⁴ The publication was well received and, in particular, Virgil Thomson, then the music critic for the *New York Herald Tribune*, excerpted from it admiringly and at length in his weekly column.⁷⁵ 'On Popular Music' is the text that is included in this volume. However, since much of what was edited out of the first completed version is of substantial interest, and because Adorno clearly considered both texts publishable, the excluded material has been provided in accompanying footnotes.

'Likes and Dislikes in Light-Popular Music' was to be followed in *Current of Music* by a 'Theory of Jazz'. Adorno mentions in a letter that in this section he planned to use an English translation of his 1936 essay 'Über Jazz' ('On Jazz').⁷⁶ He speaks, however, in a later letter, of wanting to conjoin this essay with a substantial body of new research materials.⁷⁷ For, while living in the United States, Adorno had become aware that what he had known of jazz in Germany, and as he presented it in his early essay, was limited.⁷⁸ He was thus making research visits to Harlem and had sought assistance from experts such as the American composer Milton Babbitt – who would have nothing to do with him. But, in any event, Adorno never wrote anything new for this section. Still, 'On Jazz' might well have been used here in this section, but for complex reasons of the structure of Adorno's *Collected Writings* it could not be made part of the German edition of *Current of Music*, and therefore could not be presented here in the English edition either.

Adorno envisioned a collection of studies of 'popular hits' for the 'Hit Analyses' section, but while he lived in New York City he wrote none. Yet, his highly public success with 'On Popular Music' re-inspired Lazarsfeld's interest in Adorno and he encouraged him to make new proposals for possible project funding. In response, some eight months after he had moved to Los Angeles, Adorno completed for his former employer the musical analyses of two hit songs – 'The Bells of San Raquel' (Por ti aprendi a querer), written by Fred Wise and Milton Leeds (1934) and 'Two in Love', written by Meredith Willson (1941). Along the way, 'Deep Purple', an instrumental work by Peter de Rose (1934), is also discussed in detail. In these studies, Adorno wanted to demonstrate, in musical technical terms, how in modeling themselves one after another on a major hit, subsequent hit songs

become increasingly mediocre. In these studies Adorno was pursuing, on a compositional level, a further aspect of his critique of aesthetic reproduction.

'Program Making: The Future of Music on the Air'. Adorno wrote nothing for the section so entitled.

*

Other Materials. Essays, lectures and reports are collected here that deal mostly, though not exclusively, with questions of sociological research at the Princeton project. None of these texts have been published before, and, with the exception of 'The Radio Voice', they were not meant for publication in the first place. They are of various levels of conceptual completion and historical interest. Several texts document Adorno's efforts to develop models of qualitative sociological experiment. There is necessarily limited detail to be provided of these mainly auxiliary and subordinate writings and reports; all that is known of them is given here.

A) 'The Radio Voice' is the exception in this group, since it is a major text. The reader will remember that Adorno whittled it down to 'The Radio Symphony'. Here, however, is the full manuscript that Adorno finished in June 1939. It is so largely redundant of other texts in this volume, most of all 'Radio Physiognomics', and considerably less well written as well, that the editor would have included only selected sections and pages that had been dropped from 'The Radio Symphony'. The Adorno Archiv, however, strenuously urged this text's inclusion in the interest of completeness. To those readers, then, who waded into the essay wondering, 'Haven't I already read this a few times?', the answer is 'Yes!' Close students of these texts will, however, find ways to make these many pages useful.

B) 'Memorandum on Lyrics in Popular Music'. This memorandum was addressed to John Gray Peatman, a professor at the College of the City of New York, 27 October 1941. Adorno's accompanying letter mentions that the note focuses on aspects of 'On Popular Music' and the question that he wanted to raise in that essay of 'why popular music is popular'.

C) 'Experiment on: Preference for Material or Treatment of Two Popular Songs'. Undated manuscript.

D) 'The Problem of Experimentation in Music Psychology' was presented on 2 March 1939 to the Psychology Department of Princeton University and was then substantially amplified and revised.

E) 'Note on Classification' is an undated manuscript.

F) Also undated is 'On the Use of Elaborate Personal Interviews'.

G) 'The Problem of a New Type of Human Being' is addressed to Lazarsfeld, 23 June 1941. This essay, like the hit song studies, was an attempt by Adorno to propose a research project to Lazarsfeld that would bring further support from the Rockefeller Foundation. Nothing came of this extraordinarily interesting essay.

H) 'Some Remarks on a Propaganda Publication of NBC' is undated but was written prior to 'Radio Physiognomics'. It examines closely a brochure published in 1938 by NBC, probably a piece of publicity, entitled 'Musical Leadership Maintained by NBC'.⁷⁹

I) 'Theses about the Idea and Form of Collaboration of the Princeton Radio Research Project' is dated 28 April 1938. Below the title is written: '(As a basis for discussion at a staff meeting.)' This text may have been Adorno's orienting research statement to his new colleagues. It is the only memorandum in these papers bearing Adorno's own signature.

*

This edition and editorial notes: One division of Adorno's collected posthumous writings, an edition projected to comprise more than twenty volumes, is made up of those works that remained fragmentary at the author's death. *Current of Music* was first published as volume 3 in this collection. The archival nature of this volume requires that it remain unchanged in further editions, including this one. This restriction has had important implications for this volume, especially for the editorial notes, which had to be written for both sides of the Atlantic at once. The editor was aware that what would be informing for one side would be occasionally nonsensically familiar for others, and vice versa. There is nothing to be done about this other than for American readers, for instance, to find a level of sociological curiosity in being told what Aunt Jemima pancake mix is and who the Lone Ranger was, just as European readers of this volume have been made to think about why they are now supposedly learning who Ernst Krenek and Günther Anders were.

The mention of American mass culture indicates a further aspect of this volume. Given a work dealing mainly with industrial entertainment, the editor found himself obliged to provide learned notes for things that hardly anyone in the world really has any choice but to already recognize. Some notes may thus only identify what identity on a global scale is coercively obliged to derive itself from in the first place, and, if so, if taken with a grain of self-consciousness, these notes may become a reader's aid to identifying the daily sensation of the glare of compulsory recognition; for the utopic minded, these notes perhaps

also stand for a moment when many of these things may be so long gone that someone would need to check on what any of them were.

In general, editorial notes have been minimized. The volume is complicated enough as it is and, in any case, Adorno rarely provided citations for his own writings. Notes to persons of considerable renown, such as Gustav Heinrich Furtwängler, are usually meant to supply a detail of the person's life or career that is relevant to the discussion at hand more than to offer a general introduction to that life. An effort has been made, however, to identify several generally unknown individuals of substantial interest who deserve further attention. Also, in this text potentially ambiguous surnames have generally been complemented with their forenames, contrary to Adorno's habit.

Textual revisions: All that Adorno published in English while living in New York was carefully revised by secretaries and trusted colleagues. These meticulously completed essays are presented here just as Adorno saw them through to publication, sometimes with additional materials. Most of the texts that are being published here for the first time, however, even when they show the hand of assistants, did not go through a comparable editorial process of completion. These have here been spared blunders of English expression. Otherwise, the writings have been left as rocky as many of them are, which readers will find irritating, and which the editor regrets. But thorough editorial revision would have amounted to unacceptable editorial intervention; the volume would have been straightforwardly improved, but discredited in the eyes of a prevailing literalistic mentality. Alternatively the texts could have been denied publication, which would have protected Adorno's work from the intrusion of second-rate formulations, but such restraint would have done no positive good either. Readers, therefore, are asked to bear in mind, when drawing on and quoting from this volume, that much of what is included here, and the volume itself as a whole, requires consistent discernment of its provisional status. It is nothing at all that Adorno himself would ever have published.

Editorial symbols: Editorial remarks are given at the end of the book to distinguish them from Adorno's sparse notes, which were cast for the purposes of an intended American readership. Square brackets in the body of the text are Adorno's.

* Asterisks are used in conjunction with Adorno's footnotes to lead the reader to *accompanying* draft material at the bottom of the page. It must be emphasized that these passages are provided only as reference material and are not in any way to be construed as being

incorporated into the text. They are not amendments. These passages conclude with a second asterisk to help distinguish them from footnotes as the reader returns to the initial detour. If these essays were not entirely secondary in the whole of Adorno's writings, this intrusion of auxiliary drafts would not be legitimate.

These editorial techniques are admittedly cumbersome devices, but *Current of Music* is an unwieldy work in all regards, irremediably in fragments. Nothing more is claimed here than to have wrested its angular, misfitting parts back to shore and having set them out for study. Readers of this second salvage, it must be hoped, will come prepared for the same halting labour that was responsible in the first place for transporting them here.

Acknowledgements

There is no need to claim that on all matters the broad circle of colleagues who became involved in this project, which lasted more than a decade, always saw eye to eye. The claim, however, that does need to be asserted here, and happily, is that differences of mind and trivial matters did not keep this book from being completed. So it is with gratitude that the editor takes this occasion to appreciate Bernd Stiegler and Eva Gilmer at Suhrkamp Verlag; Christoph Gödde and Henri Lonitz at the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv in Frankfurt; Jan Philipp Reemtsma at the Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung; and Klaus Reichert at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität for the reasoned judgement, struggle for mutual understanding, restraint, patience, and, most of all, the good will that finally prevailed over the whole of this complex project. Other colleagues who contributed considerably more than their time are Kevin Sullivan, Richard Leppert, Thomas Huhn, and David Jenemann. Graduate students at Southampton College, Jane Anderson and Jerome Sperling, spent weeks and months confirming the archival accuracy of each of the reproduced texts. And if it is pure chutzpah for editors and translators to dedicate to family and friends the works of Aeschylus or Shakespeare on which they happen to have laid their hands, that objection will not be raised here in the dedication of this reconstruction of Adorno's *Current of Music* to Rolf Tiedemann, the editor of Adorno's *Collected Writings*. He supported this project without reservation, defending it resolutely, as if with his own body, against the interests of the day that might have scuttled it.

Wieland Hoban translated the several German texts that have been included in this initially largely English volume.

New York City, August 2007

1 Radio Physiognomics

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Part I The Idea of Radio Physiognomics

Chapter I The Problem of the »How« of Radio

At first sight it seems unsuitable to attempt to introduce »physiognomic« considerations into the field of social sciences. The concept of »physiognomics« comprises studies of expressive movements of the human face, based upon a definite philosophy for which terms like »expression« and »individuality« are as completely beyond dispute as the method of ascertaining them by intuitive life-experience. The original meaning of the term, which gained fame through Lavater,¹ was to use an analysis of human features as a reliable indication of the personality behind those features. The premise of that sort of physiognomics holds that the features and expression are always consistent and this consistency is interpreted as an indicator of the coherent personality. This personality is considered by Lavater and his followers, among them Goethe, as a last indivisible and indelible entity, and the consistency of features is supposed to prove its very unity and indivisibility.

Now it is obvious that this concept of physiognomics is obsolete. The assumption that features are consistent with themselves and with the personality behind them survives only as a *problem*. Modern psychology has to investigate whether that consistency exists at all, and if so, to what extent. It cannot be taken for granted. The concept of »personality« itself, in the metaphysical sense of the term during the late eighteenth century, has been subjected to most serious doubts not by modern psychology alone. In the chapter on psychological paralogisms in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*,² there is a severe attack on the assumption that the soul can rationally be proved to be a self-consistent, indelible and independent entity. This criticism necessarily hits the older physiognomics. Only if the personality is accepted as a priori substantial and self-consistent is it reasonable to interpret the features and expressions of the face in terms of that personality. Again, only if the relation between the features and the personality appears self-evident may the observer trust any immediate intuition about physiognomic expressions without subjecting that relation to more discursive analysis. It is not accidental that the heritage of older physiognomics, based on assumptions such as these, has gone to pseudo-sciences down to chiromantics – a sort of depraved-romantic thinking which can survive only within the corners of present-day consciousness.

Doubly provocative is the application of the term, physiognomics, to any branch of radio research. Not only does it appear to contain

all the associations of an arbitrary and immature method of pioneer days of psychology, but it also appears to apply this method to an unsuitable object. The physiognomic method was bound to the immediate understanding between one living being (the studied face) and another (the student). When we are faced with the direct opposite of this life-experience – the study of a fundamentally technical tool – it is hard to see any reason to apply such a method. Radio and the sound which we receive over our radio sets are not a human face. To apply the term, physiognomics, to a study of the phenomena presented to us by radio seems to be of purely metaphorical value, if any. We find ourselves in the position of pursuing an approach which can be expressed only by an oblique comparison with a science which has lost its reputation even in its proper field. Hence we must make clear why we insist upon calling our attempt »physiognomics«.

This question is not purely terminological. It involves the relation between this study and the individual sciences of psychology, technology and sociology. Roughly speaking, we insist upon the physiognomic approach because the phenomena we are studying constitute a unity comparable to that of a human face. Here we are concerned more with analyzing the conditions of this unity, no matter what they may be, than with analyzing the divergent psychological, sociological and technological elements bound up with it.

After the assumption that radio has a face, in the literal sense, has been dismissed, what does this face-like unity consist of? Whenever we switch on our radio the phenomena which are forthcoming bear a kind of expression. Radio »speaks to us« even when we are not listening to a speaker. It might grimace; it might shock us; it might even »raise its eyes« at the very moment we suddenly realize that the inarticulate sounds pouring from the loudspeaker are taking the shape of a piece of music which particularly touches us. To clarify the meaning of this type of phenomenon, and to show the fundamental structure within which every radio phenomenon is bound to take place is the purpose of our study.

Here we must avoid a fundamental misunderstanding. We do not intend to discuss the expression or meaning of the *material* which radio gives us. We are not speaking about the expression of the voice of the singer, transmitted to us by radio; nor do we speak of the meaning of the words of the commentator to whom we are listening. We are speaking about characteristics of the radio phenomenon as such, devoid of any particular content or material. We consider the way any voice or any instrumental sound is presented over the radio. It will be very difficult to abstract this expression of the »radio itself« from the expression of what is actually broadcast, and we shall see

later that these two layers of expression influence each other. Still, the attempt can be made within sufficiently large margins. The following example may serve somewhat to clarify the sort of expression we have in mind. A person who enters a room where a radio is turned on may be momentarily struck by the sound before being able fully to realize what the content of the broadcast is. In this study our attitude is largely like that of this man, confronted by a radio phenomenon without understanding the meaning of its material, but only the fact that »radio is speaking to him«. Naturally, this attitude rarely survives for any appreciable time, and of course it cannot survive in this study either. However, in confining ourselves to a description of the radio phenomenon, consciously abstracting it from the concrete content and avoiding its reduction to social and psychological forces behind it, we are keeping faith with this attitude. Just as anthropological studies can say that »physiognomics« are justified as long as they refrain from an interpretation in terms of an underlying personality and remain strictly descriptive of features, motions of these features and gestalten, we may feel safe in doing the same within the field of radio phenomena.

The elements of the radio phenomenon which concern us here we call the »how« elements; the elements of its content we call the »what« elements. Although they are closely connected it is first necessary for us sufficiently to clarify the former elements before bringing them into the right relation with the latter. The study of the »how« elements has been neglected up to now except by musical specialists, sound engineers and radio manufacturers. It has escaped the attention of researchers that they may be of any real importance for the psychological effect and social function of modern radio. The problem of radio programs, the ratio between their items and techniques for getting great numbers of listeners before the radio set has completely overshadowed the analysis of how all programs, from Toscanini³ to the Lone Ranger,⁴ are all subjected to conditions of a specific »how« in contemporary radio. This sort of study is usually considered either the business of »technicians« who must try to attain the best possible conditions for broadcasting and reception, or of snobbish aesthetes who are concerned with shades of sound while neglecting the fundamental content. But this attitude is biased. The problem of what a technician should consider »the best possible« transmission or reception is certainly not settled, nor is it certain that the »how« is the shade and the »what« is the substance. Because they are so general, because they are at work in every field of radio, the temptation is entirely to neglect them since at first sight they are not expressed in differences within the radio mechanism. Just here lies the

problem. Although they do not affect the differences, they may cause everything in radio to become fundamentally different from everything outside. And the less conspicuous such a change is, the less able the listener is to abstract from the phenomenon; the more attentive must he be to the pure »what«; and the more completely is he overpowered by qualities which are inescapable whenever his radio is turned on.

If this could be established it certainly would have a fundamental bearing on the analysis of radio phenomena. To say that radio-music sounds completely different from live music may be superfluous for the difference between classical and light-popular music in radio – although this is by no means certain a priori. Radio minimizes the difference between light-popular music and classical music, unifying them in comparison to live music. A consideration of this new unity of radio music where style plays only a minor part would be a contribution to our knowledge of radio, and is worthy of being pursued.

Chapter II »Radio Voice«

Radio physiognomics must deal not only with acoustic events. Of course, this is in no way concerned with the visual physiognomics of faces. Radio physiognomics is justified not only in the sense of a »physiognomic« discussion of the human voice. It is possible to undertake a description of the elements of a human voice containing its expression; its specific sound color; its modulations; its clearness or being veiled without any reference at first to the content of the voice. Everyday statements like, »This woman has a nice voice«, or »This man's voice sounds arrogant«, imply physiognomical problems. In that sense the question of radio physiognomics would be, »Does radio have a voice of its own?« and »What are its specific characteristics?«

Radio terminology seems to corroborate the assumption that this »radio voice« is spread unconsciously among the masses of listeners. The instrument through which the broadcast is heard is called the »loudspeaker«, thus hinting that radio »speaks for itself«. Of course this is not the case. It merely distributes the voices of other speaking people. But by calling the *instrument* a »speaker«, language seems to indicate that radio itself appears to speak when taken at face value as immediate perception, although crediting the tool with a voice may sometimes become completely irrational. Children, especially, may frequently react this way, a fact which has been noted within educational broadcasting. Mr. Robert J. Havighurst⁵ lists the following characteristics in his statement on radio as a medium for general

education, made at the »Conference on School Broadcasting«, January 27th to 29th, 1938:

- a.) In the case of people the listener feels close enough to form direct impressions of a speaker's personality; around the voice he hears, the listener builds a person as real in many ways as if he had been actually met.
- b.) This illusion of closeness makes the listener feel that he is actually present at the place where the broadcast originates – or purports to originate.⁶

The »illusion of closeness« is as intimately associated with the »radio voice« as the subject matter of radio physiognomics. The obvious reason for this illusion of a speaking radio is that the listener directly faces the apparatus instead of the man who is playing or speaking. Thus the visible tool becomes the bearer and the impersonation of the sound whose origin is invisible. No matter how easily this experience may be corrected by the slightest afterthought, it still may very possibly affect our relation to radio much more deeply than most people realize. Attributing the sound of radio to the real, present radio set may make people who are not concentrating attentively forget the unreality of what they are hearing. Thus they may be inclined to believe that anything offered by the »radio voice« is real, because of this »illusion of closeness«. This voice can dispense with the intermediary, objectivating stage of printing which helps to clarify the difference between fiction and reality. It has a testimonial value: radio, itself, said it. For example, we know that a number of WOR correspondents consider the Lone Ranger and his companions to be real people and even send them presents.⁷ The most recent example of the »illusion of closeness« and its astonishing effects is the case of Orson Welles in the H. G. Wells' broadcast over the Columbia Broadcasting System.⁸ It might be worthwhile to study whether children and naïve persons are really thoroughly conscious that radio is a tool, and whether they identify it with the voice they hear, or even personify radio itself. The very fact that they are confronted by »voices« without being able to argue with the person who is speaking, or even may feel somewhat in the dark about who is speaking – the machine or the man – may help to establish the authority of the tool. The absence of visible persons makes the »radio voice« appear more objective and infallible than a live voice; and the mystery of a machine which can speak may be felt in atavistic layers of our psychical life.

Even though we know that the »radio voice« is not really radio's own voice, it certainly filters every sound. And we must discuss how

this filter affects the listener. Our subject-matter is not the attitude of children or primitives but the elements which make radio appear, in a way, to be speaking. These elements, of course, have much in common with the experience of children and primitives and we cannot neglect them when they play so important a role for the appearance of the »radio voice«. An approach to a mass phenomenon like radio cannot be biased by any sort of rationalistic psychology. Thus our knowledge that radio really has no voice cannot affect our analysis of its appearance as the bearer of a voice.

There is another possible approach to the »radio voice«. We may disregard entirely the fact that radio transmits human voices or human sounds so that they are suggestive of being produced by the tool. Further, we may disregard the fact that these basically human sounds are affected by the tool so that they actually sound like its own sound, to a certain extent. We still may maintain, however, that the »abstract characteristics of the radio sound« are somewhat similar to the voice. Attempts should be made empirically to verify this similarity by a survey of radio technique. In certain aspects the reception of live music, its transmission and the ultimate reception of the broadcast can be regarded as substitutes for human sense organs. In a way the microphone does the work of »listening« and the radio set the work of »speaking«. It might even be worthwhile to follow up the suggestion that there is an analogy between the technical structure of the microphone and the ear. Similar hints are obvious in radio sets. In form the older loudspeakers resemble the mouth. From this point of view, that the radio mechanism is a sort of mechanization of human sense organs which were used as its pattern, the concept of the »radio voice« might sound less mystical than at first. It may be that the specific characteristics of the »radio voice« are due partly to this imitation and partly to the shortcomings necessarily to be found in any attempt to undertake the function of a sense organ. Finally, how far the radio's ear and the radio's voice replace the listener's own ear and voice will have to be asked. It is upon the answer to this question that much of the »influence« exercised by radio may be based.

This offers a first glimpse of the theoretical possibilities of a physiognomic study. The very fact that the features we intend to study reach consciousness only rarely either because they are regarded as self-understood or because they are not noticed at all, which amounts to practically the same thing, may even add to their importance. One of the guiding principles of the physiognomic approach is our conviction of the importance of these invariant, and hence unconscious elements of the radio »phenomenon« which the loudspeaker presents to the listener. And it is this principle to which we shall repeatedly have to refer.

We feel ready now to state our problem more concisely. The subject matter of the physiognomics of radio is the »radio voice«. This can be compared to the live voice because of the »illusion of closeness«. The »radio voice«, like the human voice or the human face, is »present«. At the same time it always suggests something »behind« it. We do not actually know what this »something« is, but it appears within the radio phenomenon and seems to be very intimately linked with its experience. This is parallel to facial physiognomics. Whenever we listen to a voice, or whenever we look at a face, we are dealing with something more or less vaguely »behind it«, not distinctly separated from it, but apparently intimately connected, although not identical with it. To put it in psychological terms: within our experience of live voices and faces the phenomenon is not a merely superficial *sign* of whatever is behind it, replaceable by another as well. It is connected with the content by being its expression. This relation between the »radio voice« and the hidden forces behind it, whatever they may be, is emphasized by the illusion of closeness. If the »radio voice« expresses these unknown forces we must study the categories of that expression as the radio phenomenon offers them without referring to our possible knowledge of what is presented and what is going on behind the phenomenon. Thus we may define radio physiognomics preliminarily as *the study of the elements of expression of the »radio voice«*.

The emancipation of the term »physiognomics« from real, human individuals is not unprecedented in contemporary psychological research. We refer to the discussion between Sándor Ferenczi and Siegfried Bernfeld on the applicability of psychoanalytical terms to biology. Bernfeld explicitly discusses the »physiognomics of organs« in Chapter IV of his study, i.e. the physiognomics of individual organs of the human body, as suggested by the great Hungarian psychoanalyst who »personifies« body organs such as the bladder and intestines.⁹ Although Bernfeld raises objections to the anthropomorphism of Ferenczi's type of thinking, he agrees with the attempt to establish a physiognomics of sense organs, provided that it is possible to emancipate it from this anthropomorphism and from its inherent personifications, and to bring it finally to a more rational level than Ferenczi's intuitive method. In the case of the »radio voice« we certainly endorse the last postulate – that is, the »illusion of«; and the »radio voice« must finally be traced back to the subjective conditions which necessitate this illusion. Yet we regard the »radio voice« as something »given« which cannot be resolved into subjective terms before being adequately described; and one of its inherent characteristics is just that personification which we may finally have to

abandon. The more successful we are in formulating it in precise »objective« terms, the better will be the chances for subjective reduction. And further, since our aim is to unify the radio phenomenon here rather than to break it down into different sciences, the objective description may transcend the possibilities of subjective reduction insofar as the sociological and technical implications of the »radio voice« cannot be treated entirely in psychological terms. In studies of social relevance it is never sufficient to separate appearance or illusion from the essential and real. In a society which has as gross a veneration of »appearance« as ours, it is just as important to study the mechanism which produces the »illusion« as it is to discount it. That is why our method takes the »illusion of the ›radio voice‹« so seriously and suggests research into it on a larger scale. In our study, the »illusionary« character of the »radio voice« plays as important a role as its »reality«. We shall endeavor to show the interconnection between these features and to find a meaning within this apparent contradiction which constantly recurs.

Chapter III A Model for Radio Physiognomics

a) Bekker's Theory of Symphony

Before beginning an outline of radio physiognomics we should offer a concrete example, discuss it in terms of our concept of physiognomics, and show how it differs from pre-scientific physiognomics.

We present an example which has the disadvantage of not being one of the basic phenomena of the »radio voice« although it does contain certain complicated implications for music as an articulate art and for its social meaning. It has the advantage, however, of showing that radio physiognomics is not just a game concerned with superficial characteristics and illusions, but really is related to broader issues in the field of the sociology of art.

Paul Bekker, in his study, *The History of the Symphony From Beethoven to Mahler*, polemicizes against the idea fostered by formalistic musical analyses that a symphony is really what its formal structure makes it appear to be, just a »sonata for the orchestra«. ¹⁰ He points out that it differs from sonata or chamber music not so much because of the different instrumental setting, but rather because of its different social function. Bekker holds that sonata or chamber music are directed primarily to the individual and are suitable for the intimacy of the private room. The symphony, however, is defined by him by its »power to build a community« [*gemeinschaftsbildende Kraft*]. ¹¹ It is meant to unite individuals, to melt their isolation and to

combine them in one general feeling which can be defined by leading social ideas dependent upon the structure of the community instead of the isolated person. In the case of the Beethoven symphony, for example, it is the idea of freedom and unity and the idea of »joy« derived from it. Now this theory of Bekker's is certainly open to strong objections from a sociological point of view. He still seems to be bound by nineteenth century aestheticism in his belief that music, or art in general, can »create a community«. It is rather that it reflects the actual being, or the unfulfilled desires of the community with all its innate antagonisms and difficulties. These it tries either to express or to smooth away and reconcile in its own sphere because under existing conditions (for instance in the society which Beethoven had to face) they cannot be reconciled in reality. Bekker overestimates the influence of art upon reality and he thinks of the artist in terms of a »creator«, borrowed from a different sphere. In spite of the underlying romanticism of this viewpoint, his theory contains some keen observations which still hold good. Certainly the difference between a Beethoven symphony and a Beethoven sonata implies more than the fact that the one was written for orchestra and the other for piano. It may be asserted here that it is not necessary to resort to attributing a somewhat mystical social power to the symphony to trace back this difference. The difference could be established within the limits of an analysis of the *structure* of the symphony and the sonata. We may take it for granted that this difference also contains certain social implications. A symphony does not create a community; but its inherent technical qualities are certainly linked with the fact that it is supposed to be listened to by a community and in a large room. In a Beethoven symphony, which inspired Bekker's theory, the inherent compositorial qualities of unity are more decisive than those of diversity within this unity. The interconnection of parts must be particularly intense because much more drastic means are necessary to hold the attention of a group instead of a few expert amateurs in a room. The material involved appears to represent the self-expression of individuals much less than it aims at objectivity within which individual differences could be sublated. Furthermore, in musical works directed to larger audiences the extension in time must be handled completely differently from music which aims at intimacy because it is more difficult to sustain the concentration of masses than of expert listeners. (Of course this is particularly true today, but we feel justified in assuming that it already held good for Beethoven.) A symphony must always make time appear much shorter than it really is by means of certain technical devices; chamber music may use time relations in a different, »epical« sense. (This especially applies to certain chamber

music works written by Beethoven at the end of his middle period, such as the last violin sonata [the G major Violin Sonata], and the Piano Trio in B flat major whose first movement can be regarded as the opposite extreme of symphonic treatment.) In fact, it is safe to say that just some of the »classical« Beethoven symphonies, the Fifth and Seventh particularly, but also the long first movement of the »Eroica«, when they are well performed, must seem to last only a very short time – to have virtually no time-extension at all, but to take place within one moment. To speak metaphorically, symphonic works transform the time element of music into space, and it is this transformation which might explain the specific appeal of symphonic music in its stricter sense. It would be comparatively easy for a technical analysis of the symphonic form to make all these issues clear and to interpret them in social terms – how they are related to the postulate which confronted the composer; that of writing music suitable for a large audience in a vast hall.^a

A good performance of a symphony ought to realize these specific characteristics, especially the symphonic contraction of time. And how they are brought out plastically might even be considered the criterion of a good performance. We do not intend to solve the physiognomic problem involved here because it would presuppose a broader range of radio physiognomics than we can dispose of: we intend only to discuss it to show what we actually mean by radio physiognomics. But it may be put this way: »Can the »radio voice«, even if radio broadcasts an ideal performance of a symphony, still realize these specific qualities? Do the innate characteristics of the »radio voice« possibly alter the whole outlook of a symphony? What qualities does a symphony lose, and what qualities does it possibly gain? What are the implications of this alteration for the listener? How do these alterations affect his attitude – specifically, the relation between a symphony and the listener?« This may finally lead to the broader educational question: »What is the significance if the listener knows a symphony only with the specific characteristics of the »radio voice?«

^a We must add that the problem of sonata vs. symphony should not be over-stressed. Our construction aims only at such extremes as the first movement of the Fifth Symphony, for example, and the first movement of the B flat major Trio. We know that, empirically, Beethoven's works vary widely between these extremes, and part of their richness is even due to the way these extreme elements are interwoven. The formal structure of the sonata is upheld throughout Beethoven's symphonies while certain of his sonatas plainly show characteristics of symphonic treatment. The most striking example of this is, possibly, the first movement of the »Appassionata«.

b) How Does a Symphony Appear in Radio?

In order to solve our problem we may start from a few very simple considerations. The radio listener generally finds himself in a small room, whose acoustic conditions are incomparable with those of a real symphonic performance and even with a normal orchestra studio of a radio network. Notwithstanding the work of the studio sound engineer, the radio listener must still adapt his set to the conditions of his room. He has to »steer« the sound. Of course, it could be objected that he could try to receive the symphony in exactly the same acoustic proportions of its original transmission. The same would not be the same. A sound tolerable in a big room would be offensive in a small one. A normal *forte*, with all its roundness and quiet strength would immediately sound like an assault, like the forebear of a catastrophe. Whoever has twirled the volume control of his radio can testify to the shock he experiences as soon as he tries loud sounds in his apartment. Further, the conditions of the private room affect this sound to such an extent that even if it does correspond to the strength of sound of the live performance, it does not sound at all natural. On the contrary, it sounds as if it were being heard through an amplifier – a phenomenon for which technical reasons could easily be provided. It is difficult to describe in exact terms acoustic phenomena so new and unusual as loud music heard in a small room. It may safely be said, however, that this sound possesses something of the vagueness and lack of clarity of bad photographic enlargements. At the same time, it also gains a specific sort of »expression« which can be described as aggressive, barking and bellowing. It resembles somewhat a political harangue, hostile and threatening to the listener. When heard in a private room, the disproportion between the power of the »radio voice« and the power of the individual endangers the latter: it sounds as if the sound could blow up the room. Even the most fundamental physiological experience of hearing such a strong – »over-strong« – radio voice is so exceedingly unpleasant that the listener is forced to abandon his original idea of receiving the symphony in its original acoustic proportions. Finally, even under conditions of ideal reception these proportions would be different from the original. Radio amplification lessens the range between *fortissimo* and *pianissimo*. When you get a true *fortissimo* through your loudspeaker you lose at the same time a true *pianissimo* and obtain only a *mezzo forte* as a substitute – a fact which already has its basic implications for the plasticity of a symphony even if one listens to its »full strength«. At any rate, the listener is forced to tune down the reception until it becomes tolerable to him.

So he must face an entirely new phenomenon – a symphony acoustically adapted to the conditions of a small room. This phenomenon is in question whenever we discuss how far a symphony is still a symphony.

First of all, the softened sound can no longer carry the illusion of being directed to a vast community which, in our discussion of Bekker's thesis, we regarded as so essential for the effect of a symphony. The idea that the soft sound of the work actually being heard is being directed to several hundred people is so ludicrous that it must be discounted. To the objection that certainly most listeners are not aware of these implications, the answer would be that they nevertheless make themselves felt within the phenomenon itself. It is not merely a matter of the quantity of sound or of the consciousness of how many people could listen to such a symphony or how many could be attracted or affected by it. As happens so often, the quantity tilts over into the quality. The following considerations may make this clear.

One of the chief characteristics of the symphonic style of Beethoven is a preference for very short and very pregnant motifs impressed upon the mind of the listener by an unabating intensity of presentation. The best known example is the opening bars of the Fifth Symphony. This emphatic manner of presentation requires a strength of sound that gives the distinct effect of exposing the symphonic material affirmatively. As soon as this strength is tuned down, these motifs lose much of that meaning. The importance of the material is no longer underlined. Hence the stubborn repetition – of the rhythm of the initial motif of the Fifth Symphony, for example – becomes utterly senseless. The intensity of musical »statement«, which is so important for the impressiveness of the symphonic movement, is lost as soon as it is lowered to the acoustic conditions of a private room. But it is only this intensity which makes allowance for the excessive simplicity of texture in some of Beethoven's symphonies, a simplicity which otherwise touches the borders of futility. When the »radio voice« in its full strength seems to exercise a sort of collective command over the individual listener that becomes unbearable, the symphony transmitted by a »chamber voice« loses any command and becomes virtually a piece of chamber music even though its own imperative structure actually does not permit a chamber-music-like presentation. In other words, a Beethoven symphony heard as a piece of chamber music would be »bad« chamber music, lacking all the more subtle elements of texture and richness of divergent thematic characters which we are accustomed to regard as the true content of chamber music.^b

^b This may explain the fact that, in a way, a Beethoven symphony still sounds more suitable when played on the piano by four hands than in a chamber music arrangement

Further, these alterations of the sound quantity and intensity affect not only the general character of the piece presented by the »radio voice«; they affect also its formal articulation and the realization of the whole structure of the symphony. We should like to call attention to the following points: the lack of specifically symphonic »intensity« affects one feature mentioned before as characteristic of the Beethoven symphony. That is the »transformation of time into space«, the impression that the music lasts only a moment while it actually may take twenty minutes. This impression, of course, is dependent upon the utmost intensity of performance. As soon as this intensity is lacking, the symphony drops out of its suspension; it, so to speak, falls back into time.^c The concentration vanishes; the listener may concentrate upon certain details or parts, but it is most unlikely that he will be able to realize the relation between the part and the whole as well as he could with the intensity of presentation of every moment. Thus the symphonic work, in a way, will be atomized when presented by radio. That is, it will appear not as a totality in which each part derives its proper meaning only in relation to the other parts, but rather becomes a rapid succession of »atom-like« sections, each apperceived more or less in isolation.^d This damage to the whole is furthered by another tendency of the »radio voice«. We mentioned in our discussion of the full strength of the »radio voice«

as is often done, for instance, with the slow movement of the Fifth Symphony. The piano sound, although of course it is only a one-color reproduction of a multi-colored original, still contains something of the original symphonic intensity, especially the symphonic *tutti*, by the very precision of sound, the »attack« produced by the precision of fingers striking keys. This value is entirely destroyed by any chamber music rendition.

^c An experimental approach to this problem could be made even though there are certain obstacles to valid results. One is the fact that consciousness of »musical time« by no means coincides with the awareness of empirical time. Even if the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony appears to last only one moment in terms of musical time, in another realm of consciousness we may realize that it lasts empirically only about eight minutes. In undertaking experiments it will be very difficult to find out whether the purely musical or the empirical time-consciousness is involved. People (some musical and some unmusical) could be placed in a broadcasting studio during the rehearsal of a Beethoven symphony; others, similarly, could be placed in front of a loudspeaker while the same symphony is played. Then both groups could be asked to guess how long the symphony took. It may be that those who listened to the broadcast will guess a longer time than those who heard the live performance. At any rate we shall have to conduct additional interviews in an attempt to find out something about the type of musical time-consciousness for the results to be valid.

^d We may hint here at our suspicion that the atomization of music by radio has a much broader significance than for symphonic music alone. It is especially clear in a case where the whole is everything and the detail nothing.

the waning and shrinking of the distance between the *piano* and the *forte* while their contrast is such an outstanding means of musical articulation. It appears doubtful to us, however, whether these conditions are much better if the »radio voice« becomes a chamber voice. An investigation should be made to compare the range of strengths of a real performance with the range of strength in a »normal« private room reception. This could easily be done by measuring minima and maxima sound strength in both cases. Our immediate experience leads us to expect that the *forte* is muted considerably for chamber conditions while the *piano* is not especially affected. Notwithstanding the proportions within radio reception itself, it appears that the difference between the original *forte* and the radio *forte* would be much greater than the difference between the original *piano* and the radio *piano*.^e It may be assumed that the total of a »radio voice« adapted to chamber conditions may approach something like an average *mezzo piano*. The dynamic contrasts are among the foremost means of articulation of a piece of music and of establishing the interrelations of its parts. In many cases, especially Mozart, it may even be said that just this unity is established by means of subtle contrast of details. If this means has to be discounted the articulation of the whole is considerably weakened. It would be fallacious to expect music to appear more unified as all the dynamic elements become more similar. Just this likeness makes the concentration falter similar to the way it is made to falter by the lack of symphonic »intensity«. A movement played in uniform *mezzo piano* throughout is not only much more difficult to follow but as a unity without any discernible and articulating parts, the unity, the »whole itself«, threatens to vanish. It must be added, too, that radio in its present form also considerably reduces the *coloristic* means of articulation. Further, it loses

^e Here it must be remembered that for psychological reasons that still need further research this impression may hold good even if actual physical measurement does not corroborate the assumption. Hence it would be advisable to present some subjects with the same radio music which is measured physically and to ask them to give, perhaps by means of the polygraph, their own impression of the sound minima and maxima and the distance covered. The results of these »subjective« experiments then should be compared with the results of physical measurement. Another group could be faced by the actual performance at the same time, and their reactions should be compared with the physical measurements of that performance. Thus four different tabulations would be obtained: a measurement of minima and maxima of the actual performance; polygraph sheets showing the respondent's reactions to what they regard as minima and maxima in the studio; measurements of actual minima and maxima of the room reception; and polygraph sheets showing the subject's conjectures of these minima and maxima. This material might provide us with a basis for more scientific treatment of features which can be described here only in a somewhat preliminary form.

its plasticity for several reasons. One of these reasons has been called »keyhole listening« in the most recent American discussion of the subject.¹² All this leads to the conclusion that symphonic unity is seriously endangered by radio transmission. This danger is of immediate concern for the social significance of the trans-personal objectivity of a symphony, expressed in the preponderance of symphonic unity over the parts. The »radio voice« subjects symphony to a sort of decomposition, and whatever remains is basically different from the original.

However, we must be careful not to simplify the issue. If you know a symphony and you hear it over the radio, you will, of course, recognize it for the same thing you have heard before. The better you know it, the less you will be disturbed by its alterations and the more you will be able to realize even the structural elements which are fading away by the very process of radio transmission. This leads to a somewhat paradoxical inference. The objection will probably be raised that the »radio voice« is a problem only for listeners who already possess some musical knowledge while it really makes no difference for the millions of people to whom radio brings music for the first time. We believe that just the opposite is true. People who already know symphonic music can still realize the symphonic unity when they listen to radio because, from their previous musical knowledge they can spontaneously add interrelations which are not expressed through the »radio voice« itself. The new listener will not be able to do so. Compared with the idea of symphony, his picture of a symphony in radio will be more distorted than that of the expert listener even though the latter may be aware of the alterations created by the »radio voice« while the former may know nothing about them. It would be worthwhile to undertake studies along this line. People who have a certain musical knowledge and people who have none at all should be interviewed about the same broadcast, for instance the Toscanini rendition of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Opponents of our theory would expect the naïve listener to be happy to receive the symphony for the first time, and the expert listener to be critical of the performance. This is most likely to be the case. But if a capable interviewer goes into greater detail he probably will find out that the expert listener will speak about the rendition of the symphony as a whole, how Toscanini connects the elements, upholds one tempo throughout a movement: the naïve listener, however, will probably dwell on the beauty of the sound or the sublimity of expression but he will probably not be aware of the unity which radio loses more completely for him than for the expert. Our fictitious opponent will answer with the objection that realizing a unity requires just that

knowledge which only the expert has and which cannot be expected from the naïve listener, so that our assertion, however true it might be in itself, would not hit anything specific to the »radio voice«. While we admit that this characteristic of listener-types is sound, we should still maintain that radio performances as they are now just *cannot* give an adequate understanding of the symphony as a totality while live performances still can do so. We should answer that as long as radio cannot bridge the gulf between these different types of apperception, and does not enable the so-called naïve listener to become aware spontaneously of the structural elements of the symphony, it fails the very educational task it has in dealing with the masses of new listeners. The idea that structural listening could later be developed out of sensual listening appears dangerous to us. Sensual and atomistic listening seems to us not the first step of musical understanding, but an obstacle to it; and the specifically sensual listeners are always ready to denounce anything which they consider highbrow. The issue is that radio, at the outset, ought to offer presentations of music adequate to the specific meaning of the music, in our case to the specific meaning of symphonic unity.

Radio symphony holds a double relation to live symphony. It is, at the same time, »the same« and »something different« from the original. This complexity gives rise to the thought that the radio symphony is a sort of »reproduction« of an original in the same sense that pictures are reproduced. The sound received over the radio in a private room is not only physically a reproduction of the live music played in the studio. Being built out of the elements of the »symphony as such« and the alteration it undergoes by broadcasting, the *phenomenon in itself has the innate characteristics of reproduction* just as a print has certain innate qualities of reproduction beyond the fact that it actually reproduces the original. The print not only reproduces the original, but even phenomenally »looks like a reproduction«. The same holds good for the radio symphony. It is this phenomenon which attracts the attention of a physiognomic approach. It may later be found that its importance is much further reaching than a brief discussion of form, such as a symphony, can bring out.

c) Consequences of the »Radio Voice«

This permits a first glimpse of the more far-reaching sociological consequences of our »attempt at radio physiognomics«. If the character of reproduction is a phenomenal feature of the »radio voice«, we shall have to ascertain how people apperceive music which has innate qualities of reproduction. Does this music still retain the same validity as

live music? Do listeners »take it as seriously«? Does it have the same obligatory character which can be found in live music? Do listeners remember it as well as live music? Does it play the same role in their psychological household formerly played by live music? What significance is there for the listener's behavior toward music in the fact that radio reproduction minimizes certain structural elements and emphasizes others? Would such an increase of »atomistic elements« be affected by radio's alterations of the sensual sound quality of music? What influence does radio reproduction exercise upon the listener's previous knowledge of a work? Does it establish the work more firmly, or does it tend gradually to deteriorate it? Or can both tendencies be witnessed at the same time? That is, are they more firmly established as authoritarian museum pieces, but deteriorated insofar as people are no longer able to arrive at a genuine and live relation to their meaning when they have been placed upon a pedestal? And finally, perhaps the most important question of all for this country, how do people who know symphonic music only through radio reproduction react to it? We are still completely in the dark about the last question, and guessing is of no help. Methods of finding an answer can be developed much more easily, however, if we succeed in outlining radio physiognomics; if we can formulate our questions about radio reception in the light of the results of an analysis of radio production.

One mistake must be avoided from the very first. Our approach might seem to imply a bias; it might seem that we are setting out to defend the sacrosanctity of musical cultural-goods from the profanation of mechanical reproduction; that we see all the light on the side of live music and all the shadow on the side of radio reproduction. This interpretation would be entirely misleading. It would be utterly reactionary and irresponsible to defend a type of musical performance which is steadily degenerating into the privilege of the happy few while the vast majority must remain content with mechanically reproduced music. The stubborn condemnation of mechanically reproduced music would deprive it of possibilities which, no matter how it may be criticized, should be developed and improved with the help of criticism instead of being rejected for the sake of the sanctity of the work of art; for the idea of this sanctity has become as problematic in present-day concert and opera life as radio broadcasting may be at its worst. The *l'art pour l'art* attack on radio would be problematic for reasons more fundamental than just that we »must make the best of a given situation«. Such a resigned viewpoint would still remain within the spell of romanticism. It would imply that the alterations we spoke of are due only to the mechanical tool while beyond the field

of radio, and perhaps recording, live music is still in good order. This, however, is not the case. We hinted at the social background and social function of the »radio voice«. However this may be, and however many intermediary stages lead from general social conditions of our day to radio organization and radio technique, this much we may take for granted: that radio and all its social implications are part of social life as a whole, and that its shortcomings are not so purely »technical« as they may seem in the first approach to the physiognomics of the »radio voice«. These shortcomings have a deeper social significance; they can be spotted in other realms of present-day life as well. Here we do not have to deal with the relation between radio technique and social background; we may assert that we do not see any sort of mystical connection and harmony here, but that we firmly believe in the possibility of establishing missing links between radio technique and more general trends in modern society.

To show what we mean by the social implications of a technique, here is an example from the earlier history of wireless telegraphy. We consider it almost a model for the interpretation of this relation. Gleason Archer, in his book, *The History of Radio to 1926* describes Edison's experiments in the field of wireless electricity. Mr. Archer's account reads as follows:

Edison took out a patent in 1885 on a system of inductive telegraphy. By affixing a tinfoil covered plate to the top of the locomotive or coach, the inventor found it possible to attract from telegraph lines bordering the roadbed what amounted to wireless messages. However rapidly a train might be moving at the time, the Edison device continued to function. One fact that militated against it as an answer to the problem of how to maintain telegraphic communication with a moving train was that the device was too democratic in its operation. Any nearby telegraph wire over which a message might be passing found equal favor with the Edison collector of signals. One wire might be carrying a message to the train, but any number of nearby wires might alike contribute to a jumbled collection of signals. The manifold difficulties of the problem and the fact that Edison was working on more universally important inventions, led him to suspend activities in this field of endeavor.¹³

Here one can virtually seize the idea that a technique is not isolated. At a time when the merely technical productive powers are in a practical sense ready for an invention, social conditions may make it impossible not only to be generally accepted, but also to be carried through. When liberalism was still at its height and the concept of the privacy and freedom of the individual a taboo stronger than any other

consideration, the concept of »discretion« prevented Edison from pursuing experiments which could easily have led to the invention of radio fifty years earlier. Only in a mass society governed by monopolistic institutions in which the taboos of the individual have faded away has radio technique been fully developed. It may be more than mere coincidence that at the time of radio's triumph in many countries the secrecy of private letters has been abolished – secrecy which, earlier, had prevented the transition from telegraph to wireless. Whether the present state of affairs can be called more democratic than Edison's time, referred to by Dr. Archer, is another question.

Here is another example: The characteristics of »reproduction« which we suspect are profoundly bound to the »radio voice« are due to the fact that for one social reason or another radio has set for itself the task of reproducing and imitating live music instead of emancipating itself from the »original« and trying to produce something specifically its own. The shortcomings we mentioned are due not so much to the »radio voice« as such, but to the inadequacy of this voice for live music, even though it still insists upon upholding the impression of this adequacy. This implies first that if we could deduce, as Veblen, for instance, has attempted, the social reasons for the cult of the »original« being propagated by its radio reproduction,¹⁴ one of the most important links between radio technique and modern society would be discovered. Again, if theoretical knowledge could lead to an abandonment of the practice of imitation, these shortcomings might disappear and radio might become really adequate to its potentialities. This is not the point, however, which we have in mind here. Our principal consideration tends in a different direction. Let us assume for the moment that [. . .]¹⁵

If our assumption that the shortcomings of radio have a deeper social significance is true, we must expect them not to be related to the tool and we must not expect them to be circumvented by changing technical practices. The man who would turn his back to radio and face live music, then, would be no better off. We do not pretend to have established the »missing links« and we even consider it doubtful whether the musical phenomena we are discussing can be traced very far back to social conditions by individual motivation from one given cause to one given effect. They may be effects of the *totality* of our society; we may not be able to discover the individual social motivation for each individual musical phenomenon upon which we must focus our attention. All this admitted, however, we may still say that, even though we still lack these links, we actually can still identify features in modern live music and official music life which definitely prove that there is no escape from the field of the radio mechanism into a field of unspoiled musical culture. This concept that radio, and

especially its shortcomings, are indicators of contradictions in our whole art life and ultimately in our whole social life instead of being false because of the degeneration of art into a mechanical process, may dispense with the suspicion that we want to save an island of genuine and live music against the threatening sea of mechanization and reification. We want to face the danger of this sea, not for the sake of fleeing to cultural islands, but for better navigation. Any investigator who does not see the dangers of that sea and who simply allows himself to be drugged by its grandeur, and who sees its waves as waves of unbroken progress, is very likely to be drowned.

The tendency to atomize music, to lose the musical entirety and replace it by detail, the vanquishing of the »seriousness« of music; all these are by no means confined to the »radio voice«. That seems to be only the precise technical executor of trends which cover a much larger field. We may assume that it is not only within the sphere of light-popular music that this atomistic listening which we think is encouraged by the »radio voice« takes place. In the sphere of so-called serious live music as well we must note obtrusive symptoms of the same type. The constant repetition of a very few standard works by a very few composers; the increasing attention paid to sound quality compared to the constructive elements of the composition; the presentation of works merely as occasions for showing off some conductor who gives »his Fifth«; all point in the same direction. But just the conservative elements of live concert music, those which most fiercely defend its magic qualities, its intensity and its original form against deterioration, are now open to the gravest doubts. They all have a certain touch of »quasi«; they are overdone as if the conductors really do not believe in the possibility of this defense and were trying to persuade themselves that it is still »possible«; and those very magic qualities, the intensity and the pathos which some conductors show (in an extreme manner, Mr. Furtwängler)¹⁶ are spoiled by a sort of over-emphasis and theatrical performance which bears witness against the cult of the »genuine« which they pretend to serve. We may even question whether these magic qualities are becoming market articles today, similar to the catchwords of a hit song to which they allege to be so strictly opposed. The reactions of people to these elements are in any case by no means so very different from those which we are inclined to suspect the »radio voice« of imitating. The concert-goer who waits just for the very moment that the conductor begins to fascinate is very similar to the radio listener who, although he entirely misses the formal structure of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, nevertheless dwells upon the beauty of the tune of the slow movement. The insincerity and insufficiency of today's concert life has become such a commonplace that, under

certain aspects, one often feels obliged to defend it against objections which would replace it by more primitive types of musical behavior. It is impossible, however, to escape the conviction that abandoning radio for the sake of live music would not help very much, and that progressive chances can be sought within the sphere of radio itself.

Here again a study of the »radio voice« may prove helpful. In our comparison between an »original« and a »radio« symphony we have so far pointed out only the shortcomings of the reproduction. A physiognomic study of the »radio voice« will have to be equally careful about the opposite tendency. For the moment, we content ourselves with translating some remarks by Ernst Krenek¹⁷ who tried to develop a theory of the positive possibilities of radio listening from a criticism which followed the same line as our remarks about the radio voice. The passage reads:

Radio reproduction is well suited for the production of a new and hitherto unknown concentration on the work of art while at the same time it postulates a higher degree of such concentration to bring about an effect suitable to the subject matter. (That is, for over-compensating the elements of deconcentration which we sketched above.) Radio may become an especially valuable means of musical apperception for a listener who is willing and able to enter into a relation to music sincerely in keeping with the facts (*sachgerecht*). He will not consider the concert hall as the room furthering concentration at its best. The concert room was predisposed for collective reception of music as long as it was »community building«, affirmative art. The more recent forms of music are different and they again affect older music so that their new values are generated which are less to be thought of in terms of »elevation«, »edification«, »entertainment«, and similar characteristics. These values can be much more easily apperceived in an attitude of composure, intellectual preparedness and conscious orientation. Listening to music in the seclusion of a private room is favorable for attaining this attitude because there one can utilize any means of concentration, such as reading the score, smoking, drinking, pacing up and down, and so on. It is obvious that this function of radio – a new type of concentration just opposite of the tendency of deconcentration which we outlined before – today takes place only in very few and exceptional cases and plays only an infinitesimal part in the organization of the broadcast. Surely here, however, the essential and most promising future values of the institution of radio should be sought.¹⁸

We may add that the very fact which we mentioned in our discussion of symphony in radio, that the parts become preponderant over

the whole, may lead to a sharpening of attention upon the parts. One may listen to individual musical sections in radio as if through a microscope, or, to choose a more appropriate comparison, just as in the movies one concentrates upon a close-up where the scene remains vague as long as one follows only the whole. Personal experience leads the author to think that just the breaking of the spell of the whole which we discussed earlier in terms of its negative manifestations, so to speak releases the detail; and that the »radio voice« makes allowance for the study of details which previously could be obtained only by studying the abstract score of the music. It might well be that this study of details, free of the »spell«, will finally lead to a new apperception of the whole which, although totally different from the traditional, may ultimately make good its losses. Certainly such an attitude would be, as Krenek pointed out, less emotional than the traditional one. The slogan of »intellectualism« should not deter us, however, from seeing its prospective chances. What will be lost of the »spell« and its persuasive intensity may be regained by clarity and adequacy of the listener's relation to the work of art which is transmitted to him mechanically.

But another and more subtle issue is involved which may come to the aid of the effect of radio. We discussed the lack of articulation of the radio performance which, at the same time, allows a closer study of the details. It would be fallacious, however, to regard this »lack of articulation« in itself purely as a loss. As a performance of classical music, especially chamber music, becomes more refined, it also becomes more inclined to thrust the rougher contrasts into the background. If the structure of a work is so well established that anyone – in a way, even the man who has never heard it before – is somehow aware of it, then a sophisticated interpreter will no longer try to articulate the work by means of heavy surface contrasts. He may even avoid such contrasts and try as much as possible to produce an unbroken unity, a sort of musical texture, so to speak, whose outward articulation is up to the listener; the constructive elements stressed by this performance are not immediately evident in the sound phenomena. This type of interpretation could be compared with the works of highly differentiated writers, such as Marcel Proust, who strongly resist any outward articulation of their texts, even avoiding paragraphs or italics in an attempt very densely to weight their texts, thus challenging the reader's intellectual activity. (In some older literary forms, especially the Arabic, the same is found. Overt articulation is strongly connected with the desire to relieve the writer's customer of any work of his own. The ultimate of cheap articulation is the newspaper headline. An aversion to »headlines« in music can also be

felt.) If the most modern type of musical interpretation draws the articulation away from the surface of sound into deeper layers of the connection between motifs and themes, then the way radio presents music by smoothing away outward articulations would unexpectedly again be up-to-date, an executor of musical tendencies of which it certainly is not aware.

Chapter IV Methodological Inferences

The settling of such questions overreaches by far our present purpose. We must confine ourselves to discussing the example of the symphony in radio from a methodological point of view to clarify our method sufficiently before sketching a more systematic outline of radio physiognomics.

First of all, our study tries to keep as closely as possible to the phenomenon and not to any hypothesis or pre-judgments about the phenomenon, roughly understood as the music pouring out of the loudspeaker. Of course, our inferences sometimes take the form of hypotheses, but we are trying to develop them from observation of the phenomenon itself and not to deduce them from above. *The question of why we follow this descriptive or »phenomenological« method can easily be answered. We are dwelling on the phenomenon because it is actually the phenomenon which determines the reaction of the listeners, and it is our ultimate aim to study the listener.* The man who sits in his armchair and listens to radio does not hear what is going on in the conference room or in the studio of the network. He does not hear wave-lengths and frequencies. He hears only what goes on »under his nose«. The elements and events behind the radio phenomenon affect him only through the medium of the phenomenon and not by themselves.^f A scientific attempt to reconstruct the

^f This, of course, does not have to be taken literally. We know that newspapers, announcers, commentators, etc. always exercise certain influences which transcend the phenomenon and, still more important, no listener is completely left to the phenomenon because he always has a background of general knowledge which links the phenomenon with its causes – with a man and tools by which it is produced. In spite of that, however, we feel justified in upholding that the actually decisive element of radio listening is the phenomenon itself. We even venture to suggest that the listener's knowledge, beyond the limits of his immediate experience of radio, impresses itself upon this phenomenon so that, in a way, it constitutes one of the characteristics of the phenomenon itself. We hinted at this when we discussed the prospective differences between the radio phenomena of a symphony previously known and that of a symphony unknown to the listener. A known symphony »sounds different« to him; the knowledge and relations beyond the immediate present experience migrate, so to speak, into this present experience.

listener's reaction must follow the same line. To start from the causal conditions of radio instead of from the phenomenon would bring arbitrary elements into play. We cannot know to what extent these elements can actually be felt in the listener's conscious and unconscious life unless we can definitely trace them back to the phenomenon which he experiences. Just as the radio phenomenon provides the »material« for the listener's psychological relation to radio, it also provides the material for its scientific penetration. This, of course, does not mean that the consideration has to stop with the phenomenon. To »penetrate« it actually means to dissolve it and to reduce it to its conditioning factors. It makes all the difference, however, if we actually start from the phenomenon and then »reduce« it, or if we think in terms of objectivity before having determined whether that »objectivity« can actually be spotted within the living-experience of the radio listener.

Here we must face one inevitable objection. If we stress the »subjective« radio phenomenon as our starting point, how, then, can we talk about it in »objective« terms? How are we safeguarded against the danger of private arbitrariness and bad generalization? If, for instance, we attribute an aggressive character to the radio voice in its full strength or a lack of symphonic intensity to a symphony transmitted by radio, how do we know that this is not merely an individual statement? For instance, does the concept of symphonic intensity play any role within the experience of people who have no musical knowledge whatsoever?

We must be very careful in answering these questions because we are fully aware of the fact that the phenomenological method has frequently been guilty of exactly the same arbitrariness of which we accuse ourselves. But it appears to us that the terms, »subjective« and »objective«, handled in the usual way, are much too indefinite to have any explicit meaning. First of all, the assertion of relativists that subjective reactions are arbitrary and accidental and that each individual may react differently is much too radical to be true. The relativist who challenges the absoluteness of his adversary's statements is much more absolute in some of his assumptions than the latter could ever be. The assumption that there are extreme differences among individuals could never be corroborated by experience and can be upheld less than ever in a period where individuals, thoroughly subjected to standardizing influences, seem virtually to become more and more similar to each other. In the second place, the statement, »subjective phenomenon« itself, ought to be much more clearly differentiated. However outdated the old Lockian distinction between primary and secondary qualities may be, from the viewpoint of the consistent abolition of the

idea of things in themselves, which are still the basis of Locke's concept of primary qualities, his classification of qualities contributes something important to our knowledge of the phenomenon *itself* – without any regard for »things behind it«. In our own immediate, phenomenal experience we seem to be largely aware of the difference between »we« qualities and »it« qualities. The musician, for example, who rehearses a work and is busy controlling and possibly altering a sound phenomenon and not any »thing« behind it, is fully aware of the difference between the quasi-objective qualities of this phenomenon (however much it may be »subjective« compared with an »objective« thing) and elements purely subjective in the somewhat different sense of being conditioned by his own individuality and the contingencies of his own individual listening. This sounds rather involved but it is comparatively easy for an elementary example to make it clear, although the real issues are on a much more differentiated level. Let us take a musician in a string quartet who is studying a new work. By some accident he is placed next to the cellist. At one moment he may notice two things: that one of the parts sounds somewhat out of tune (he may not even know exactly where and what it is, at first) and the cello sounds loud, out of proportion to the whole. He probably will correct the playing out of tune because he is aware that »his« sound phenomenon of being too loud has a strong and objective validity. He may refrain, however, from asking the cellist to play more softly because he realizes that the cello's apparent loudness is due to the observer's closeness to it; whereas in the concert hall the music may appear in its proper proportions. The differentiation of »subjective« and »objective« within the phenomenon which itself is »subjective« in a wider sense, is not related to such primitive sensual data as »too strong« and »out of tune« but is most likely to reproduce itself whenever higher intellectual differentiations of the phrasing, the expression, the sense or the meaning of the music are at stake. *Throughout our apperception of music we immediately differentiate between »subjective« and »objective« characteristics within the realm of our subjective phenomenon.* In the long run, this phenomenal discrimination between subjective and objective within the phenomenal field, of course, damages the trite division into »subjective« and »objective«. Here, however, we are not concerned with these much farther-reaching epistemological consequences, but simply state our method. Our description must stick to immediate radio phenomena as the »material« of the listener's reactions; but it must also try to elaborate the »objective« characteristics of these elements, as they present themselves as »objective«, and to drop those which again are characterized phenomenally as related to specific individual differences.

Because we consider this objectivity a phenomenal character and not a result of discursive thinking we cannot give any abstract »criteria« for what is objective and what is subjective in the radio phenomenon. Selecting the elements of »phenomenal objectivity« which we have in mind becomes a matter of exactitude of description. On the other hand, we must acknowledge that even if the exactitude of description can be achieved it is not sufficient protection against the arbitrariness we hinted at. It will be necessary to find out if other people have arrived at the same objective characteristics of the phenomenon which we mentioned. The results of a physiognomics study are necessarily subject to quantitative verifications. This verification, however, must presuppose as careful a phenomenal description as possible. The description may uncover elements inherent in the phenomenon which an untrained respondent can notice only with difficulty even though he experiences them. Only if our description can, so to speak, »locate« them and help to determine why people are not consciously aware of them even though they »have« these »objective« characteristics, shall we be able to develop control methods for ascertaining them.

We consider the lack of symphonic intensity in the above-discussed sense one of these objective characteristics of the phenomenal »radio voice«. Just here the objection will be raised that this lack of intensity will not be noticed by a listener who has never heard a symphony or even who might have heard a few but still knows nothing about symphonic treatment and the specifically Beethovenian style. And we might even be sued for projecting some of our expert prejudices into the experience of the man on the street. But this is not the point. At the present moment we are not interested in what people know or do not know about music; nor are we interested in how much of the music and its implications they are able to grasp individually. Our assertion is only this: the »phenomenon itself« – a phenomenon which within sufficiently wide margins we can suppose to be »objective« and the same phenomenon to both the expert and the man on the street – cannot convey features which we characterized in our analysis of a Beethoven symphony as the components of »symphonic intensity«. We do not say that the radio listener loses something of which he was never even aware. We only say that the phenomenon does not even give him a chance to grasp this »something«.

This discussion of the »objectivity« and »subjectivity« of our physiognomic attempt enables us to return to the question of what really constitutes its physiognomic character. The »objective« element within the subjective phenomenon of the subject matter of radio physiognomics is the expression of the »radio voice«. Its objectivity has a

deeper meaning. In the example of the man playing with the string quartet, we may say that the objectivity of the phenomenal characteristics of playing out of tune can also be stated in truly objective terms, entirely independent of the individual observer. This could not be done, however, in the case of the cello appearing too loud. A *cause* for the out-of-tune-ness could be given within the sphere of objective things: it can be traced back to the violinist's failure to put his finger on the right place on the sounding board. In a similar sense the »expression« or meaning of the »radio voice« is objective insofar as within the strict limits of the phenomenon it points to the processes and forces which are going on behind the phenomenon. Here lies the justification for calling ours a physiognomic approach. A physiognomist tries to establish typical features and expressions of the face not for their own sake but in order to use them as hints for hidden processes behind them as well as for hints at future behavior to be expected on the basis of an analysis of the present expression. In just the same way radio physiognomics deals with the expression of the »radio voice«. This relation, at the same time, sets the limits to the physiognomic approach. In the last analysis its scientific value entirely depends upon whether we shall be able to resolve the rebuses of the expression of the »radio voice« into the moving forces behind it and the consequences before it. Thus our study is preliminary in a radical sense. Radio physiognomics marks only a crossroad; the point at which, within the phenomenon, the past, namely the causes of the phenomenon, and the future, namely its prospective consequences, intersect.

How must we understand the »expression« of the »radio voice« as an index? Let us return to our examples of adapting the radio sound to the private room and subjecting the symphony to the conditions of that adaptation. We mentioned the harshness of the unadapted strength of the voice heard through a loudspeaker. This harshness as a mere expression hints quite irrationally at a sort of authority behind the phenomenon. One imagines a person recklessly addressing the individual; this person appears to be very much concerned with the listener insofar as he derogatorily demands his attention. At the same time, though, he appears not to be at all concerned with the listener but to show him, by the disproportion between his huge radio voice and the listener's tiny voice how unimportant the latter is compared with the power which addresses him. Now this expression, in a way, is certainly an illusion. The real owner of the terrific voice may be quite a humble person. In the studio he may even speak quite normally, while the over-emphasis is caused only by amplification. But is the expression of harshness which we attribute to the phenomenon, therefore, just futile

and disconnected from radio as a whole? Or does it actually »express« something fundamental about radio itself, namely that a private person in a private room is privately addressed by a public voice to which he is forced to subordinate himself?

Even if we discount the presupposition of the cause, an authoritarian voice, and its effect, frightening the individual, as a reality behind radio, still the structure of the radio phenomenon works as if that relation existed, and makes it a sort of living force. When a private person in a private room is subjected to a public utility mediated by a loudspeaker, his response takes on aspects of a response to an authoritarian voice even if the content of that voice or the speaker to whom the individual is listening has no authoritarian features whatsoever. Either the public voice gains an overwhelming strength over the individual, or just in order to bear the public voice the individual must alter it, as we sketched in the case of the radio symphony. In radio the configuration of public tool and isolated individual promotes serious obstacles to the older type of individual art consumption, clearly witnessed in the case of the symphony heard in the private room.

These obstacles and the illusion of such individual art consumption which radio maintains can be equally understood. When radio comes into these conflicts with the conditions of a private room, why, then, does it address individuals in a private room? Why do we not find new forms of listening to music in large rooms and under conditions better suited to the material? The answer is necessarily complex. First, as paradoxical as it sounds, the authority of radio becomes greater the more it addresses the listener in his privacy. An organized mass of listeners might feel their own strength and even rise to a sort of opposition. The isolated listener definitely feels overwhelmed by the might of the personal voice of an anonymous organization. Second, the deeper this voice is involved within his own privacy, the more it appears to pour out of the cells of his most intimate life; the more he gets the impression that his own cupboard, his own phonograph, his own bedroom speaks to him in a personal way, devoid of the intermediary stages of the printed word; the more perfectly he is ready to accept wholesale whatever he hears. It is just this privacy which fosters the authority of the radio voice and helps to hide it by making it no longer appear to come from outside. Here are the deeper social reasons for the difficulties we described in musical terms when we discussed our example of the symphony. Radio upholds the illusion of privacy and individual independence in a situation where such privacy and independence do not really exist, which contradicts it. It is evident, however, that this illusion of privacy, immediacy in facing

public events, and individual liberty in choosing them, is by no means limited to radio and runs through our entire public life. As people are subjected more and more to public mechanisms of every kind, and as the pressure of these mechanisms upon the individual increases, it is evident that these mechanisms must try all the more to conceal themselves behind a façade of the individual's adaptability, privacy and intimacy, just for the sake of not frightening him so badly that the effect tilts over to the contrary and the individual no longer attempts to escape the inescapable.¹⁹ Here, again, the physiognomics of the »radio voice« fits completely the experience of how modern mass society works in other fields. The cult of the »original« which we have already mentioned is closely bound to the artificial survival of individual categories in the monopolistic era. We refer here to Veblen's theory of art and the leisure class, where the desire to possess an »individual«, non-manufactured, non-standardized object as a motive of social prestige plays so vast a role.²⁰ This idea affects not only listening conditions, but also the idea of the »object« received under such conditions. Radio's tendency to imitate live performances, reinforced by practices such as broadcasting applause, describing the concert hall and the audience, or the auditorium where the work is played, could be described as an attempt at pseudo-democratization of aristocratic or, at any rate, ruling class aspects of art, thus changing each listener, no matter how economically and psychologically weak he may be, into a smart, pleasure-taking person sitting in a seat reserved for the happy few. This tendency to make believe that the majority is in the situation of the privileged minority can again be witnessed in much broader fields. The decisive point is that today the technical structure of the »radio voice« makes objects which fall under the category of mass products, appear, by the very nature of their distribution, to be »original« and »owned« by the individual who hears them. This again is in line with other phenomena which cannot escape the attention of the sociologist of art. We refer to the fashion of artsy-craftsy things (*Kunstgewerbe*) which plays so vast a role in Germany. The basic trend in this type of production appears to be handling cheap and mass produced material and, by means of individual »taste«, making it appear to mean something in itself, to have the value of something »original« (*Eigenkleidung*). Even its cheapness becomes transfigured into a sort of noble and ascetic simplicity (*schlicht*). This last tendency has not yet been developed by radio, but its aspect of offering the mass product as something homely, unadorned and genuine is definitely »artsy-craftsy«. The »personal« attitude of some radio commentators, and especially radio advisers in private affairs like Martha Deane,²¹ may even be

related to this tendency. Here again, however, the limits of the physiognomic approach are transcended and the material questions of program-analysis are involved. But we reach the following methodological conclusion.

Even if it is impossible for the characteristics of the »radio voice« which we discussed to be traced back to immediate social causes, and even if they appear to be due to radio's specific technical structure without regard for its social function, we may still say that this »technical structure« in itself contains social facts and fits into social aspects. We gave two examples: the ideal of imitating live music and the ideal of maintaining the privacy of a public experience. These two examples reflect inherent elements of present-day society, as we tried to point out, although a physiognomic study could not provide all the necessary links between these social tendencies and their results in radio. But a physiognomic attempt may negatively phrase the social implications of these examples in radio; if radio gives up these two »ideals« some of the technical characteristics which we considered most problematic would be dropped. That this cannot be done as easily as it might be recommended as an improvement in a theoretical discussion is again a social fact and now a very clear and drastic one. Every attempt now made to liquidate the »live« work in radio, or the comfortable privacy of reception, appears doomed to failure for the sake of what is called the »wish of the majority« which the tool must serve. A perusal of a publicity release of any major network will show that the greatest positive emphasis is placed upon those very features which we regarded as the strongest enemies to radio functioning suitably for its material and its bringing the listener into a living relation with the material.⁵ The man who believes that the commentator shouting through his loudspeaker is a virtual dictator is wrong; but the fact that he »sounds like a dictator« is certainly due to conditions which do not allow any voice to be broadcast so that it might fundamentally touch upon the public speaker's illusion of privacy. Thus, in a way, the naïve listener who becomes afraid of the voice of the commentator is right: the social mechanism behind the technical one leading to these disproportions is necessarily one which he has every reason to fear, and it may easily be one which breeds dictators who really shout just as the voice of the humble commentator sounds in a private room.

We pointed to the features which make our study of phenomenal expression an indicator for social forces behind it and social prospects

⁵ Here we refer to our feature-analysis of an NBC publicity release which is added as Appendix I of this study.²²

ahead of it. The last discussion may have given an idea of the type of »hidden forces and prospects« we have in mind. At the same time, these considerations now allow us to clear up the question of how our physiognomics differs from the traditional physiognomics mentioned at the beginning of this study. This difference, of course, goes much further than the obvious fact that the physiognomics of the »radio voice« does not deal with live expressions and live individuals. From the methodological viewpoint it may be stated as follows: older physiognomics was undertaken and regarded as an intuitive science of its own. Our attempt is nothing of that sort. It is only a description of phenomena assembled at a crossing point with the aim of showing the unity of aspects scientifically so different from each other as are the psychological, technological and sociological sciences. It is not the ambition of radio physiognomics to replace these scientific approaches by a »vision« of the totality. Physiognomics intends only to define more correctly the inherent features of radio phenomena and to elaborate within these features certain relations which deserve as much attention for further analysis as radio's isolated scientific problems. We spoke of the »radio voice«. We described it as a phenomenon whose realm is not to be transcended except by an interpretation of what is given within its proper limits. Here we met psychological features; for instance, the problem of the individual's concentration or deconcentration, the problem of the individual becoming afraid, the problem of »sensual« or »constructive« response to symphonic music. Then we discovered technological features, such as radio's alteration of live sound, the unsuitability of a strong »radio voice« for a private room, a weak »radio voice« for a symphony, etc. Finally we hinted at the social implications of these features, such as why the illusion of individual appearance is upheld throughout the field of radio, or why radio tries to imitate a live sound instead of producing a sound of its own. All these considerations can be, and have to be pursued for themselves. As far as we can see, however, it is only by means of radio physiognomics that we can ever become aware of the way they are concretely connected instead of reconstructing their unity in a totally abstract way after having sectioned it into the disciplines traditionally used for handling them. It is this intention to connect scientific processes of different levels with the phenomenon from which they are abstracted which finally guides our physiognomic endeavors. We may confess here that the axiom which governs all these attempts is our conviction that the unity of the radio phenomenon, in itself, as far as it really has the structure of a unity, is simply the unity of society which determines all the individual and apparently accidental features. In our approach we try to combine

sociological, psychological and technological aspects because we believe that they are only »aspects« of our society and, in the last analysis, that they may be reduced to fundamental categories of our society.

Part II Categories of Radio Physiognomics

Chapter V Time – Radio and Phonograph

The basic characteristic of the relation between radio and time is the time-coincidence of the »phenomenon« to which we are listening and the broadcast performance. This time difference is so infinitesimal that it may safely be overlooked. This can lead to astonishing results which may influence the »expression« of the »radio voice« by giving it a touch of unreality and witchcraft. This will occupy our attention later as one of the essentials of that voice. The author knows of the following fact from his own German experience. In Kronberg, a country place not far from Frankfurt am Main where he often stayed with friends, he had the opportunity of listening to a nightingale which sang very beautifully in the garden. This nightingale was discovered by the Frankfurt Radio Station, and the author and his friends managed to listen to it over the radio when the windows were open. The result was that we were able to hear the radio nightingale a bit earlier than we could hear the real voice because sound takes longer to reach the ear ordinarily through space than by electrical waves. The real nightingale sounded like an echo of the broadcast one. Thus the »radio voice« creates a strong feeling of immediate presence. It may make the radio event appear even more present than the live event. This feeling of presence necessarily means a feeling of immediacy, too. There is no gap and no mediation between the time something is going on and the time at which you are listening to it. When we face a radio phenomenon we are actually »present« in that our own presence in time is no different from that of witnesses to the broadcast event. Because of this immediacy, this experience of being present in time, radio always tends to make us forget that it gives us in other respects a mediated phenomenon. Therefore the element of time-coincidence must be kept evident as one of the basic features of the »radio voice« from the very beginning.

It is because of this identity in time that radio strongly resembles telephone and differs strongly from the phonograph. It may be pointed out here that one of the main temptations for radio to imitate live events can be found in this coincidence. Radio, as a means of dis-

persion, presents any real event without, so to speak, taking the event out of time. It does not »thingify« it – at any rate it does not appear to do so to a superficial observer. The illusion of immediacy and spontaneity we mentioned in *Part I*^h is based upon the fact that this immediacy actually exists in time proportions. Further, the fact that radio is free of objectivated or »canned« material, in the crude sense of the phonograph record, gives a much greater mobility to the tool, and this mobility enforces the illusion of immediacy and presence. For instance, there are no narrow time limits as there are with phonograph records. One can listen to a whole Bruckner symphony without interruption. In listening to a recorded symphony the interruptions always remind the listener of the separation between the record and the live performance and destroy the musical continuum, notwithstanding the fact that in a deeper sense the »radio voice«, too, »breaks the music into bits«.ⁱ Again, the mobility of radio allows it to broadcast accidental elements of a performance such as noises of tuning, applause when the conductor appears, conversation of the audience and the sudden silence with the conductor's appearance, applause when the curtain goes down, etc. The elimination of these accidental features helps to make a phonograph objective and »beyond time«. The more faithfully they are reproduced and the more emphasis given them by the handling of the programs, the more does the listener feel as if he were within immediate, spontaneous life wherein the essential and accidental are separated without any attempt being made to raise them to an »objective« level above the listener's consciousness of the »current of life«. However, from the outset we must be conscious that live qualities of radio are due only to the factor of time-coincidence and the absence of the necessity to fixate the sound, independent of time. The sound itself, however, will show characteristics more akin to the sound of the phonograph. In the categorical structure of the phenomenon we can already find the root of problems which later become decisively important for the radio phenomenon and its effect, namely that it *appears* to be a live phenomenon, whereas actually it is very much different from the live event to which it is connected by the abstract element of time-coincidence. The time-coincidence and the swiftness by which radio can chase events in time brings the listener into closest possible touch with what he listens to: in other respects, namely in terms of space and specific sound qualities, the »radio voice« keeps him far distant from the very same events.

^h Cf. *Part I*, p. 15 and p. 48.

ⁱ Cf. *Part I*, p. 30.

This element of time-coincidence is basically important because it provokes the feeling of immediately »being together with« against all the tendencies of objectivation and reification which also characterize the phenomenon. We shall have to prove more exactly what we already hinted at in *Part I* – namely, that we regard the elements of reification as essential, and the feeling of »being face to face with« as only superficial. But when reflecting upon time-coincidence, we shall have to admit anyhow that this feeling of »being face to face with« has its reasons within the fundamental structure of radio, even as do the opposite trends. If, finally, this immediacy, this feeling of »being face to face« finally must be discounted, it will have to be done for social reasons and not for technological ones. These reasons, of course, will have to be studied again in terms of the phenomenon. We may discover that the feeling of »being face to face« gains its illusionary character as soon as the radio phenomenon uses the time coincidence as a means of attempting to bridge the gulf in space, and of suggesting a presence in space as well; whereas as soon as suggestions for future handling of radio come into play, just this element of time coincidence may be useful. It then may help legitimately to break down some of the barriers of reification which we find so strongly developed in other spheres of radio. There are certain occasions, like the broadcast of political meetings, where the situation of the radio listener does not differ in function from the situation of those who listen to the live event. In such cases time-coincidence suits the meaning of the occasion. Here people are really present – as long as radio does not want to have them make believe that they are present at the *place* where the event occurs. The virtual antagonism between radio's reification or alienation and its immediacy also affects the »radio voice's« mobility. This can easily be clarified by a comparison between radio and phonograph. The difference is evident. Although a phonograph record is recorded at a special time and a special place, it is no longer bound to this special time and place. Radio can chase live events with greater mobility than the phonograph, but its mobility is limited by the uniqueness of the live event. Phonograph recording takes place under different conditions, and you cannot chase the live events by phonograph in the sense of reportage. But the mobility of the *results* – that is, of the record – is greater than the mobility of the result of radio broadcasting – that is, of the phenomenon which comes out of the loudspeaker. You are rigidly bound to the very moment of the event or performance by the very closeness of the »radio voice« to the »now« of the broadcast performance. This leads to severe limitations which do not apply to the phonograph record. Although you can listen to the radio virtually everywhere in space,

you can't do it in principle everywhere in time. You remain the slave of the very immediacy of radio – of the time-coincidence of the performance.

This, again, has certain implications for the structure of the phenomenon. You are bound to a specific time. You can listen to things that you are interested in only at the time that they are offered to you and not when you would choose to listen to them. When you have only your free time to listen to music you cannot listen to whatever you like as you may do when you, yourself, play, or choose something out of a vast repertoire of records. You have to adapt yourself to the comparatively small range of the dial of your set at a specific hour. All these conditions a priori subject you much more to the will and the power behind the instrument than when you are listening to the phonograph. It may be expressed more generally: while radio is more mobile than the phonograph in its connection with immediate life, closeness to real events – musical or non-musical – you are less mobile in that you must keep pace with the tool itself. The new tool, by its closeness to life, may be more »dynamic« than the older form of technical reproduction. The radio listener becomes less mobile than the phonograph listener, though, because he must fit more strictly within the events which radio presents to him.

Of course we must mention here that both tools – radio and phonograph – cannot be totally opposed. Not only are both steps in the mechanization of musical production. They are often both combined not merely as far as the sets are concerned, but also as far as the actual performance is concerned. There are a good many recorded performances over the radio, and one of the stations most conspicuous for its discriminating musical programs relies almost entirely on broadcasting records.²³ This mixture, however, does not fundamentally alter the structure of the phenomenon. That is, the broadcasting of a record fundamentally remains a radio phenomenon and not a phonograph phenomenon as far as the time factor is concerned. If the record is broadcast you can listen to it only at the moment it is broadcast. It has lost its mobility in time and, on the other hand, you will have much more of the impression of witnessing an immediate musical event than you have when listening to a phonograph, whereas when you hear a non-broadcast phonograph record, you will recognize the phonograph sound at once.^j For this, of course, not only the time

^j It would probably be easy to verify this experimentally. It would be necessary to form a group of people of about the same general background of musical education. They should then be presented with the same piece of music played in four different situations: 1.) a live performance; 2.) a phonograph record of the same piece; 3.) a broadcast of a live performance; 4.) a broadcast of a recording of the same

factor is responsible, but mainly the fact that technical acoustic conditions of radio may make good some of the shortcomings of a phonograph record. In particular, you do not hear the scratching of the needle over the radio, although you do hear it when you play the phonograph in your room.

The broadcasting of records appears to be a gain for the quality of the record. At the same time, it appears to be a gain for radio, too. The former director of the Berlin Radio Station, Dr. Hans Flesch,²⁴ pursued the policy of broadcasting records only – records not brought out by the phonograph industry and not available to the public, but made especially by order of the broadcasting company and available to the company only. There followed a long discussion about this procedure, and Dr. Flesch was assailed especially for his »mechanizing« radio by broadcasting only records, and for breaking the spell of immediacy which we have mentioned as one of the inherent consequences of time-coincidence. The new regime in Germany has abolished his practice partly in order to create work for the unemployed whose interests they considered damaged by a stock of fixed performances on which radio could live for a considerable time.

It is not up to us to criticize the social implications of an action which conserves more primitive forms of labor at the expense of more highly developed ones, thus chaining productive powers. But we feel justified in discussing the problem of radio performances of records, in itself, and we feel strongly inclined to defend Dr. Flesch's procedure. The incomparably higher number of listeners and the higher degree of musical validity necessarily attributed to any radio performance because the listener emancipates himself from being bound to a special place and occasion and feels the right to listen to the »music itself«, appears to us to be sufficient reason for freeing radio performances as much as possible from the contingencies of live performances. This purpose is well served by broadcasting records, if these records are well-planned and well-controlled. The broadcaster, then, does not have to be content with what is given by the artist at the moment he plays. He does not have to take into consideration the disposition of the artist at that moment. And the artist himself is free of these contingencies as well. He may record his performance as long as he has achieved the most nearly perfect one, or he may just record it several times and then select the best from all the records. Or he may use the results of his previous records as a means of improvement till he reaches a definite

Footnote j (*cont.*)

piece of music. Possibly it would be a good idea to use more than one group of listeners in this experiment as a mutual check, and to compare their reactions.

version which he considers satisfactory. Finally, it would be possible in this procedure to define more rationally and more exactly the functions of the sound control engineer. At present the sound control is, to a great extent, independent of the performer. The sound engineer is a technician who controls the broadcast of the performance according to technical rather than purely musical categories. The conductor has no influence over the sound engineer while he conducts the performance. He is at his mercy. One need only imagine a conductor who, for some reason or other, pursues a policy of performing music with extreme and surprising sound effects, as much as possible, in order to make the texture of the work clearer, for instance. These effects would be tuned down by the sound engineer, probably; and this clearly illustrates the grave implications of his function at this point of radio production. The broadcasting of records could dispense with these complications very simply. The conductor of the original performance could rehearse the broadcasting of the record in the studio with the sound control engineer, and together they could determine how the sound must be »steered«. For all these reasons the quality could be considerably improved by broadcasting records. We think that this improvement would compensate for the so-called lack of immediacy, especially because a trained listener finds it very difficult to distinguish between a technically well-done broadcast of a technically well-done record and a broadcast of live music with all the contingencies of the occasion.

But there is still a deeper reason for recommending this procedure. We spoke about the »illusion« of immediacy created by the element of radio's time-coincidence. Evidently the sponsors of the phonograph-radio method realized that this was an illusion, and they felt that somehow it is unsuitable to imitate the irrational factors of a performance, and even to foster them artificially with a rigid and entirely mechanical tool. They became aware of the fact that the immediacy of the phenomenon, upheld artificially, ceases to be immediate.^k Thus

^k Something rather similar to this may be observed within the radio correspondence of certain stations. We find a great many people complaining about the broadcasting of applause. They realize that by being broadcast the applause loses its spontaneity and begins to become an advertisement for the performance for which the applause has been given. The reaction may even have a deeper implication. They may feel ashamed about the applause, just as a person is ashamed when he is forced to witness any action with the inherent character of intimacy exposed to publicity. Something of this feeling ashamed, of being exposed to the »intimate« event of the live musical performance, may have influenced the record broadcasters in their policy. It may not be accidental that the American advocates of record broadcasting can be found just among those with the highest musical taste, whereas those who defend the sanctity of the broadcasting of live music are much less discriminating.

they tried to develop a method of replacing this immediacy by an objectivity suitable to the tool. This attempt, again, bears witness to the basic antagonism within the »radio voice« – that of immediacy vs. objectivation. They decided in favor of objectivation by abolishing the pseudo-immediacy of using the time-coincidence to suggest space-coincidence and promoting the illusion of witnessing a live performance which, after all, is not really witnessed. Another way, the opposite, would be to replace the pseudo-immediacy by genuine immediacy. We shall have to discuss this possibility in the *Music Study* in its proper place. It is the problem of combining electrical musical instruments with radio. Both tendencies, as much as they appear to be opposed – the objectivation of radio phenomena by broadcast records and the breaking down of its reification by »playing on the radio« as electrical instruments suggest – coincide in one decisive element. They both want to liquidate the pseudo-immediacy – the mere appearance of being present with an original when faced with a reproduction – by a structure of the radio phenomenon which is no longer an illusionary one, but suitable for the event itself. From the opposite poles of progressive broadcasting we find tendencies which ultimately point in the same direction.

Chapter VI Space Ubiquity

In its relation to time, radio seems to have much of the same structure as live music. It even appears to come closer to ordinary time experience than does recorded music. This thesis, by the way, must be modified in the light of some of the later characteristics of the »radio voice«. Its relation to space is fundamentally different from that of live music as well as from that of the phonograph. This relation may be formulated as follows: live music takes place at one particular time, at one largely specific locus. Phonograph records can appear at different loci, in principle at different times. The phonograph phenomenon in principle appears at different times; the radio phenomenon in principle appears at one time, but at different loci. The one phenomenon of the performance, because of the element of time-coincidence with the live musical performance making it still appear as the »one and original performance«, is scattered in space. The structural paradox involved here strongly resembles those discussed earlier in this study. Something which does not appear to be a »reproduction«, like a phonograph record, but an original – namely the performance – at the very moment of its being performed, nevertheless has the character of reproduction insofar as the uniqueness of the phenomenon ceases to exist and appears at the

same time as »images« of it in innumerable places. This paradox again points to the core of radio phenomena. Something general and mechanically reproduced appears to be something individual and »original«. It is from this structure of the »space« of radio that its faculty of delivering the same material at the same time and to all places must start. As early as 1930 the German writer, Günther Stern, published an article called *Spooks in Radio* in which he treats the phenomenon of radio ubiquity. He starts with the assumption that music is, in principle, neutral to space. »Music is nowhere and everywhere it is heard; it transcends the ›here-itself‹ in spite of its ›here-ness‹, and never finds its unity in a limitation of space.«¹ He believes that as soon as music gains a more definite relation to space, its fundamental character is somewhat altered. He gives as the simplest example of the phenomenon that of a street organ which, »in spite of the space-neutrality of music, ›takes music for a walk‹, playing it now here in one locus, then there in another, thus leaving what it has already played like a trail of smoke behind it, and metaphorically, going to meet what still remains to be played, thus dragging the unity of the piece which should be neutral to space the whole length of the road.«^m

Stern assumes that, »When the locus of music is stable, the space is contingent and ungiven. This space becomes articulate when the music moves and changes its locus.«ⁿ On the other hand, according to him, this precise localization of music is always inadequate because even under these conditions the real unity of music itself is by no means identical with the space-unity of sounds constituted by a continuous movement.

He considers this phenomenon a radical one in radio. According to him it completely destroys the space-neutrality of music. »When one leaves his house, the music of the loudspeaker still resounds in his ear. He is still in it – it is nowhere. One takes ten steps and the same music sounds from a neighbor's house. Now, when there is music here as well, one finds music here and there, localized, rammed into place like two stakes. But, at the same time, ›here‹ it is the same music which was heard ›there‹. ›Here‹ Mr. X continues singing what he has started to sing ›there‹. One continues walking. At the third house X3 continues again, accompanied by X2, and very vaguely echoed by the cautious X of the first house.«^o

¹ *Spuk in Radio* in *Anbruch* 12 (February 1930 no. 2), p. 65.²⁵

^m *Ibid.*

ⁿ *Ibid.*

^o *Ibid.*

Stern assumes that »shock« originates in this phenomenon. He sets as his task the explanation of this shock, and gives three reasons for it.

The ubiquity of music, in that it accentuates its being »here« and »there«. This »individualizes« music, in spite of the fact that the piece heard in three different places is always the same.

The possibility of a plurality and even numerability of »musics«. According to Mr. Stern, this is not due to music because each individual piece is a world in itself which does not suggest another musical world beyond itself and identical with it, but different because of its localization.

The »double« or second-self phenomenon. Each of these different »here-s« and »there-s« of the music pretends to be the piece itself which now, again, is »nowhere to the second power« because it could appear everywhere.^p

Mr. Stern assumes that this »shock« in radio, founded upon its ubiquity, is closely related to a fear which always seizes men whenever technical tools become stronger than him and overpower him. We have already hinted at this in mentioning the »radio voice« creating the illusion of a voice of its own, independent of human activities which are actually behind it.

Mr. Stern's sketch deserves careful discussion. On the one hand, it is open to criticism which may affect the ground of his interpretation. On the other hand, we think that some of his observations are well founded, and we shall have to try to bring them in line with our framework of radio physiognomics.

Objections must be directed primarily against the philosophy behind Stern's sketch. At the time this article was written, he was still a follower of the »existential« philosophy of Heidegger. He tries to explain a phenomenon like radio, with all its social and historical implications, in terms of reactions of »the« man being an invariant, instead of trying to find the historical and social determinants of the phenomenon itself in the sense in which we tried to uncover them when we mentioned the social background of the disproportion

^p *Ibid.* When Stern refers to music being »nowhere to the second power« he means it in this sense. Music, normally, as live music, postulates spacelessness. Here it is nowhere to the first power. As soon as it is wheeled through space (he gives the case of the street-organ) it takes on a spatial dimension. In radio, however, ubiquity again causes this spatial dimension to disintegrate. No longer – as in the first case of live music – does the listener postulate a spatial relation to the music. For him the music is »nowhere to the second power«.

between the public tool and its individual appearance. He undertook radio physiognomics as an anthropology of radio. He tried to deduce radio characteristics from the essence of man. In considering radio, however, it is not enough simply to be content with radio's »being human«. He must also consider how it alienates itself from man. Of course, Mr. Stern, too, mentions this alienation in his sketch. But it makes all the difference if you subject radio to an anthropological approach with static categories within which the alienation appears as a mere variable; or if you speak of radio's essence, its dynamic relation to our society, which we baptized preliminarily as its »contradiction between immediacy and reification«. While Stern sticks to the idea of existential invariants, he hypostatizes very specific historical insights as general and, so to speak, a priori characteristics of the »radio voice«. This applies especially to his theory of the »shock« of the »radio voice«. This shock, we think, vanishes – or at least recedes into the background – as soon as one becomes acquainted with the phenomenon which Mr. Stern discusses. No one will experience the continuance of one piece from different houses as a sort of ghost-like apparition any longer. The same thing takes place which seems to have taken place with the phenomenon of the double, or second-self. This, too, is handled by Mr. Stern as being fundamentally disquieting. The double, once a problem for Edgar Allan Poe and Heine, has long since become a trite, technical term in the film business. This warns us of one of the difficulties of radio physiognomics which we have not yet mentioned, but which we cannot evade. We must be careful not to generalize our physiognomic observations »in time«. That is, we must fully realize that they all have their historic indices and that whatever appears as a fundamental characteristic of the »radio voice« may disappear sooner or later. On the other hand, we must try to elaborate as carefully as possible these historic elements of the »radio voice« because they may be precisely the deciding ones for the actual constitution of the phenomenon which we are dealing with. In spite of all this, however, it would be superficial to dismiss Mr. Stern's assertions about the haunting character of radio. We believe that they should be altered only insofar as they can no longer be treated as a priori factors, but as they constitute a sort of vague, unconscious fringe about the radio phenomenon which gives it a characteristic touch, but which is not evident in its immediate apperception. Still, it is possible that just by this unconsciousness of the »haunting characteristics« which Mr. Stern outlines, the power over the phenomenon in a certain dimension may be even greater than his article realizes. In *Part I* we gave the example of the child who believes that the loudspeaker speaks for itself. Something similar holds good for the present

question. Now, certainly, all these imaginings have to be dropped as soon as there is a fuller understanding. This, however, Mr. Stern does not do. Just as the illusion of the »radio voice« disappears when we consider the radio machine, the shock described by Mr. Stern disappears as soon as one becomes fully conscious of the structure of radio, mentioned at the beginning of this sketch. It is this structure which allows it at a given moment to disperse the same piece of music over innumerable loci. But we may take it for granted that this consciousness exists only for comparatively few persons, and comparatively seldom. This problem, by the way, will bother us especially when we deal with suggestions for empirical research in radio physiognomics. And we may uphold the hypothesis that whenever the listener assumes an attitude to radio which is not fully rational, and moreover whenever he does not keep all the technical implications of radio in evidence, when he listens to radio, some of the shock elements mentioned by Mr. Stern may still hold good.

This, however, needs a further reservation which springs from another insufficiency of Mr. Stern's thesis. It is the thesis of the spacelessness of music. His theory is based upon a threefold assumption. First, that music is normally (as live music) entirely spaceless in that we do not relate the sound which we hear to any specific locus. (This should not be confused with the fact that music is always necessarily *produced* at a special locus.) Second, it gains a sort of relation to space as soon as it is »taken for a walk through space«;^q and third, finally, this relation to space is again destroyed by the ubiquity of radio. We think that this assumption does not do justice to the phenomena which are to be described, and a criticism of it may help to clarify the concept of radio ubiquity. Mr. Stern is right about the neutrality of music to space insofar as the unity of music and its properly musical constitution is in question. It may be assumed that, in a way, music has its own space. One can speak of musical »dimensions« and even of musical »perspective« as something clearly noticeable by any keen listener. This is more than purely metaphorical but is by no means identical with empirical space, and certainly different from music's relation to the place where it is executed and heard.^r But this space cannot be entirely severed from our experience of external space. The

^q Stern, *op.cit.*

^r This is especially urged in Ernst Kurth's *Musikpsychologie* (Berlin: Max Hesses Verlag, 1931). He treats the antagonism between musical and external space (localization) in a special paragraph, p. 128 ff. The whole fourth and fifth chapters of *Part II* of his volume are concerned with »The Musical Space Phenomenon« and the »Musical Illusion of Matter«.²⁶

following example may help to clarify this, although we know that these problems are so deeply involved that it will not be easy for a non-musician to understand what is meant, especially since these problems have not been dealt with even in music theory.

Let us take an orchestral score of the mature Wagner, for instance, *Die Meistersinger*. In this score the horn plays an outstanding role for several different reasons. One of them is the sound quality of the horn in the *piano*. This makes it possible to give tones and even leading melodies to that instrument which do not sound quite »present«. They are not, so to speak, on the surface of the musical space, but somewhere deeper in this space.⁵ At the same time, the main voices have »something not quite here«. Of course, few listeners will be conscious of this effect and of the means of achieving it. Nevertheless, the music is most likely to impress them that way. Now, certainly, it would be fallacious to assume that an immediate relation between this effect and empirical space exists. The horn is no further distant in empirical space than, for example, the violins which seem to be more »here«. But this phenomenon, very characteristic of musical perspective and, by the way, one which is hardest for radio to realize, certainly would never occur unless the *specific expression* of the horn sound, its »calling«, would necessarily provoke the consciousness of a space which is penetrated by the horn call. And this space, which the horn sound recalls, is certainly the empirical space. When this calling expression sounds *piano* it sounds as if it were »coming from a distance« and in this indirect way, by the specific expression of an instrument, empirical space is introduced into musical space where it is contained in a sublimated form. Most probably, if all the phenomena of musical space were analyzed with proper thoroughness, it could be found that these phenomena are related to outside space by

⁵ We must emphasize that the concept of the »depth« of sound or, as some American writers call it, the auditory perspective, is something which refers only to the acoustic phenomenon of music and its inherent space, and has nothing to do with the aesthetic concept of »depth« which is used either with regard to feelings or to the intricacy of workmanship in a piece of music. However, it is not impossible that this aesthetic concept of depth is more closely related to the technical concept of depth we have in mind than one should expect. Busoni, in his musical aesthetic writings, hints at this direction when he speaks sarcastically about the way people attribute depth in the non-technical sense to Beethoven, and points out that part of the reason for this talk is the role played in Beethoven's music, especially in the 9th symphony, by deep, low and dark sounds. It is noteworthy that actually the aesthetic concept of depth is mainly attributed to music of a certain sound-character whereas, for instance, Mozart, whose metaphysical imagination cannot be disputed, is seldom called »deep« because he lacks those sound qualities.

means of musical »expression«. This outside space is, so to speak, left as a sediment within the interiorized musical space, just as the most interiorized psychology is necessarily related to the external reality and can be expressed only in terms of this reality. It is this relation which is particularly neglected by Mr. Stern's approach. Even in a more primitive sense musical space is not so independent of the normal and empirical space as Stern and also Kurth appear to believe. Even if the proper musical dimensions of a work are not related as such to empirical space, they still fall within it in that every musical phenomenon takes place within certain limits where it can be heard.

As trivial as this objection is, it must be remembered in contrast to Mr. Stern's tendency to make music an island separate from our empirical life by stressing the autonomous elements of music. He loosens the ties between music and the concrete world and transfigures music into a sort of absoluteness which makes it sublime and fetishistic at the same time. Here, however, we are concerned not so much with this consequence of his theory about the space-neutrality of music. We just want to maintain, as a result of our previous discussion, the fact that in principle the relation to empirical space, in the case of a moving street organ or a piece of music moving from one loudspeaker in one house to another loudspeaker in the next, is by no means more closely associated with space than any other music phenomenon in the sphere of live music. This can be ascertained also by a good many examples where the two »loci« of music – its own »space« (in the purely psychological sense developed by Professor Kurth) and empirical »space« – collide, and where this collision even creates certain shocks. We refer to the odd, haunting expression of an opera heard by a latecomer in the lobby of an opera house; or to the feeling retained to the listener who comes from the auditorium of the opera to the lobby that he is still in the music-space. This leads to the inference that the shock which Mr. Stern describes is due not so much to the scattering of music in space and to complications of the relation of music-space and empirical space which were certainly known in pre-radio days, but to other characteristics of radio which will have to be investigated.

Mr. Stern's assumption that music is spaceless and noticed in terms of space only on exceptional occasions like the street-organ case, or walking through the street where the same music pours out of the windows of different houses, would imply that radio in a private room, anyhow, is spaceless. We have already had to correct this thesis of spacelessness, entirely. Now we must go beyond that as far as the »radio voice« is concerned. Is it true that radio music in a room has the character of »here-ness« which, under certain given and normal

conditions, live music has? Does the »radio voice« really sound as if it is »here«? A man with musically well-trained ears, who is walking along outside a restaurant and hearing music inside, will almost always be able to determine whether this music is really being played in the restaurant or if it is being transmitted by radio. Of course, this partly depends on the specific modifications of sound which any music undergoes by radio. And it would be impossible to sever our present observations from these modifications. But we believe that *the so-called spacelessness of music is affected also by these modifications*. Even if the transmission is very good, radio music always seems to be an echo of music coming from a distant place. The space-distance between the room in which a person is listening and the room wherein the broadcast is taking place has not been altogether bridged by radio. It will be rather hard to give the exact technological reasons for this, and we cannot exclude the possibility that in a way it is illusionary – that is, the echo character of radio music which appears to be the resounding of distant music is actually not due to the space-distance but to the specific conditions of the loudspeaker which are responsible for the echo-like hollowness and resounding of the radio voice. At any rate, this feeling is so strong that every radio phenomenon obtains a new and very specific space relation, namely that it is not actually here, that it comes from somewhere else. And this is not due to our knowledge of the technical tool, but to the immediate sound of the phenomenon.[†] Thus Mr. Stern is quite right in seeing radio music related to space in a new sense. He is mistaken only in that he attributes this quality solely to the sequence of music at two different loci, whereas it actually affects the radio phenomenon in its most elementary form – within the private room.

[†] We must be careful, however, not to regard the relation between »phenomenal« characteristics and preceding knowledge as static. Musical phenomena are as little isolated as any others. Our previous knowledge may very well constitute an element of our present experience, migrate into the phenomenon. Just here the conditions of laboratory tests and concrete social experience are entirely different. And the phenomena with which we are concerned in this study are not the »pure« acoustic phenomena which, in a way, are only abstractions, but the concrete phenomena within the continuum of our experience. In the same sense that our palate is shaped by former instruction, early experience, education and even knowledge of conventions in its discrimination between good and bad taste, our ear also reacts not purely physiologically, but within an »historic dimension«. Our knowledge that the live performance is taking place at a great distance from our room may actually form a sediment within our present experience. If we stress here the phenomenal character against the purely intellectual knowledge, we mean by that only that we believe that we are witnessing in the phenomenon something of that sort, and not only reflecting upon it.

We have had to discount a great many of Mr. Stern's assertions, such as the anthropological character of the radio shock, the difference between a space-neutral live music and a nonspace-neutral music that again, finally, becomes – by its ubiquity – again space-neutral radio music, etc. What is left of his theory may help us to establish a better understanding of ubiquity in radio. We believe that two of his »reasons« for the shock are to be dealt with here: namely first, his observations about the »plurality or numerability of musics«, closely associated with the structure of its mechanical reproduction, which he regards as unfit for music – and, second, his observation that this plurality comes into conflict with the claim of each reproduction to be the »thing itself«. To clarify further this discussion, we refer to a theory developed by Walter Benjamin.⁴ Benjamin treats the difference between the uniqueness and reproducibility of the work of art from the point of view of a fundamental historical change – terms which can enlighten Stern's last two points and which can help to understand the shock he mentions no longer in »existential« concepts, but in social and historical ones.

We are giving some of the basic ideas of Benjamin's essay so that we can employ them in a discussion of the problem we tried to condense from Stern's essay. Benjamin holds that up to the era of mechanical reproduction (which he studies particularly in the field of motion pictures) one of the essentials of the work of art was its »*hic et nunc*« – its here and now – its existence unique to the locus at which it can be found. The »authenticity« of the work of art is based upon this »here and now« character, and the elements which make for its authenticity strictly deny any sort of reproduction, not only mechanical. »Only the original sustains its authority and the »aura« of the work of art is only the way this authenticity is expressed in the phenomenon of the artwork.«²⁸ Benjamin traces the uniqueness of the artwork back to its ritual function in former ages. That is, he deduces it from the veneration of a special artwork at a special locus, supposed to represent superhuman powers only in its original form, as a symbol that is not interchangeable with other figures at different places without affecting the metaphysical substance attributed to it by its worshippers. The destruction of this ritual nature of the artwork, the vanishing of its »aura« and its becoming reproducible are, for Benjamin, equivalent terms. In moving pictures he finds elements of a radically new, non-auratic art which is determined even within the

⁴ »L'œuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproduction mécanisée«, in: *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 5 (1936, I), p. 40 ff.²⁷

process of its very production by the basic idea of its reproducibility. Its »cult value« is being replaced by its »exposition value«. ²⁹

Now it is obvious that this theory cannot be directly applied to music because there is no conceivable music, except perhaps improvisations and they do not count, which is not based upon the idea of reproducibility.^v Reproducibility, itself, cannot be considered an element of basic change, which accounts for our observations about the ubiquity of the »radio voice«. Here, however, we must be careful. It is true that we cannot say that in music the »original« is more authentic than its reproduction because it actually exists only in being reproduced. Every score is, in a way, only a system of prescriptions for possible reproduction, and nothing »in itself«. We may add here that the epistemological justification for our speaking about changes »within« the artwork (for instance, the decomposition of »the symphony« or »the opera«) can be found here. If these prescriptions for possible reproduction fundamentally relate the work to its reproduction, basic changes within the reading of these prescriptions also affect the work itself because the work is not independent of them and their relation to a possible interpretation. However, we must acknowledge that in music something very closely akin to Benjamin's observation can be found. *The authenticity which Benjamin attributes in the visual arts to the original must be attributed to live reproduction in music. This live reproduction has its »here« – either the concert room or the opera – and its »now« – the very moment it is executed.* And what Benjamin calls the »aura« of the original certainly constitutes an essential part of the live reproduction. It is exactly this aura which leads people to be eager to attend a live performance even if they cannot follow the music as well from their cheap seats as they could have followed it in front of their radio sets. It is this aura which is reflected in all the talk about the fascinating conductor, the cult of the virtuoso, and all the well known »irrational« features of people's reactions to live music. Even the characteristics of symphony, discussed in *Part I*, are largely due to the aura or authenticity of the live performance.^w

^v Of course, in painting, all sorts of techniques for reproduction existed, too, long before the invention of the methods of mechanical reproduction. Benjamin holds, however, that the earlier means of reproduction did not fundamentally alter the authenticity of the original, whereas today the concept of an original contrasted with its reproduction, and at the same time, the »aura« of the original, begins to fade. We do not have to discuss here the truth of this statement.

^w Here we must avoid a possible misunderstanding. In this context we mean by authenticity not, as is generally meant, the performance's adequacy to given prescriptions, not the faithfulness of preserving these prescriptions or the absence of

Now, we believe that *this* authenticity, or aura, is vanishing in music because of mechanical reproduction. The phonograph record destroys the »now« of the live performance and, in a way, its »here« as well. Although the ubiquity of radio observes the »now«, it certainly is more hostile to the »here«.

It appears to us that these observations are implicit in Stern's thesis of the »plurality and numerability of musics« and the contradiction in the claim of the duplication of the piece to be the »piece itself«. *In radio the authentic original has ceased to exist and, as a category, it has fallen behind the actual state of technical development.* The shock which Mr. Stern describes, however, is *nothing but the collision between the innate tendency of mechanical reproduction to abolish the »thing itself« in its originality and authenticity, and the claim still surviving and artificially fostered, that one is facing that original.* The claim to be the »thing itself« is not, as Mr. Stern appears to hold, the claim of radio. It is a claim which comes from the listener and which is nourished also by the way radio functions under present conditions. But the shock – that is, the basic conflict – will cease to exist as soon as radio has learned to emancipate itself from the idea of originality which it denounces at every step. This appears to us to be the real theoretical explanation for our preliminary remarks on originality in *Part I. In radio the authentic original has ceased to exist.* The present standard of technical development has surpassed the category of the original. However, the illusion of the original is maintained by present-day radio.^x But we must briefly re-examine Mr. Stern's theory

Footnote w (*cont.*)

arbitrariness from the performance. Authenticity, as we refer to it here, is the feeling that the listener is faced with the »genuine«, with the thing itself, and not with an imitation, and the atavistic authority impressed upon the listener by the »here and now« character of a live performance. Under this category the listener's presence at the performance of a Beethoven symphony conducted by Furtwängler, as arbitrary as it might be – compared with Beethoven's prescriptions – is on the same level of »authenticity« as the experience of a spectator who comes face to face with Botticelli's *Allegory of Spring* in Florence.

^x Here again we have to face a universal tendency. Something very similar has happened in art, where now the aim is to reproduce famous paintings, especially by Cézanne and Van Gogh, which are so faithful to the original that they look like something unique although they are reproduced; and which, framed like original pictures, often serve to deceive the observer. However admirably the technique of these reproductions is developed, it cannot be overlooked that the idea of fostering the unique and the original by its imitation in mass reproduction is something fundamentally problematical in itself. The new techniques of printing ought to emancipate themselves from the original and be made fruitful for themselves. The same un-genuineness which prevails whenever one faces a framed Van Gogh imitation which could be called, in Nietzsche's famous words, »almost genuine« makes itself felt in radio.

in the light of this explanation. He speaks of the »plurality and even numerability of musics which are really not due to music«. This »not being due« to music, then, refers only to the idea of the original in the sense of the live performance. Only relative to that concept is the plurality contradictory and shocking. If, however, the concept of *uniqueness* is abolished, not only will this shock no longer survive, but also the entire feeling of plurality will collapse. The disquieting factor lies only in a plurality of uniquenesses. Without uniqueness the plurality will no longer be felt because divergent claims of different »here's« will not exist. Stern's thesis that plurality is not due to music is a hypostasis of the auratic character of music, incompatible with its mechanical reproduction. Radio music is haunting in the sense of a double only when it makes its fictitious claim to be unique, to be »here and now« which, at the same time, is disclaimed by technical reproduction. In this historical context, and not as anthropological or existential insights, Mr. Stern's remarks become understandable. If the haunting character of radio really does still exist, it is nothing but the futility of the impression of uniqueness or individual expression still maintained by radio in its present form. The haunting factor in radio is not the newness of the mechanical tool, or the overpowering of man by the machine. It is only the remnants of the pre-technical concept of authenticity haunting an art technique basically opposed to it. When these remnants are driven out, the »spook« in radio will be finished.

So far, we have discussed the destruction of the older character of uniqueness of the work of art by mechanical reproduction in terms of space alone. We must add, however, that in a more indirect sense this destructive tendency holds good beyond the concept of space. Here is an example which, although it does not belong to physiognomics, certainly influences radio's physiognomic expression. It is the repetition of standard works. By being repeated again and again some of them, for instance the Beethoven symphonies which we mentioned in *Part I*, not only lose their »here« but also their »now«. Even if they used to be repeated at certain specific intervals, the quasi-ritual dignity attributed to them as long as they appeared at one particular hour vanishes. Now, when they are played again and again, they can no longer uphold the dignity of the occasion. They are losing their aura because they no longer keep their distance from the listeners. They show, instead, a tendency to mingle in his every day life because they can appear at practically every moment, and because he can accompany brushing his teeth with the Allegretto of the Seventh. If this means the loss of authenticity in our sense of the term, this can also mean an increase of authenticity in another sense, just as the authority of an

advertisement increases when it is repeated again and again. The more often you hear the Seventh Symphony, the less, probably, will you cease to discuss it. The exposition value which Benjamin sees increasing against the cult value of a particular work, and which is closely akin to the fatality of plugged music, appears to us to be even more authoritarian than the former. Here the theory of the aura becomes involved in difficulties which cannot be hidden for the very simple reason that they are not difficulties of an antagonistic theory, but are created by contradictions in reality. Although a symphony loses the authority of its uniqueness, it accumulates new authority by ubiquity and its faculty of appearing at any time. A further complication is created here by a tendency already mentioned. Under present conditions radio produces resistance to abolishing the cult value and aura of music. By creating festival and exceptional situations, presenting the work in an exaggerated, solemn way, etc., many radio performances try to save the uniqueness at the same time that they are attacking it. The situation of the listener who is facing the radio phenomenon as a unique one, in that it appears within the four walls of his room, certainly helps to strengthen these tendencies. Our task will be to discuss these complications more systematically. We shall have to visualize radio's structure when mechanical means of reproduction are confronted with individualistic situations, individualistic claims, and surviving relics of authenticity in time and space in the older sense. In spite of the »echo« of the radio phenomenon we can assume that its ubiquity is self-evident in the listener's concrete experience. The ubiquitous radio phenomenon has a subjective »here« for the listener although the objective lack of that »here« probably deeply affects his experience.

Chapter VII Ubiquity-Standardization and Pseudo-Activity

a) Preliminary Notes on Terminology and Method

We must be very distinct in our use of such terms as »subjective« and »objective«. Our present distinction has nothing to do with the »primary« and »secondary« qualities of the »radio voice« we mentioned in *Part I*. If we take up this terminology we are within the field of primary qualities. That is, we are not dealing with individual differences (like the difference between a trained musician and a cowboy listening to a radio symphony, for instance). We are remaining strictly within the limits of what we called »objective« features of the radio phenomenon. Hence it appears to be confusing to introduce a new difference between »objective« and »subjective« elements.

First, we formerly called these qualities »objective«; second, everything related to a phenomenon and not to a thing is to be called »subjective« in a phenomenological sense. We can overcome this difficulty by forgetting for the moment our older distinctions and just trying to stick to the subject matter which now concerns us. In this part of our study we intend to give a draft of the »categories« of the »radio voice«, the framework within which the »radio voice's« phenomena take place, and not a description of the »radio voice« itself. This treatment of categories belongs, as we must always keep in mind, to the phenomenon in that here we are not treating causal mechanisms which determine it. We do not speak of things, or the influence of the microphone upon the loudspeaker or the program-maker on certain features like »standardization of works«. Thus the total analysis which we are undertaking at present may be called a subjective one. But within the broadest sense of subjectivity we must differentiate between phenomena which are suitable to their own structure, and phenomena which conceal this structure even though they are bound to it. In this context we call the former »objective« and the latter »subjective«.

The following example may clarify this. The ubiquity of the radio phenomenon can be called a »subjective« characteristic in the older and broader sense. We do not deduce this ubiquity as a causal consideration. We ascertain it only in the phenomenal field, as walking along the street and listening to the same tune pouring out of ten different windows. But in spite of this entirely phenomenal verification, we may justifiably call ubiquity an objective characteristic of the radio phenomenon in our new, present sense *insofar as every radio phenomenon takes place within this ubiquity*. (Hence we called it a category.) In principle, there is no radio phenomenon which cannot be spotted at any or every place. Although the »here-ness« of the »radio voice« is one of the inherent characteristics of present-day radio, and thus also a radio category according to our new division, it is still a subjective one because it necessarily hides the ubiquity within which it must always take place. We called it illusionary because it makes us forget the ubiquity within which the phenomenon we witness in our room also occurs, whereas ubiquity, in itself, is indifferent to our realizing that we have forgotten it.

At this point we must face an objection. Within our sketch of radio categories we introduced some which are plainly contradictory. On the one hand, we speak of ubiquity as a category; on the other hand, we speak of the »here-ness« as very closely related to the way radio phenomena now present themselves – almost a category, too. Generally, however, one expects a set of categories to be consistent. To this we must

reply that our ambition is not to give a radio philosophy. We do not want to hypostatize any of our characteristics of radio as logically inherent in the tool, or the way it expresses them. Our categories are physiognomic insofar as we try to describe and determine the expression of the »radio voice« within the historical and social situation in which it appears. We do not want to systematize what may be disorderly. We do not want to harmonize what may be discordant. Our set of categories may contain contradictions, but we hold that these contradictions are not logical shortcomings of a systematic approach which is subject to grave doubts in advance in a field like radio. We hold that these contradictions in the categories *express contradictions in the subject matter itself* and, in the last analysis, contradictions in our society. We hinted at the role played by concepts such as »aura«, »authenticity«, »the original«, »the genuine«, and so on, in radio. These concepts are still upheld by current cultural standards, but they are nevertheless basically opposed to technical reproduction. They are artificially maintained, for one reason or another. This may account for the contradictions reflected in our set of categories in speaking of »objective characteristics« of the »radio voice« and »subjective« illusions which still have a certain »objectivity« within the framework of modern radio experience. As long as the idea of the original survives, the antagonism between publicity and privacy in radio will survive as well.

b) The Standardization of the Phenomenon

The basic ubiquity of radio is expressed in a sort of *standardization* of the radio phenomenon in that the material is offered to a vast number of people and, if they want to use their radios, they are more or less forced to listen to this material. This standardization must be understood as a phenomenal character of radio and not as any standardized content. It is due to the structure of the tool and not primarily to mass production, although it fits completely with more general conditions of monopolistic economy.^y

The standardization which we mean is the more or less authoritarian offer of identical material to a great number of people. It would

^y It would be fallacious and a bad simplification, therefore, to say that radio is a product of monopoly capitalism. Only two things can safely be stated: first, it fits perfectly with conditions of monopolistic postulates; and second, it owes its existence to the very same processes of development of industrial productive powers which also act for the economic monopolization. But radio was not invented »for the sake of« monopolistic society. The tendencies which associate it with the present social conditions have nothing to do with the consciousness of the originators of radio. These tendencies are being realized over their heads.

hold good even if there were no standardization of programs. This standardization, in a way, is the essence of radio itself. The abstract fact that an identical content appears at innumerable places at the same time practically coincides with the concrete fact of standardization – namely, that the same material is impressed upon a great number of people. It ought to be absolutely clear at the outset that no matter what alterations may be recommended for program policies, this sort of standardization cannot be altered. It would be absurd under given technical conditions to attempt a type of broadcasting which would produce different material at the same time in different spots. One must reckon with iron laws of technical reproduction which cannot be altered and should not be hidden and radio should try to make the best of them.

This standardization is so self-evident that it would not be worthwhile to attach too much importance to it. It is necessary, however, to keep it in mind as a basic fact because only against its background can all its countertendencies be properly understood. Most of these countertendencies have already occurred to us. We mean the illusion of »here-ness«, of closeness, of authenticity in radio. We also mean the listener's attitude: his resistance to subjecting himself to any standardized material even though he is most likely to enjoy the very same subjection in another layer of his psychological reactions. We must say this first. All these trends which we must now deal with in greater detail attempt to alter something which in principle cannot and should not be altered so long as the basic principle of radio remains the offer of the same thing at the same time to a number of people – at least for an indefinitely long period.

c) Countertendencies

1) Selection

The first countertendency is the drive to select from a number of stations. We must say, however, that this freedom of selection is not an inherent quality of radio, like the standardization of phenomena. It depends upon an element which cannot be called a category of the structure of the phenomenon. It depends upon the fact that a number of stations operate independently of each other, presenting different programs at the same time. This fact certainly is not an invariant. It clearly depends upon social and economic trends outside the field of radio. A superficial observer who believes that the monopolistic tendency in our society is basic would expect the number of independent stations to become smaller because the increasing cost of producing different programs at the same time is unnecessary for

programs planned by one big unity. In fact, during the boom of radio rationalization in Germany a sort of program-concentration took place which offered the same programs to every listener to the Frankfurt and Stuttgart radio stations. Still, it is doubtful if this tendency really was fundamental. In America, however, we find a highly complicated situation which cannot be stated in simple terms of monopolistic production leading to program-standardization whose ideal would be hearing a certain program at a certain time at all places. Just the opposite appears to be true. Here, however, our study will later have to provide extensive verification.

As the power of radio stations, and especially the large networks increases, they try more and more to maintain a diversity of programs at the same time. The countertendency we mention may well increase in direct proportion to the basic tendency not of ubiquity-standardization (which, within broad limits, must be considered such an invariant that it would be meaningless to speak of its increase) but of the power of monopolization. A study of how this individualization in a deeper sense expresses standardization – a study of how different stations manage to broadcast »the same« even though they present totally different programs – would no longer be physiognomic. Still, it appears to be part of the purely phenomenal experience of the listener that as long as he is not selecting one special program he is most likely, just by twirling the dial, to feel that he is »getting the same stuff« everywhere. Here we quote another passage from Krenek's article which expresses the conviction that in spite of the apparent diversity of programs the real differences are much smaller than we are led to believe, not only among stations, but even among entire nations with antagonistic philosophies. »One would be mistaken in assuming that American, European, Italian and French radio have diametrically opposed contents.«^z The so-called freedom of choosing different programs at the same time, however, is very limited. In totalitarian countries like Germany this choice is so limited that *Volksempfänger* (radio sets for the masses) are built to allow the listener to tune in only government-controlled German stations. But apart from these arbitrary limitations, there are arbitrary ones everywhere. Still, the ubiquity-standardization remains unaltered in the variety of stations at the listener's disposal. First he must select a station from those available on his dial, and even at best these are very limited – even more so than, for instance, his choice of phonograph records to be played at a given time. To a great extent he still remains at the mercy of standardization. The very act of selection, however

^z Ernst Krenek, *op. cit.*, p. 157. [Adorno's translation.]

limited, sometimes makes the listener feel as if he were playing an instrument. Certain effects of turning the dial, as long as all the programs are musical ones, resemble musical colors. The role of this effect is still unknown for the listener, but it may be compared to the dragging sound of an accordion. The accordion is a very primitive instrument which is tremendously popular especially in Germany where there are not enough teachers to meet the demand for instruction. This instrument's appeal, celebrated in special hit songs, is worthy of sociological consideration. Its role may be roughly defined as a piano fit for camp life or collective life of any sort, involuntarily antagonistic to the private apartment. Significantly, the accordion is called in German, a »sailor's piano« [*Schifferklavier*]. In America there is the name, »gypsy piano«. Its portability is closely connected with its primitiveness. There is no space for all the keys nor are the players expected to combine chords with their fingers. Instead, ready-made chords are already provided. It may well be guessed that the expression of the »radio voice«, which resembles the sound of the accordion when the dial is being twirled, often plays a somewhat similar role. Just as the accordion player strikes ready-made chords in a quasi-improvisatory manner, the radio listener can »play« on his dial. Thus his apparently free efforts can produce pre-formed effects. In a sense, radio introduces into the private room certain effects and functions of the accordion. If we could find out how often people willfully produce accordion-like effects by twirling their dials, we would have an indicator for studying this. In New York, in fact, a cabaret artist imitates the effect of twirling the radio set's dial. Certainly he would not have done so unless the phenomenon had a rather broad collective basis. We might use him and his experiments as a hunch for finding out more about the questions involved here. In any case, the man who plays »on his radio« as if it were an instrument, obtaining ready-made, accordion-like chords dragged into each other in a dilettantish way, is a sort of model for all behavior where individual initiative attempts to alter ubiquity-standardization.

2) *The »Good Reception«*

In addition to this selection and »playing« on the dial, the listener can make further attempts to alter the standardized phenomenon. After he has selected the station, he may try to influence the phenomenon by regulating the volume and carefully adjusting the dial at the point which he believes the best for reception. He may also utilize additional makeshifts to influence the tone color, obtain clearer reception, and the like, if his set possesses them. When all this fails to satisfy him he can try to influence the standardization by making program suggestions to

the radio stations. This last attempt, again, necessarily remains within the framework of ubiquity-standardization. Even if the station follows the suggestion of the listener and does alter its program, the new program will again be impressed upon a multitude of people at the same time and at different places. This, however, will be discussed later.

An analysis of how people try to resist ubiquity-standardization by influencing reception is a particularly good example of the difficulties in a physiognomic analysis as well as in any other deeper reaching study of the listener's attitude to radio. For the listener's professed motive in regulating the dials of his set is contrary to an attempt to exercise that influence. What he is aiming at is generally not to modify the radio phenomenon to express his own taste. He tries to get »good reception«. That is, he tries to achieve as clear an idea of the »thing itself«, the actual performance, as he can with his set. Now, the idea of »good reception« in itself is not an invariant. There may be youngsters, drunks or musically uncultured people who regard the radio set as a means of providing them with as much noise as possible, and who think that reception is »good« when it is as strong as possible. This tendency is fostered by the difficulty in receiving certain stations and the necessity to increase the volume to prevent interference from nearby stations. Then there is the other extreme: good reception as a background; that reception which disturbs the listener as little as possible. Between these extremes there is a wide range of shades and finally there is the desire to get as clear and concentrated a picture of the music as possible. This is sometimes independent of volume and, although it appears on this scale, it cannot be expressed in mere terms of distance from the two poles.

But there are even greater difficulties involved in the idea of »getting good reception«. This can easily be seen in the tone-control dial. Getting the »thing itself« as accurately as possible by adjusting the volume-control would presume that the recipient possesses sufficient knowledge of the work to adapt the volume of his reception to the volume necessary for a particular work. This certainly cannot be expected in many cases. On the other hand, we may assume that the average listener can determine whether reception in his own room is clear and articulate. He can control this clearness and articulation by means of the volume-control.^{aa} This may indicate that the concept of »good reception« is by no means so unequivocal as might be

^{aa} Let us give this example. Until recently the sonority of the basses, which generally play an important role in many musical works, could seldom be clearly received over the radio. With a number of sets the listener could not even use his volume-control to get the required weight of the notes because it would have completely disturbed

expected. It certainly contains strong individual elements on the part of the listener, but we may still say that in his consciousness it is the ideal of good reception and not self-expression which prevails in his regulation of the radio phenomenon. For, roughly speaking, any attempt to express himself as an »additional factor in the performance« will obviously only spoil the phenomenon and will sound childish. Although it is our conviction that if the automatic behavior of radio listeners could be checked many more cases where this spoiling of the phenomenon actually occurs could be found, it would be hard to verify it because no respondent is likely to admit that he behaves so. He would be afraid of making a fool of himself. The reason for this is that no matter how far the activity of a regulating listener may go, he has no real power over the phenomenon. It always remains within the framework and within certain proportions of the given

Footnote aa (*cont.*)

the entire balance. This adaptation to conditions of clear reception in a room obviously affects the »work itself«. Good reception is by no means identical with reproduction suitable to the original work. It consists of elements of that suitability and also of elements of suitability for listening conditions. This complexity makes the regulation of reception much more difficult than most people would expect, in spite of the fact that technical means at the listener's disposal are so simple. It is most probably this complexity which induces radio manufacturers entirely to abandon these regulators, or at least to reduce them to a minimum in cheaper sets. On the other hand, certain expensive sets like the Philco display the same tendency. This particular model of the Philco, with the »Mystery Control Box«, is equipped with a box containing a »station selector«, a volume-control and tone-control button. The station selector works very much like a telephone dial; the listener simply turns the dial to the station he wants to tune in, thus doing away with the necessity for carefully adjusting the dial in order to tune in the exact frequency of the selected station. This »mystery control box« may be placed anywhere in the room within one hundred feet of the radio. General Electric manufactures a model with a station selector, too, but it is built directly into the radio cabinet and does not have the mystery control box. This station selector, of course, controls only the accuracy of tuning in frequency and does not affect the specific sound color of the reception.

All this means, of course, a new limitation of the listener's »influence« upon his reception. It would be exceedingly interesting for this study to check the popularity of these sets, although a modifying factor in their popularity would be their cheapness. The result of this survey would be hard to predict. On the one hand, there is a certain tendency to buy commodities which demand as little effort as possible, relieving the owner of functions which the mechanism now performs. On the other hand, in the field of art, it is just this complete abolition of the customer's activities which will most likely develop a counter tendency. If our assumption of the listener's resistance has any degree of truth, we may expect that this new type of radio set will remain slightly less popular than others. Of course there is another factor which may be responsible as well and that is that people are not yet accustomed to this new type of set. Therefore, it is apparent that before any valid comparison can be made the question will have to be studied more carefully.

material. The ridiculous and spoiling effect of that sort of activity, which we shall simply call »pseudo-activity«, is based upon the fact that all of the listener's possible attempts to modify the phenomenon remain external to it, an arbitrary addition instead of a really constitutive element.

Here we shall refer to a case which the author observed in Germany. He knew a child who liked to play the player-piano. This piano was equipped with a crescendo and diminuendo mechanism, comparable to the volume-control on a radio. The child's family had comparatively few rolls of music so that, by repeatedly playing the Scherzo of Mendelssohn's »Midsummer Night's Dream« and Lohengrin's »Bride Chorus«, he became fed up with them and tried to do something of his own. This effort was especially encouraged by the fact that when he played the piano the keys moved mechanically, as if they were being struck by invisible fingers. Thus the child made lavish use of the crescendo and diminuendo button with the effect of producing only a caricature of the music. These music-characters were comparable to the distorted face which appears in certain mirrors. This distorted image, although it is fundamentally conditioned by the original, is comical because of its elongation or broadening while its dependence upon the original is still apparent. This experience is so simple that we can expect a number of radio listeners to give up the idea of influencing the radio phenomenon. But here lies the difficulty. We spoke of resistance to ubiquity-standardization. We discovered that there are good reasons to believe that the listeners do not consciously want to alter the phenomenon because it is too obvious that this alteration spoils it. How, then, can we speak of the resistance of the listener to ubiquity-standardization in handling the radio? How can we justify an assumption which has so much to be said against it? It is obvious that we can only have indirect reasons for our assertion. The principle which guides the »activity« of the dialing and tone regulating listener is »good reception«. We can assume that behind this desire lies a hidden resistance to ubiquity-standardization. But we can prove this only if we find that the listener's actual behavior in regulating his radio set is not so completely guided by that principle as it appears. If this could be found, this question, however, would still remain: What is the nature of the reasons which induce him to behave differently? It would be impossible to identify these reasons with those of resistance to standardization without further consideration.

Now we have a hunch that, in general, people who are dealing with radio do not behave so »rationally« and are not so entirely guided by the desire to get good reception as they pretend to be and as they are

expected to be. At this point we must call upon personal observation and experience; the author must admit that quantitative verification of these observations would not be easy. He has noticed that people do more with their radio sets than is necessary for good reception. It is, perhaps, more important to mention that the idea of good reception becomes largely independent of what the listener wants to hear, an idea in itself. There is, first, twirling the dial. Of course the reason usually given is that the listener is trying to get samples of the offerings of different stations before making up his mind about what to listen to. It is pretty obvious that in a number of cases this is a rationalization. People twirl the dial for the sake of twirling. They turn the dial until they get a new station and as soon as they get it, or as soon as they know they can get it, they change it again and try anew with a different station. Of course they may be captured by something which interests them particularly, but there seems to be a strong likelihood that the dial-turner – the man or woman who does not switch on his radio to get a particular station or program but just to adventure on the air – gets his main pleasure from the very fact of turning the dial and from the possibilities of the machine, without caring very much about what he gets. This likelihood increases with the similarity of programs, particularly of light musical programs which are available almost all the time. We may assume that dial-turning alone, devoid of any real selection, becomes important to the listener in direct proportion to his loss of interest and the degree of importance he attaches to the station he tunes in.

There is a corollary to this. In their efforts to achieve good reception many people skillfully adjust all the controls on their radios and actually manage to secure the best possible reception they can get with their sets. Still, as soon as this ideal reception is achieved, they either turn the dial to another station or switch off the set. Of course we shall not allege that the majority of listeners behave like that, but certainly the number is large enough to allow them considerable symptomatic value for our radio-listening masses.

The objection could be raised that this behavior still remains within the range of the »good reception« ideal, and this we must certainly admit. But the significance of that ideal is completely changed when the program he receives is no longer considered important by the listener. When good reception is divorced from the desire to get a particular musical broadcast as clearly as possible, then the only explanation is that the listener cares only about »good reception« because he himself wants to have the privilege of doing something as well as possible. He knows that he cannot really influence the phenomenon; so he substitutes for this influence the ideal of »doing as

good a job as possible«. Instead of being able to do something against the mechanism when such an attempt would be futile, he wants to do something with the mechanism and identify himself with that attempt at the expense of what he is allegedly pursuing. Good reception becomes a fetish. By »fetish« we mean that the means are considered the end. This completely reverses his resistance. Doing the best job for receiving a radio broadcast no longer opposes ubiquity-standardization but obeys its laws so completely that the listener gets the illusionary self-satisfaction that the workings of the mechanism are his own. Still there is good reason to believe that behind this transformation lies only his original desire to preserve his individuality and »his phenomenon« as his property. When conditions prevent people from fulfilling this desire against a central power, they make the case of the power their own case. The pattern is: private person resists ubiquity-standardization of his radio set; knows this resistance is futile; finally transforms this wish for individual activity into preparedness to obey the laws of his apparatus; but just in this way loses his relation to the object and the content which he originally sought or pretended to seek. This pattern may well be considered an example of social attitudes covering a much broader field than the small living room where the dial-twirler proves his competence. There will, of course, be violent objections to this interpretation. While the tendencies we mention might be admitted, it will probably be said that an interpretation in terms of resistance to standardization is much too far-fetched. Probably the desire for individual activity as we have discussed it will also be objected to on the basis that it does not appear to be too overbearing in other fields of modern life. Then, too, we shall probably have to meet the antipathy of research people aroused by so psychological a concept as »identification with a central power«, so difficult to express in quantitative terms. Further, we shall probably hear the explanation that the more common-sense interpretation of this fact we discuss would be the »naïve joy« in dealing with any kind of technical tool, the child's naïve joy in playing with his toy railroad, or the joy of the youngster who becomes an expert on automobiles even though he has never owned one and even though he may never be able to buy one of his own during his lifetime.

But here we should like to make a general remark about any objection on the basis that an argument is too far-fetched. This concept holds good only in terms of the aims of this study. If the investigator wants to find out, for instance, what makes people buy a radio set with certain devices for extensive sound control, then it would be justified to call an explanation »too far-fetched« in terms of the individual's desire for self-expression or self-identification with the tool. This would certainly not add to the knowledge of an industrialist who

wants to find out what commodity sells best in a special situation. Here the investigator should be content with a simpler and »nearer« statement. Our aim, however, is fundamentally different. We want to relate radio to the basic structure of our society. Nothing serving this purpose is »too far-fetched«. In a certain sense, the more far-fetched our statements are, and the more they transcend the limited and immediate situation and consistently relate it to basic social conditions, the more valuable they are. Of course they must be substantiated by as many indicators as possible. Now we are trying to elaborate an explanation of how this corroboration could be achieved. But we must discount the objection that a more simple explanation of a phenomenon could be given because in our study we consider it futile to interpret an isolated phenomenon in the isolated terms of what it creates. Our task is to get from it as many implications for broader social issues as we possibly can. We may be inclined to give far-fetched explanations, but we do so in order to create links between certain phenomena and underlying social processes. Thus an »adequate« explanation, an explanation with the minimum theoretical strain, does not interest us. Just the contrary, we want to glean from the phenomenon as much theoretical significance as possible. We would call an explanation »too far-fetched« only if it overstepped the limits of the phenomenon and contradicted its actual meaning. But we cannot possibly consider that the simpler explanation is a priori the better. Neither simplicity nor complexity is scientifically valuable in itself. The question, here, is the relation between the social and natural sciences, and we cannot discuss it any more extensively now; and we can fully discuss the more specific objections to our approach only after we have more quantitative material. Our present answer must necessarily remain somewhat sketchy.

First, we admit that the facts which we have observed are not confined solely to radio. They can be observed in all fields of mechanization. Still, the author believes that these tendencies played a much smaller role in the phonograph era when people had the illusion that it played »just for them«. ^{bb} We can even admit that these reactions are not directly due to the listener's radio experience. He has transplanted

^{bb} An observation made by the author in the poorest sections of north and east Berlin is appropriate here. In the backyards of the slums, always full of children, unoccupied women and older people, the old street-organ not only survives, but plays a considerable part in their social life, in spite of radio and phonograph. They frequently dance to its music. When they are asked why they still listen to these noises, they often reply that the music is played especially for them and directed immediately to them. It seems likely that under the pressure of poverty, psychological features come into play which are less readily admitted by people who are too content

his enjoyment of twirling the dial from the enjoyment of technical devices like the motor car. Or, speaking more precisely, while the listener still adheres to the idea of »good reception«, which really originates in the radio technique, he transfers attitudes borrowed from other technical fields to this idea. Even the direct motivation for phenomena such as those we are dealing with now cannot always be treated in isolation. We may not be able to describe the listener's obedience to his apparatus while he is attempting to get ideal reception in terms of radio. We may have to go back to more general behavior in modern life. Still, however, even if we do admit all this, we would only thrust the problem further back, but by no means would we solve it. The »harmless joy« in technical devices, and in being able to master the machine, are empty phrases. Pleasure in technical tools has several components and cannot be reduced without hesitation to the categories we have tried to develop. Certainly, to explain a child's attitude toward his toy railroad in terms of resistance to the tool, finally leading to identification with it, would be inadequate. Certainly his spontaneity has not been completely adulterated. He is not only the servant, but frequently the master of the material, even though resistance is not absent when he is so frequently ready to destroy his own toy. The desire to be the real master of machinery is a relic of this genuine spontaneity and certainly survives with the toys which our society provides for adults, of which radio is one of the most famous examples. The dial-twirler, too, shows something of this desire. *But the complexity of psychological structures is properly understood only in a given social situation.* We cannot discuss the structure of drives in the abstract, but only in their relation to social conditions and the expression of these conditions in the technical standards of a period.

There is every reason to believe that under present conditions people are becoming afraid of the alienated and anonymous power of monopolistic institutions. One of the only psychological refuges is identification with those very powers, just as a prisoner may grow to love the barred windows of his cell. We have good reason, too, to believe that the same mechanisms which inspire fear in the listener influence the psychology of the masses to such an extent that we can expect them to be all the more ready for this identification. It would be illusionary to dismiss this knowledge as pre-scientific and, instead, to »stick to the

Footnote bb (cont.)

with what is offered them by large powers, and who still feel that they are on the same side of the fence. As far as we know, similar features can be found on New York's East Side too, for features of that type are less conditioned by nationality than folklorist interpreters believe them to be.

facts!« when these social insights may help us »understand« things better and relate facts which would otherwise appear unrelated, contradictory and accidental. Our interpretation of the listener's attitude is a product of our observation of the listener and our knowledge of these more general social conditions and tendencies. The facts, themselves, do not absolutely *demand* one explanation when they are considered in isolation. But when they are considered in the light of these social tendencies; when our interpretation is based upon sufficient material and remains consistent with that material; when it explains actions which otherwise would be meaningless; and if, finally, when it links facts apparently so divergent as those we have so far discussed – when these four criteria are really fulfilled, we feel safe in preferring our »far-fetched« interpretation to a »natural« one based upon »natural human behavior« which no longer exists, at least in our society.

For the present moment, though, our observations about the listener's reactions to ubiquity-standardization go much further than we are justified in treating them now. In our present context we can consider only this fact satisfactorily settled: that the listener's attitude to the radio phenomenon goes beyond his professed desire to get a good reception of the material. However, in our attempt to describe how this attitude works, how the idea of good reception becomes an aim of its own, and how it is related to general conditions, we feel impelled to introduce the hypothesis that resistance becomes modified to self-identification.

We are fully aware that our proof so far has been inadequate but this is so not because of lack of experience, alone. These attitudes are necessarily unconscious. If a listener should become aware of them he would either cynically admit it, abandon his rationalization and stick to the attitude with the defiance of a craftsman proud of being non-intellectual; or he would cease to react that way. But this insight would be so unpleasant that we may safely expect much stronger resistance to an attempt to force the listener to admit his attitude (for example, the attitude of resistance, disregard of content, identification) than to ubiquity-standardization. Considering the logical difficulties in any combination of psychological studies of many people, we shall probably have to discount individual analysis as a method of proof, and depend upon further hunches instead.

3) *Fan Mail*

One of these hunches may be found within the second possibility of »resistance« to ubiquity-standardization, namely the attempts to impress one's own will upon the stations. We have already said that this attempt does not strictly fall within the limitation of our

physiognomic study because no possible result of these reactions could really affect the ubiquity-standardization itself. If we discuss it here, we do it for the sake of finding indirectly a foothold for our interpretation of the dial-twirler.

The listener's attempt to impress his will upon broadcasters usually takes the form of letter writing. Of course, personal contacts are often attempted, but in the first place they are very difficult to check and are reflected only in vague references to the close contact between local station directors and their audiences. In the second place, it is hardly probable that any great number of people have established these contacts; and finally, those people who do contact radio officials are, in a sense, on the other side of the fence. Either they are personal friends, or else they have been personally consulted. There is not much reason to suppose that their reactions express trends of the ordinary listener's reactions. Usually they try to adopt a more or less objective attitude, identifying themselves not with »good reception«, (as we assume the dial-twirler does) but rather with what they would rationalize as the well understood interest of the broadcaster. Thus we are forced to turn to radio correspondence.

We are fully aware of the objections to the extensive use of mail-analysis in radio research. We know that it is doubtful if letter-writers can be considered representative of non-writers. We know that their psychological make-up, by the mere fact of their writing letters to an unknown, powerful institution, is probably somewhat different from the normal listener's make-up. This issue of radio correspondence shall be treated separately. In this study, however, we are only venturing a few observations from our rather extensive sampling of fan-letters. These observations, no matter how questionable, certainly fit in the picture we have drawn. Of course, letters inspired by an offer of reward, as in certain commercial broadcasts, must be excluded. We must also exclude letters written by any sort of pressure-groups; and finally, the extensive correspondence of radio-amateurs should not be included, either. They certainly deserve a special study of their own. And so only those letters which could be called, somewhat broadly and vaguely, »spontaneous« remain. To call their »spontaneity« a sign of resistance or self-identification with the power resisted, of course, would be premature. But they contain positive clues allowing such an interpretation. These letters deal with more or less »objective« phenomena, like bad reception, inconvenient programs, the ratio between different types of music, timing of programs, etc. Therefore, one should expect them to be stated in objective terms, suitable for such issues. However, this is not the case. Instead, they are full of references to the writer's personality. Not only obviously

neurotic persons, but also some who are apparently quite sensible talk about themselves, their age, their profession and their outlooks. They seem to justify their suggestions by considering their particular viewpoints as expressions of their particular personalities. Incidentally, these viewpoints are most frequently identical in those letters which most strongly emphasize the writer's unique personality. The problem, then, is: why does an individual who pretends to be making objective suggestions, write about himself to an institution with which he has no personal connection when he knows that he cannot expect any real personal interest (even though the station's stereotyped answers carefully uphold that illusion). Apparently these letter-writers feel somewhat lost and neglected in the face of »ubiquity-standardization«. Thus, even while they are criticizing the phenomenon, they compensate for this lost feeling by attempting to re-establish personal participation in the phenomenon and by trying to attract the attention of the institution from which it originated. The discrepancy between the objective situation and the objective purpose of the letters on the one hand, and their obtrusively personal character on the other, indicates that this psychological motive is really stronger than the reasons given by the writers.^{cc}

There are grounds for suspecting that a number of letter-writers are aware of these problems and are ashamed of writing these letters. The investigator continually comes across letters beginning with the assertion that »this is the very first fan-letter« the writer has ever written to a radio station; that he is »no fan of the usual type«, and so on. These formulas can be interpreted somewhat as follows: Even while he is aware of the futility of his attempt to pit his personality against the power of a radio network, the listener tries to compensate by emphasizing his uniqueness. This is the unconscious mechanism. »I, a private person, am writing a letter to you, a huge institution. I know that it is really nonsensical. I have no power over your decisions. You are not interested in me as a person, to the slightest degree. I know

^{cc} We must, however, make an important reservation. Our theory does not ignore the material to which these letter-writers respond. Certain programs (for example, political speeches, meetings and news) are really understood by the listeners. Their own subjective interest coincides with the objective matters discussed in them. In these cases the listener is in an »adequate situation«. Here, although we cannot entirely discount these psychological motives, still their preponderance over objective motives cannot be expected with any certainty. But, when a correspondent writes indignantly about the torturing discords of modern music, or the sadistic mutilation in »jamming« our precious old folk-tunes, it is an entirely different matter. The fan-letter as a psychological indicator becomes more valid the more the subject matter of the broadcast lies beyond the writer's understanding and his sphere of rational thinking. This must be considered an interpretation of fan-mail.

that, in the last analysis, the private person does not matter at all. Still, there is something which drives me to write you. It is stronger than these considerations. I must justify it and this I do by asserting that I am such an exceptional person. That is, I invoke the very category whose futility stands before me as I write.«

But there is still, in a latent and more rudimentary form, another element in the attitude expressed in these personal formulas. It is this. »I am only an individual, but still I write to you. I know very well that an individual talking about his own personality to a concern like you, makes a fool of himself. But«, – and this is the deciding point – »I am different. There are still some people who do not want to listen to crazy jazz or cheap entertainment. There are still some people of the true cultural and artistic discrimination. I am one of them, and that is why I have a right to write you.«

The fan-mail writer constructs a gap between himself and the other listeners, or »other ordinary letter-writers«. He tries to establish a bond between himself and the high radio officials he expects to read his letter. In other words, he overcompensates his feeling of being lost as an individual by making his cause common with the cause of the subjugating power. In spirit, he sits down at the same desk with the radio director and discusses what could be done. This, however, is exactly the same mechanism as the identification which we sketched in our discussion of the listener's attitude to ideal reception. This viewpoint corroborates the individual's weakness because here he deserts to the other side of the fence. Still, he maintains the original motive of »individual resistance«. He justifies his action by the quality of his own incomparable individuality which does not flatly accept what is offered to him. He virtually believes that he is a potential radio director just because he is »different«, because, in his opinion, he is a particular sort of individual, one of the few surviving in our mass society. It is strongly ironic that the man who is *actually* on the other side of the fence, the broadcaster, tries not to be different, but to identify himself with the man on the street or the tired business man; while the letter-writer energetically tries not to be mixed up with them. It is just the man on the street who wants to be different. All these differences, finally, are probably much less important than they appear to be to the different groups. The very feeling of being different most likely belongs to the illusionary individuality which we built up as a characteristic of radio physiognomics.

We do not pretend to have *proved* anything by these considerations. We have only sketched the approach which brings our assumptions of the pseudo-activity of the dial-twirling radio listener into a logical relation with observations of other possible reactions against ubiquity-standardization. We admit that our observations of the

irrational and fetishistic behavior toward »good reception«, and our conclusion about fan-letters may be weak. But we hold that a combination of these and other similar observations may finally provide enough material to substantiate our theses. The advantage of this sort of extensive mail-analysis would be that it would contain quantitative psychological material in an objectified form. Thus the difficulty of ascertaining the irrationality of people's behavior toward radio phenomena would be excluded. Here we must be prepared for the most severe objection. Even if we should succeed in both fields, this would not be sufficient proof. Instead of trying to understand the facts without prejudice we shall be accused of trying to corroborate them by the same underlying theory which we are trying to prove. To this objection we have very little to say. We do not wish to »repudiate« it. As a matter of fact, we admit the assertion it contains, but we dispute the validity of its presupposition. It starts from the belief that we must consider disconnected facts from different spheres, each of which demands its own explanation. If one result can be corroborated by another in a different field, it is usually considered sufficient proof. But basically the fields are not really disconnected and it is our duty to point out their connection. This can be done only by means of an underlying theory. If we are reproached for using the same categories to explain divergent facts we can only plead guilty of basing our assumptions upon one theory. Our attempt to justify our interpretation of the dial-twirler by discussing the mechanisms behind fan-mail does not aim to prove our theory by citing more »facts« which might be considered independent of it. We are only trying to show that these facts »fit« the same theory. Furthermore, by going back to this theory, facts apparently so far apart as dial-twirling and fan-mail-writing begin to »speak«. To go back to the terminology of this study, they »gain a common expression«. As long as a concrete analysis is undertaken, applying these categories to different fields does not mechanically force stubborn facts to fit the theory. We apply these categories not because we think that they are a universal recipe for every problem, but because we believe that fundamental structures of society present themselves everywhere and that every network of concepts must be woven according to these structures.

There is, too, this further objection which might be raised; we are biased *because* we make a theoretical approach. To this we reply that no approach devoid of theoretical elements is possible – not even a »purely experimental« one.^{dd} Even the selection of subject matter for

^{dd} Even physical measurements, since they, too, are physical events, must obey the same laws which they are supposed to ascertain. Hence even the physicist can

any research must, of necessity, contain theoretical elements. When the researcher makes up his mind to investigate one problem instead of another, he is presumably unaware of any of the facts which he will have to interpret. The abandonment of theory does not guarantee greater security. Quite the contrary, it holds the danger of allowing only a treatment of superficial data without identification of the moving forces behind it. Even the concept of »the given facts« is not an invariant. There may be situations where the given facts build a solid wall in front of what is actually taking place. And if this wall can be torn down only by referring to inconsistencies (like the irrationalities we hinted at) these inconsistencies are only small chinks. The wall can be torn down only by speculative thinking, in spite of the danger that the person who dares to speculate may be struck by some of the stones he loosens.

4) *Examples*

In addition to these symptoms of the listener, there are certain devices used by broadcasters which also fit the picture we have drawn. Broadcasters certainly have had some experience, if not with the actual psychology of the listeners, at any rate with their behavior, which is an indicator of social psychology. Here only two examples are presented, both taken from one of the largest networks: »The Home Symphony«,³⁰ which provides a chance for the man in his home, the school orchestra, or the amateur ensemble to play with an orchestra under the baton of a first-rate conductor, and the »Music Is My Hobby« program.³¹

The first device is obviously irrational. No amateur is likely to play as well as any of the highly trained musicians who participate in the performance. From the viewpoint of purely musical quality, certainly the amateur's participation only harms the resulting musical phenomenon. In addition, the activity of a listener who participates in »The Home Symphony« is very limited, much more so than the activity of the real orchestra member. Not only must the amateur obey the conductor's directions; he must also adapt himself to the picture of an existing, objectified, rigid performance, and he most frequently falls short. Thus the pleasure he takes in playing is only the pleasure in doing something which is already objectified, and doing it not so well. This, again, is clearly the attitude of finding subjective pleasure

Footnote dd (*cont.*)

prove the exactness of an experiment only by regarding the laws in question as known. Cf. Edgar Wind, *Das Experiment und die Metaphysik* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1934), p. 1 ff.

in identification with the central institution: and, apparently, this pleasure is so strong that the shortcomings of the home-participant's real achievements do not count. We must add, however, that this statement pertains only to the relation between individual spontaneity and the objective result, which is doubtful. The home participant has no real influence over the »standardized phenomenon« and any slight influence he may have is only negative, similar to the dial-twirler's negative influence over the music which he spoils when he changes stations. However, there is a possible pedagogic value to such an attempt. It is possible that a player may increase his own musical skill by participating in »The Home Symphony«. He may develop a better understanding by doing something himself instead of only passively listening. Our criticism, however, would not minimize these possible benefits although we believe that »pseudo-activity« will also affect their pedagogical value. We believe that true musical understanding is furthered more satisfactorily by studying the score of a Haydn symphony and playing it on the piano, however badly, than by playing tonic, dominant and sub-dominant of the double bass at home, even under Toscanini. From a pedagogical point of view, the spontaneity which is a priori condemned to domination by something given appears to us at least to be of doubtful value. Still, of course, we must admit that playing »in« an orchestra at home may develop certain qualities better than playing the piano or chamber music without any control. We must admit, though, the further possibility that when the amateur's own shortcomings are compared with the achievements of the orchestra, a criticism of these shortcomings may be obvious and so a higher level may be achieved. This, however, has nothing to do with the player's first illusion that he is taking part in a performance when he really is not; and that he is doing something for his own sake when he is really only imitating what is being played to him. The relation between physiognomic and pedagogical considerations in radio is rather complicated.

The second example, the »Music Is My Hobby« program, combines the complex desires for resistance and identification. Individuals, especially those who are successful in other fields, are given a chance to appear on the »other side of the fence«, and actually identify themselves with the public power at their disposal for the time they appear before the microphone. They are, so to speak, representatives of millions of less successful listeners who will never have a chance to be heard over the radio. These people may find some consolation in the fact that if only they are successful enough in business they may some day have the chance to replace Huberman,³² no matter how badly they play the fiddle. It is as if the institution were saying, »Don't

resist me and my ubiquity. Everyone has the martial baton in his pocket. Some day this phenomenon which appears so strange to you and seems to extinguish your own personality may be ›your‹ phenomenon in the radical sense that you may actually produce it.« But just when this is achieved the individual ceases being delivered over to the phenomenon on the reception side. He becomes a part of the large power, instead. It is unnecessary to discuss here how these programs sound. Even the most self-restrained scientific observer may be allowed to utter certain doubts about the pedagogical value of a successful banker's rendition of the Mendelssohn Concerto as a guiding example for his fellow citizens. He is a substitute for all the clerks whose voices can no longer be heard. Taken in isolation, the features described may again appear insignificant and harmless expressions of the necessity for broadcasters to take the human weaknesses of their listeners into consideration. But in light of our remarks about the relation between the individual and the institution they appear less harmless and their weakness less human. They can be expected to be symptoms of a state of affairs where the individual is stripped of his own individuality and all his ›activation‹ is only a cloak for this expropriation.

5) Switching Off

There is one last chance left for the listener to escape ubiquity-standardization. He can simply switch off his radio. This simple gesture makes the phenomenon cease to exist. We shall discuss it here because it hints at an irrationality beyond the concrete act of switching off. Rationally, the listener turns off his radio when he no longer wants to listen, when he has no more time to listen, when he is tired, or when he dislikes the program or the performance. It appears to us, however, that in a number of cases the listener derives a certain amount of pleasure just from this gesture. Krenek hinted at this psychological motive when he wrote that the radio listener can condemn even the most powerful dictator to silence.³³ Since it is absolutely impossible for the individual actually to impress his own will, he seeks refuge in one last loophole. He completely destroys the phenomenon. We consider the psychoanalytical assumption of a ›drive for destruction‹ only the translation of a definite social tendency of this present period into the more abstract language of ›human nature‹. We believe that the ›drive for destruction‹ can be described more accurately as a desire of those who are condemned to impoverishment or demolition; who reflect their own annihilation by annihilating the whole; who console themselves by hoping for what they fear and who even prefer a world catastrophe to a change of conditions.

Totalitarian governments have not overlooked the loophole of turning off the radio. During the Czechoslovakian crisis the German authorities unambiguously expressed their expectation that every inhabitant in Germany listen to Hitler's speech. In other words, anyone who might try to escape the voice of his Führer was virtually threatened. The particular significance is this: the individual who cannot possibly alter the ubiquity-standardization of the radio phenomenon transforms it and every pleasure he might get from it into the pleasure of destruction. The author has observed that people switch off their radios with a sort of wild joy, just as if they were shouting, »I shut his mouth for him!« This gesture of opposition is the most fruitless of all. It creates the illusion of might and power, but it really means only that the rebel is withdrawing from contact with the very public events he believes he is altering. Of course they really go on without taking any notice of him. It is a more modern form of the attitude of the philistine, talking politics in his tavern, pounding the table with his fist, shouting »It can't go on like this any longer!« and ordering another glass of beer. As soon as the listener, the man who says proudly, »I just can't stand this stuff any longer«, triumphs over ubiquity-standardization and changes the phenomenon, he loses his apparent power because the phenomenon ceases to exist and he is left alone. Radio correspondence, especially correspondence about modern music, shows clues of a similar attitude. The listener can really influence ubiquity-standardization only when the phenomenon no longer exists and he is no longer a listener.

Chapter VIII Image-Character of Radio: Hear-Stripe

In our discussion of ubiquity as a basic category in radio we mentioned that it seems to make the radio phenomenon appear to be »coming from somewhere else«. We spoke of radio's echo-effect and mentioned that the feeling of closeness, developed by the time-coincidence between the broadcast and the live music, is somewhat shattered by this feeling of listening only to an echo of the original. This observation is only a symptom of certain broader characteristics which we consider so important that we intend to devote a more detailed treatment to them, even though we know that this »image-character« of the radio phenomenon is one of the most obscure and difficult issues of radio physiognomics. We must confine ourselves to a delineation of the problem and a description of the phenomena which lead to the problem. But we must make several reservations, especially when we discuss its effect upon broadcasting. We shall not conceal possible

contradictions in our description, for these contradictions may be related to the very meaning of these phenomena.

When you place the needle upon the revolving phonograph record, first a noise appears. As soon as the music begins, this noise recedes to the background. But it constantly accompanies the musical event. Non-musical people who are not able clearly to realize this main event, always complain about this noise. The slight, continual noise is a sort of acoustic stripe. This is similar in motion pictures when the sound stripe appears on an empty screen, and seems to be moving along with the picture even though it is really stationary. Something very similar exists in radio. Even if the set is functioning properly, the electric current can be heard when it is tuned in. This current makes a »hear-stripe« [*Hörstreifen*] vaguely comparable to the noise caused by drawing a long strip through a narrow aperture, or rubbing something against a resisting object. This hear-stripe in radio disappears from the musical surface as soon as the performance takes shape. But it can still be heard underneath the music. It may not attract any attention, and it may not even enter the listener's consciousness; but as an objective characteristic of the phenomenon it certainly plays a role in the apperception of the whole, and will be effective unconsciously. Respondents often express that indirect experience by reporting that radio is not so vivid to them as live music because they do not actually see the instruments being played. This explanation is not sufficient. When he is faced by a large orchestra the layman is only occasionally able to combine the sound reactions of the orchestra members whom he sees. In the modern post-Wagnerian orchestra, in fact, it is not even easy for him to identify a sound as belonging to a particular instrument or instrumental group. The feeling of »unreality« expressed by so many radio listeners is likely to have deeper reasons. In a way, not only the means by which it is produced, but the »music itself« is invisible. If our guess is right, the part of the phenomenon really responsible for this experience is the hear-stripe.

Freed of the listener's rationalization, the complaint that he cannot see the music being played is really a vague articulation of his feeling that he cannot »see the thing itself«. Here »seeing« is to be understood in an acoustic sense. He is not faced with the reality of music, but only its reflection or its projection upon the hear-stripe. He hopes in vain to compensate by seeing how it is done, but this hope is futile. In the talkies the hear-stripe effect is very emphatic and probably more so than in radio. Motion picture revues often assist the musical event by showing the action of each instrument. But any keen observer will probably notice that this visual presentation of the

instruments does not fundamentally alter the image-character of the music.^{ee}

When music is heard along with the hear-stripe, as is the case, unmetaphorically, in talking pictures, how is this significant for the effect of the phenomenon? Does the stripe move with the music or does it stand still? The question might appear absurd because the music always moves on in time. But the issue goes beyond that. First of all, the problem is that the music appears to be projected upon the stripe, like a picture upon it. This may play as large a part in the alteration and neutralization of radio music as the loss of more distant harmonics, so often discussed by radio technicians. This loss exists only in relation to the live music performed, and presupposes a more or less distinct imagination of the live music. The picture-like projection of music upon a stripe, however, appears in the phenomenon itself and is felt without any reference to an unknown original or the listener's musical erudition. *He hears the phenomenon »like a picture«*. This, and not something it has lost in comparison with the original, is the deciding consideration. The obscure implication of the hear-stripe phenomenon (mentioned here chiefly because it may have a definite influence upon the problem of symphony in radio) is that it may appear to the concentrating listener that the real movement is that of the hear-stripe while the music either stands still or is dragged away by the stripe. Similarly, in motion pictures, the screen drags the picture away.

It is hard to predict how the description of this very complex phenomenon might finally evolve. Possibly, in radio, it is just the opposite. The film transfers a number of stationary pictures into a continuum of movement by using the very small difference between each

^{ee} Of course, in revue films the practice of showing instruments in action has other reasons which are probably more important. One of the most conspicuous is the problem of finding a use for the means of presenting a visual event when they do not demand the principal attention of the audience. Of course this is the case when a musical event occupies the center of attention. So the director gets the idea of visualizing the music in some more or less childish way. The reason for this is probably the widespread curiosity to see how it is done as a substitute for understanding what is being done. Even though we are mentioning this here as a practice of the talkies, we should like to mention, too, that in radio as well as motion pictures trends based upon apparently different motives finally lead in the same direction – in this case, to vain compensation for the »image-character« or neutralization of music in radio. The real social question is this: how can we account for the fact that tendencies of so vastly different origins as the loss of harmonics, unsuitability of home reception for the acoustic dimensions of a symphony, and the hear-stripes, all converge upon a single point – the radical change in music caused by the »radio voice«. Here we can only state the problem. We cannot, however, even attempt its solution.

picture as a means of »dynamic« transition. In radio the constantly moving hear-stripe makes music appear to stand still. Against the hear-stripe it dissociates itself into »pictures«. This may account for the dissociation of the dynamic unity of a symphony into mere subsequent »details« which we discussed in *Part I*. It is very difficult to articulate this experience. It is at the same time very definite and very vague, something much easier to repeat in the face of an actual broadcast than to transform into conceptual language. Perhaps we may say that music, normally aloof from the noise of the real world, and because of this aloofness, appearing to be »real«, loses this »reality« when at each moment it is confronted by the hear-stripe, hinting so definitely at the empirical world. Radio music, in a way, seems to remain suspended in time. It is deprived of its integrating force over time. In *Part I* we attempted to explain this force as the deciding factor of symphonic music, but it can be understood in a broader sense as a guiding principle of any musical »form« which is more than merely a pure symmetrical subsequence of singular and dissociated features. At this point, radio really touches upon the center of what has been understood as great music, at least from Haydn to our time. However, this is not the place to discuss whether in this respect radio is a destructive or »creative« force; nor whether new musical forms, corresponding to the radio phenomenon, are in view.

Of course, it is a well-known fact that technical development is tending to abolish the hear-stripe. But it is doubtful that there has been any real success up to now. The author feels safe in assuming that the hear-stripe still exists in the majority of radio sets still in use. Technicians will have to decide if the hear-stripe is also due to the same fact which this study so often mentions as the root of the difficulties of the »radio voice« – that live music is »reproduced« by the microphone. It can be stated, however, that so far electrical instruments do not appear to present the hear-stripe. Perhaps if it were possible to play »upon the electric current« of radio, in the sense that one can play on a piano or violin, the hear-stripe would disappear. Under present conditions, however, we know that such a suggestion sounds utopian.

We shall probably be accused of a tendency to attribute too much importance to the complex we have characterized by the term, hear-stripe. We shall probably be told that the hear-stripe can be noticed only by the trained musician or the expert technician, while the average listener is seldom, if ever aware of it. We shall be told that it is foolish to dwell upon such fine shades, using radio physiognomics only as a pretext for dealing with artistic subtleties, when the really important problem for the listener to radio music is getting a good

transmission of a good performance of all kinds of music. Now it is by no means our intention to dwell on nuances at the expense of basic events. The question is only, what are these basic events? Certainly, in a discussion of the listener's consciousness, the program matters more than its »how«. But we have every reason to believe that when radio's deeper effect upon the listener is in question, that is, its effect upon the deeper layers of his psychical life, his conscious reactions play only a comparatively minor role. For example, the conductor plays a great part in the listener's consciousness even though, in a number of cases, his personality influences the acoustic phenomenon much less than the hear-stripe. Comparative experiments would probably show that more people are able to discriminate between broadcasts with strong and weak hear-stripes than are able to discriminate between Toscanini and Barbirolli.³⁴ Still, these same people would probably prefer a Toscanini broadcast to one disturbed by only a slight hear-stripe. We certainly agree that the listener knows that this is a Beethoven symphony and those are the Kidoodlers.³⁵ But his behavior toward them both may depend on his unconscious feeling of dealing with »real music« or only an echo of music. We are entitled to expect this preponderance of unconscious over conscious reactions as conditions for such behavior can be more distinctly traced back to the objective side of the phenomenon. The unconscious feeling may well outweigh the surface principles of the listener's »taste«, in determining his real attitude. Further, in describing the radio phenomenon, the problem of the »basic« event takes a different shape for the following reason: the »how« of the »radio voice« (for instance, the hear-stripe) is unaffected by the program, but the program is by no means unaffected by the »how« of the »radio voice«. The hear-stripe plays its role when the Kidoodlers make their musical jokes as well as when Toscanini conducts Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. If, however, some of our assumptions concerning the hear-stripe are true, then the Seventh Symphony over the air is, to say the least, very different from the live Seventh Symphony, or from what the man on the street believes a symphonic broadcast to be. This whole study is based upon the assumption that, in the last analysis, the effect of radio upon the listener is dependent upon the radio phenomenon itself. If this is true, it is by no means beyond the realm of possibility that the hear-stripe question is more important than the program question just *because* it is unaffected by the program and still affects all programs. It is utterly possible that what theoretical reflection might hold to be a »fine shade« is really the »stubborn fact« in the phenomenon with which any theoretical interpretation must first deal.

Radio's ubiquity is responsible for its echo effect, making music sound as if it were coming from somewhere else. This constitutes only a part of the broader tendency of the image-effect of radio. The elements of acoustic neutralization – loss of distant harmonics and the lessening of differences between different timbres – account for the image-like lack of articulation in radio. In every-day experience the term »canned«, applied to radio and phonograph music, expresses this image-character. The difference between the image sound and the real sound can very well be compared with the difference between fresh and canned food. The hear-stripe, finally, seems to act as the medium upon which the image appears. And in contrast to the »naturalness« of the hear-stripe, the image-character of the music is kept vivid all the time. We regard this image-character as the most decisive qualification of the »radio voice«, for it touches upon the fundamental relation between music and all the other arts. Before the invention of tools for mechanical reproduction, music was largely different from other arts (except stage and stage-like characters) because there was little fictitious about it. In general, music does not imitate anything – neither the external world, like painting, nor the psychical world. The autonomous logic of musical events continually rebelled against any attempt to chain it by an imposed necessity to express feelings and emotions. Music is the only art which consists largely in its own existence without giving a picture of anything. Counter-tendencies have been alive, however, since the beginning of the modern age; that is, since the invention of *musica ficta* in Florence during the late middle ages. These tendencies, however, were more like undulations than a constant trend. Although they were successful at certain times (like the Florentine opera, and later of Gluck and romanticism) at other times they were entirely in the background. Even in successful cases there existed a fundamental difference between the »fictitiousness« of music and the »fictitiousness« of the novel or painting. If we consider one of the first great examples of expressive music, the *Lamento d'Arianna* by Monteverdi, this music might »assume« the expression of a fictitious character as an element of its texture. But, strictly speaking, even this expression cannot be understood as an imitation of the psychical behavior of the dramatic character who sings the expressive tune. It is related to this character more in the sense of the relation between our shouting or laughing or crying and our psychical life. Laughing, crying and shouting also express something going on inside us. They do not give a picture of it. We should not be justified in speaking of any similarity in the psychical state of sorrow and the phenomenon of weeping in a sense comparable to the similarity of a picture to the original. Even the late

romanticism of *Tristan*, generally considered representative of highly developed psychological expression of music, in no sense imitates the feelings of the characters. It tries to force the listener to react in a certain way to the fate and behavior of the *dramatis personae*.^{ff} Even music most full of feeling offers less of an image of this feeling than it expresses and impresses the listener by it. In the listener's behavior toward music, features strictly corresponding to this structure can be found. The »emotions« created by music are not emotions aroused by a fiction. The listener, touched by music, considers music as reality similar to the reality of his own feelings, his own memories and his own sorrows. The more »emotional« and »irrational« behavior toward music, in comparison to reactions to other arts, is probably not due to the »irrationality« of music. Music, even emotional music, is very rational in certain aspects. The vigorous and direct response which so often makes people forget that it is »only art« is probably due to this reality of music, the fact that there is so little picture-image-imitation about it.

In spite of all the elements of fiction scattered throughout music, its basic reality has been abolished for the first time by the image-character of the »radio voice« – but in a most paradoxical sense. For the image presented by the radio voice, by the music pouring out of the loudspeaker, is not an image of the outside world. This music sounds like an image of music. It loses its own »reality« in the sense we have just discussed. It is our belief that this change closely corresponds to changes in the radio listener's attitude, regardless of whatever we assume to be cause or effect. What Benjamin called the »loss of the aura«³⁶ in music can probably be reduced to the loss of that reality. All the older magical effects of music that people believed in were bound to a concept of music as a real power. No matter how aloof from practical necessities it may have been, music was still something in itself and not an image of something. It was on the order of prayer and play; not of painting and writing. The loss of this »reality« necessarily means the loss of »seriousness« in the older and traditional sense. Music sounding like a picture of music instead of being a sort of spiritual reality can no longer be expected to mitigate and humanize. This loss of reality, not the »music itself«, »breaks the spell«. As the illusionary qualities increase, the »irrational« power, formerly considered the essence of music, threatens to vanish. The

^{ff} Sometimes Wagner himself appears to have been conscious of this nature of his expressive music. For instance, in the famous letter to Liszt, he speaks about the interruption of his work on *Siegfried*, and says that he has »convoyed« the hero under the Linden tree. »Convoying« music is strictly different from imitating music.

»irrationality« of today's emotional reactions to music is bound to this loss of reality. In this sense, this sort of irrationality is strictly opposed to older irrational effects of music, no matter how similar they may appear under other categories. Even terms like »emotional«, »irrational«, »magic«, can be understood only in an historical perspective and may have entirely different meanings at different periods. It is only when it is fully realized that the image-character of the »radio voice« ruthlessly destroys the remnants of musical magic that the fallacies in all attempts to maintain magical features in radio – if only the sacred work of art, the creative personality and the artist – can be appreciated. The tool denounces as a cheat anything which radio presents in magical terms, for the tool liquidates the reality of music as a spiritual power, the basis of all its »magical« effects.

Chapter IX Atomistic Listening: Culinary Qualities of Music

The effects of radio's image-character upon the listener's attitude are manifold. As a matter of fact, they may affect his entire attitude to radio and music. Extensive investigation would be needed to determine the extent of these consequences. Here, however, we shall discuss only one rather limited problem, closely akin to the model problem of the symphony, discussed in *Part I*.^{sg} This can be stated in terms of the »phenomenon« in our physiognomic sense. We refer to the image-like presentation of music; its atomization^{hh} and especially atomistic listening. We must again note that, although the reactions we describe can be traced back to the structure of the phenomenon, they can by no means be dismissed in terms of cause and effect. Although it may be said that it is difficult to listen to radio in any but an atomistic way, this atomistic listening which we are going to characterize is by no means limited to radio. It is valid for much broader spheres of our musical life, at least for light popular music and, we believe, for the apperception of serious music as well. Tracing back this type of listening to the structure of the phenomenon – to the »features« of the presentation – will only be a pattern for more general conditions.

It is comparatively easy to understand why the listener is forced to listen atomistically to a radio symphony. It is not so easy to understand why people probably listen to a symphony in a concert hall in

^{sg} Cf. *Part I, Chapter III*.

^{hh} *Ibid.*, p. 29.

much the same way. The problem still remains; what, in the last analysis, accounts for the similarity of these two reactions? We do not intend even to hint at its solution in this study, but we cannot overlook the fact that certain tendencies can partly be traced back to a period in the history of music when the possibility of mechanical reproduction in the modern sense was not even thought of.

We have pointed out that »against the hear-stripe, it (music) dissociates itself into pictures«.ii But the other elements of the image-character also participate in this dissociation. The artificiality of the »radio voice« diminishes the dynamic contrasts and differences of color. Sound color becomes more muffled, booming and reverberating. It is this layer of reverberation in most of the sounds which makes the timbres approach each other. As a result, it is certainly more difficult for the listener to distinguish between timbres in a radio reproduction than in a live performance. This is again furthered by the fact that instruments whose color does *not* undergo this »booming« are not quite absorbed by the unity of sound. Over the air the flute, for instance, sounds much more piercing and less blended than in a live orchestra. Its contrast does not help to articulate the rest. It is so far aloof from the *tutti* sound that the ear cannot properly relate it to the rest of the sound; and this relation is necessary for its function as an articulating contrast. This disproportion holds good for the percussions as well. It is hard to say if the fault lies in the over-distinctness of the flutes and percussions, or the relative indistinctness of the rest of the orchestra. And in radio many other sound elements of the rest of the *tutti* closely approximate each other and are still impossible to broadcast satisfactorily. We must remark that this approximation should by no means be regarded only as a disadvantage of radio. It can also make for better blending; and in later stages of radio technique, conscious handling of it may even prove very helpful. We mentioned before that radio sometimes executes musical tendencies which existed long before its invention. This blending of timbres is an especially significant example of the »radio voice« as an »executor« of older tendencies. The musical art of instrumentation and scoring, the use of musical colors as an autonomous means of expression, is of comparatively recent date. Even though its germs existed earlier, it can be said that it has been discovered in its full extent only since Berlioz and Richard Wagner, the inventors of the modern orchestra. Now, the very principle of that orchestra, beyond the mere increase of instruments, is to facilitate continual transitions from one instrumental

ii Cf. p. 131.

group to another, and to overcome the conspicuous breaks (for example between woodwind and strings) so prevalent in the classical period of instrumentation. Wagner has defined music as the »art of transition« and this definition certainly holds good for this type of scoring. The effect of radio upon the orchestral sound is very much the same.ⁱⁱ A closer analysis shows, however, that this similarity is less mystical than it might appear at first. Wagner's principle of orchestral blending, from the very beginning was connected with the increasing mechanization of instruments – a mechanization which has achieved its acme in radio. One of the essentials of the Wagnerian technique of blending is the horn. The older horn, consisting only of natural harmonics to a given basic tone, was replaced by the ventile horn which contained the full chromatic scale. Thus it could fulfill its new function. It is significant that this very innovation which made the horn mobile enough to fit every possible musical combination, at the same time made it lose much of its character as a »natural«, much less mechanized instrument. In his preface to the orchestral score of *Tristan*, Wagner himself mentions this fact. He says that he hesitated long before introducing the new horn into his orchestra because of this very shortcoming; finally, however, he decided that the advantages made good for the loss of timbre and that, in his opinion, some of these losses may be balanced by a virtuoso execution of the horn part. This expectation has not been fulfilled. Everyone who is acquainted with the modern orchestra knows that the greater the skill of the ventile horn player, the more of the original and characteristic heaviness of the horn sound is lost. The tendency to »neutralization of sound« has, for a long time, been closely connected with the mechanization of musical instruments. This may be a satisfactory, if only provisional explanation for the fact that the »radio voice« actually executes older tendencies of the modern orchestra and music.

No matter what these relations or their future chances may be, they nevertheless produce a lack of plasticity in the sound. They will continue to do so as long as the »radio voice« continues to affect music which has not been composed with that neutralization in mind. The

ⁱⁱ This may, by the way, be the reason that jazz appears to be particularly appropriate for radio transmission. The art of changing one instrumental sound into another has been developed to a record level here. It is often very difficult even for the expert to distinguish the sound of certain types of muted trumpet from the clarinet or saxophone. Jazz, in a way, sounds like »radio« in the sense of the »radio voice«. Hence it has the least to lose in broadcasting. It is much more difficult to be sure that the jazz one hears in a restaurant is being played by a band or just over the radio than to make the same decision about a chamber music ensemble. This observation is not confined to the expert. Respondents have reported it in several interviews.

lack of plasticity conflicts with the structure of the entire work because it prevents the clear articulation of its component parts. The lack of contour by the coloring in radio, and all the features connected with it, are felt as a lack of formal articulation. The question arises: how do these changes affect the appearance of music in the »radio voice« and how does the listener apperceive music?

At this point we are again up against a contradiction which a theory whose aim is consistency would try to smooth away. This contradiction may be briefly stated: Radio lessens the sensual charm, richness and colorfulness of each sound; but because the whole becomes less apparent due to this lack of articulation by neutralized sound colors, the listener is forced to devote his attention to the isolated details. Thus listening becomes more sensual in spite of the decrease of its sensual qualities.

For the sake of simplicity, we suggest that the qualities in question be called »culinary«. The term is used because it designates what is appreciated by the listener in music, just as an individual appreciates the good taste of food. He likes these qualities only for the instantaneous, transitory »sensual pleasure« which they give him. They act as a sort of sensual stimulus, and not as an expression of any »sense«.

Some of these culinary qualities are given here. The first is the softness and richness of sound, aimed at by practically every musician in this country, particularly in radio and motion pictures. It is a sound for which the element of »tension«, characteristic of Beethoven, for instance, is unimportant. The rich and soft sound, in the modern culinary sense, virtually abolishes everything beyond its presence. This, however, must be modified because in culinary music, especially that music affected by impressionism, there are many discords and stimuli which seem to give a sort of tension. This tension, however, is totally different. It is comparable to the voluptuous tension of tickling, and its equivalence in the sexual sphere. It is a tension which is supposed to be pleasant in itself, regardless of what it leads to in time. This fits in with the use of stimulating chords as mere sound effects without relation to the proper development in time of the music in which they appear. They are connected with the second main characteristic of atomistic listening, the »catchword« stimulus. To be effective in a culinary sense, they must be something different against the background of well-known and ordinary effects. Still, they must not be too unusual and must never shock the listener to deprive him of his »tasting« pleasure. A closer analysis of these features will be given in the study of light popular music.³⁷

Although these sensual qualities always play a role in music, they change in highly developed music. Here they become »elements of a

whole« in which they are sublated by being both preserved and abolished. In great music, though, they are no longer independent entities upon which any value judgment can be safely based. Our thesis of the effect of the »radio voice« is this: Even while these culinary qualities are like canned food, as we have previously remarked, they are still becoming increasingly important. They attract the listener's attention away from the structural elements of the totality; and that totality is dissociated because of its lack of formal articulation through the »radio voice«.

The historical development of music during the nineteenth century helped to accelerate this change. As early as Wagner the specifically expressive elements of earlier romanticism became bearers of this sensual appreciation which Wagner characterized by the word »*wonnig*«, one of his favorite words. The German word »*wonnig*« is very hard to translate into English. The dictionary gives the synonyms: delightful, delicious, precious, pleasurable. None of these fits exactly. Its meaning can be described only indirectly. It means, at the same time, ecstasy in a spiritual and symbolic sense (the noun, »*Wonne*«, is a very solemn and emphatic word for pleasure) and it has a touch of the sensual intensity by which this symbolic »expression« of sublime joy is felt. While it still bears the idea of expression and symbolic meaning like a cloak, the luxurious »culinary character« already overpowers the older romantic nucleus. In a composer like Tchaikovsky the change from specifically expressive to »culinary« means has already become totalitarian. This may even account for his popularity. It is still presented as »great music« with a deep meaning of passion behind it. Actually, however, it can be entirely apperceived »culinarily«. A composer like Puccini points in the same direction. The relation between today's light popular music and so-called serious composers like these could easily be shown.

We must be especially careful not to over-simplify the issue by our terminology. For a highly trained musical brain these »culinary« stimuli are found in certain sounds (or sound totalities) which sound abhorrent to the untrained majority, just as an undeveloped tongue is unable to appreciate certain delicacies. We are not emphasizing this differentiation here, although we shall discuss it later. We use the word in a ruder sense. Here »culinary« qualities are those which produce that immediate and unbroken sensual pleasantness of a full, soft sound, especially of harmony, in the musical apperception of the majority of today's listeners. It remains the task of the psychology of music listening to show what qualities are regarded as »culinary« by today's masses. As a matter of convenience, we shall place in that category those stimuli which combine simple tonal devices with certain

rudiments of impressionist sophistication which can be spotted in light popular music. It might even be simpler to apply the term for our purposes to those elements of music expressed most clearly in the voice of a singer. Most people will call this voice »beautiful« without any regard to its musical function. The same sort of reference is frequently made to the »beautiful tone« of the violin. It is safe to say that, in general, this sensual quality of the sound is stressed much more than constructive elements of music, frequently denounced as »abstract« or »intellectual« no matter how concrete they may be from a musical point of view.

It is interesting that the »culinary« qualities of music, or more simply the relation between music and cooking, is considered a basic and positive category, devoid of any relation to historical dynamics and even antagonistic to such dynamics, in a book written by one of the most representative music critics of our time. This problem is so important in general musical consciousness that we shall discuss his theory in greater detail, hoping to clarify our concept of the »culinary« qualities of music by this discussion.

The point is made by Deems Taylor.³⁸ We believe that a relation between the apperception of food and the apperception of music really exists today, and that Mr. Taylor has the great merit of expressing it very frankly. We differ, however, with his attitude toward culinary listening. He considers it sound and healthy and suspects any reaction to music which pretends to dispense with its culinary qualities as insincere and highbrow. We, however, believe that no matter how sincere and well-meaning the culinary perception of music may be, it occurs only when a real relation to the musical work is lacking.

Mr. Taylor starts with the assertion, »It is astonishing how much alike food and music are. They are so, of course, because music is decidedly a variety of food. So is all art. We feel the pangs of bodily hunger and put things into our mouths in order to stay them. Similarly, we feel certain emotional or spiritual cravings that can be satisfied only by religion or art – frequently both.«^{kk}

We do not object to the materialism of that comparison because we believe that it is very suitable to describe how people react to music. After all, listeners who »taste« music are probably better equipped to appreciate it than sob sisters who are concerned with Beethoven's deafness or Wagner's love affairs with the wives of his sponsors. We dispute only the truth of the comparison as far as a strict description of musical phenomena and not present-day listener-behavior is concerned.

^{kk} Deems Taylor, Chapter I, »The Scorned Ingredient«, *Of Men and Music* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1937), p. 86.

Mr. Taylor speaks about the striking likeness between music and food and calls the former a variety of food; but he, himself, revokes the specific meaning of his assertion by his sentence, »So is all art«. That music must respond to desires and necessities of our psychical life, that it must have some use-value instead of being merely a fetish, is self-understood and, as Mr. Taylor sees clearly, valid for other arts as well as cooking. Even the most radical new music must have some bearing upon fundamental human needs. But all this is so general that it applies to any product of human culture.

The mistake in Mr. Taylor's argument is that first he describes cooking in these general terms which certainly hold good for music as well; but then he substitutes a much more concrete meaning of cooking which he applies to music. He still takes the similarity for granted even though it no longer applies to the specific structure of food and the specific structure of music. The evidence that music in the last analysis complies with human necessities and drives does not imply that it works the same as eating.

The analogy between music and cooking lies in the fact that eating and listening are both reactions for which a sequence of certain elements in time is essential, and they both deal with stimuli and relations of the character of »reality« sketched in *Chapter VIII*. Neither music nor cooking gives an image of something beyond itself, although a closer analysis of both would show that they are by no means so autarchic as they appear at first sight. But this analogy is about all. To stress it means to omit the constitutive difference, the difference by which music actually becomes an art. One may put it this way: in cooking, the momentary stimuli, the pleasure you get out of each bit you devour, really matters. Of course there are interrelations. There are tastes, a combination of which is not at all likely to give any pleasure to anyone. There are probably very few persons who would like to mix hot chocolate with pickled herring. Furthermore, the order in which a good meal is served also plays a role, although the laws of that order are much more variable than the plain man thinks. The more sophisticated one's taste, the more will one enjoy alterations and combinations which would be perverse or just repulsive to an untrained tongue. But this is not so important. Tasting has certain limits of consistency and order. But it is really only the individual event, the isolated stimulus within the rather wide margins of that order that counts. To put it negatively, it is hardly conceivable that a piece of spoiled fish would ever please any palate, no matter in what context it is presented. Even the famous Chinese eggs are harmless compared with the effect of stinking fish. The limits are clear-cut. With music it is totally different. It is the whole that matters, and the question of

whether this whole makes sense; that is, a purely musical sense, which is not easy to verbalize and which, although it can be realized only in the actual musical phenomenon, can nevertheless be decided upon very distinctly. Compared with the time-development of this whole, the individual stimuli are only of minor importance, although by no means lacking. There is great music – we gave Beethoven as an example in *Chapter I* – in which these stimuli are pretty much in the background, but which impresses us by its totality and by the strength by which this totality gives the essential musical sense. There are probably comparatively few bars in a Beethoven symphony which »taste good« in the sense in which caviar or snipe tastes good.

If one reduces music to elements as primitive and indivisible as the stimuli which make for our appreciation of food, one will find that practically none ever »tastes good«. It would be hard to say that one single tune »sounds beautiful« if it is completely divorced from its context; whereas the child who is given just one teaspoonful of cold roast beef juice might like this one teaspoonful much more than a full meal. Furthermore, if a composer should construct a piece of music consisting only of »good tasting« elements, the result would be simply repulsive. There were certain composers who tried this. The German composer, Franz Schreker, with his ideal of »beautiful orchestral sound« is perhaps the most characteristic, but there are also such elements in Scriabin, Debussy and Ravel. It is evident that it would be absurd to consider Schreker, perhaps the best musical cook who ever lived, as the greatest composer for that reason; and certainly Mr. Taylor, when faced with his music, would be the first to call it unbearable – and quite rightly so. He might answer that this is parallel to what would happen to a child who waits for his mother in a pastry shop for over a half-hour and then becomes sick and overpowered by the smell of all the good things. This sickness would certainly prove nothing against the culinary qualities of the cakes and chocolates displayed. But this comparison is not valid. The pastry shop is not meant for wholesale consumption. The customer is supposed to buy and eat what he likes (and what he can pay for) and not swallow everything. If he is well-to-do he may avoid entering the shop and just order his favorite chocolate truffles over the telephone. He could not behave the same toward Schreker. He would have to listen to the whole prelude to the *Gezeichneten*. If he should make up his mind to leave the performance before the end (for which he may safely be pardoned) it would not mean that he could enjoy the isolated beautiful sounds, but that he could not stand them. They would sound »too beautiful« in the strict sense that they would preclude the building up of the very totality which he is expecting from the music.

Finally, there is no such simple and indivisible beauty in music as there is in cooking. There are some writers who speak about the eternal and indelible quality of the triad. Hindemith, for instance, in his new treatise on composition, speaks of the grandeur which he compares with the rain and snow.³⁹ But if you are not sheltered by a well-articulated composition, you may only become soaked by this natural power, and it will get on your nerves without conveying anything of its eternity to you. Otherwise it would be very simple to compose. But a composer who uses only triads certainly falls far behind a cook who specializes in clear and simple roast beef. On the other hand, there is no possible musical sound which could not make sense in its own context, and not even a relation to unbroken and primitive »culinary« qualities is essential to obtain that sense. The composer is not in the position of the cook who must continually take refuge in [a] joint of lamb in order not to overfeed his clients on oysters and foie gras. The versatility of the musical »tongue« is so great that it cannot be compared with the real tongue without reservations. This applies as well to many noises which can obtain a musical meaning, but which certainly have no »culinary« qualities whatsoever.

In the light of this discussion, we consider the following statements by Mr. Taylor not quite convincing. »We ask two simple questions regarding any food: Does it taste good? Does it nourish me? Now many modernist composers and their advocates remind me of a cook who should suddenly tire of doing things with the same old flour and salt and pepper and beans and lamb-chops and should forthwith proceed to invent dishes composed of benzene, shavings, quinine, oyster shells and crankcase lubricants.«⁴⁰

After our discussion this question, »Does it taste good?« can be applied to music only as the vague analogy: does the work as a whole mean anything to me? The use of this analogy would gain nothing; it would only obscure the issue. The pleasure derived from any work of art can be so complex that a comparison with more elementary pleasures can no longer help. Possibly this pleasure consists only in enjoyment in mastering the most terrifying experiences of dread and fear by bringing them into some definite configuration. You may be able to »stand it« by achieving an artistic command over it.

The purely metaphorical character of Mr. Taylor's second question, »Does it nourish me?« is obvious.⁴¹ Unlike food, music does not build a material part of the body. Mr. Taylor would probably say that it does make a part of the spiritual body. Convincing as this might sound, more complex issues are involved here which are again obscured by the comparison. The analogy would mean that music must give you something »positive« which does you some immediate

good within your own psychological household. This, however, presupposes a sort of pre-stabilized harmony between the individual's psychological household and the value of the work of art, which actually does not exist. The »nourishment« offered by music may not lie in its immediately adding a new substance which helps you feel better and go on. It may be, for instance, simply a sort of shock which just makes you doubtful about that very psychological household which, according to Taylor's theory, it ought to satisfy. It can contribute to »nutrition« in the last analysis, but not in the sense of something which you just devour and digest. The consideration of a possible antagonism between the work of art and the psyche which it is supposed to nourish has been strikingly expressed by Rilke in his poem about the bust of an archaic Apollo. This poem ends with the words:

[...] denn da ist keine Stelle,
die dich nicht sieht. Du mußt dein Leben ändern.^{ll}

It is doubtful if the B flat major Fugue for String Quartet by Beethoven is any more nourishment than the bust.

»The modernist composers and their advocates«^{mm} whom Mr. Taylor attacks because of bad cooking would be very foolish to rely upon the argument that they use new ingredients because the old ones no longer taste good. They would submit themselves to the very theory of the »culinary character« of music in opposition to what they are advocating. It may be taken for granted that these very composers and their advocates are not very good. A modern musician who would reply, (as Mr. Taylor would have him) to the criticism, »This is nasty!« – »But you fool, it is supposed to be nasty; the old flavors are outmoded« – would be on exactly that level of musical cooking which produces only bad music. Even with the admission that the purely sensual, »culinary character« cannot be entirely omitted from compositions (and we have admitted that in our analysis of the analogy between cooking and composing) it certainly would be much too primitive for the composer to say that he chooses a certain sound because it is nasty. We pointed out that no possible isolated sound can be absolutely nasty or absolutely beautiful in itself. It may be asserted, however, that the very sounds which are today most vigorously assailed as discordant have had a certain sensual attraction for the composers. Their very complexity, the number of tones

^{ll} »... for there is no spot (on the bust) which cannot see you. You ought to change your life.«⁴²

^{mm} Taylor, *op. cit.*

they contain, the richness of color which can sometimes be expressed more clearly by one chord than by a whole texture in older music, appeal to us sensually more strongly than more primitive chords which are less of a »structure«, a unity within a diversity. We consider it possible that this very quality of the new sounds, in fact their »beauty«, is one of the reasons that a number of young musicians pursued the lines of radical modern music. However, it is just this consideration of the new chords which no longer survives; and the more a composer develops, the more he will see that the charm of the richest twelve tone chord is only one operating force within a dynamic unity. A composer, however, who would denounce himself by calling the sensual elements »nasty« is probably insincere and, in the depths of his soul, probably dislikes his own works. In the case of great composers, however, it is totally different. Mr. Taylor holds the late Alban Berg in high esteem. But Berg, himself, was very enthusiastic about the very sensual quality of the new chords.

It would be hard to show an increase in »culinary« qualities by analyzing listeners. But there is another possibility for checking our theory that the »culinary« quality of music is really the foremost characteristic of our period. We refer to the indirect approach of showing that for *objective* reasons music in the past could not be listened to in a culinary way. This indirect approach will be sketched now.

A number of people will take it for granted that the majority of listeners listened culinarily in the past as well as the present. We shall probably be accused of romanticism in expressing this difference in attitudes. For example, the objection will probably be raised that the relation of parts to the whole and the sense expressed by the whole has always been confined to only small layers of cultural elite and experts; while the majority were concerned only with these sensual qualities. We shall probably be confronted by the example that Rossini was more popular than his contemporary, Beethoven; and we shall no doubt be reminded that the cult of the virtuoso has been a perennial feature of music life since the inauguration of the opera in the latter part of the sixteenth century. It will be emphasized that it is unjust to say that today the masses are on a lower music level than they were then, and the obvious fact that radio has acquainted so many people with musical features which never reached them before will be pointed out to us.

To clear up these objections we must first say that in our sense culinary qualities are totally different from the qualities stressed in former centuries. It is not accidental that in any discussion of the earlier cult of these qualities the term, »virtuoso« automatically appears. Then, people admired the faculty of handling the natural material and overcoming the resistance. The heroes of older musical popularity were

more like a toreador than a bartender. Possibly their voices played an important role, but it is unlikely that their voices were venerated in the abstract without considering their ability as a tightrope walker. The »culinary« qualities were obviously not the same as they are today for the very simple reason that they did not exist in this sense. They will be sought in vain in any older opera, even the tremendously popular *Orpheus* by Gluck, for example. It will again be objected that his music might have possessed sensual charm, but our spoiled and perverted palates can no longer taste them. This is to the point. The difference is not simply that the older stimuli fade away when they are experienced too often and must be replaced by fresh ones. There is a difference in the quality itself. To make this clear, the origin of the so-called »culinary« qualities as they are generally enjoyed today must be considered. These »culinary« qualities were not introduced as such. They were originally created by the desire for *expression*. All the »culinary« qualities, the chords which sound sweet, exciting, stimulating today, were formerly the bearers of an especially intense expression which has since been lost and of which only the »culinary« stimulus is left. Now these elements of expression are comparatively new. Roughly speaking, they are no older than the romanticism starting around the time of Weber and Schubert. Of course, older music did not lack expressive elements. Beethoven, at least, was certainly received in terms of expression. But they were always interwoven in the complete texture, and integrated in this entirety whenever they were felt in isolation. Only since music has become a specifically individualist language has the element of momentary self-expression of the individual begun to supersede the texture of the whole. These elements of the individual's spontaneous self-expression are the ancestors of today's »culinary« qualities. Or, speaking more exactly, the »culinary« qualities are the empty shells of individualist expression in music. The tendency against the whole (which we noted as one of the essentials of culinary listening) can be observed throughout romanticism inasmuch as it was directed against any single structure which could not entirely be melted into the means of individual self-expression. As long as they were full of expression, they had a »meaning«. They were serious and, in their very shortness they were even »wholes« in themselves.^m

^m A closer discussion of this relation would lead to the specifically romantic meaning of the *fragment* in literature. Although it is very short and definitely not a totality, it represents the totality in its subjective aspects by suggesting infinite possibilities for development. It appears to us, however, that its importance has never been fully realized in music. Romantic fragments do not exist in music as they do in poetry with Novalis and Schlegel or Keats and Shelley. But pieces like the twenty-four preludes by Chopin where each fragment is only one gesture of expression, unfinished

Today romantic expression has been used so extensively that its old expressive power has been lost. Only its emancipation from the whole has remained along with its sensual conspicuousness which formerly carried the expression. The expression, however, has faded away and become conventionalized. The momentous and conspicuous romantic self-expression has been changed into qualities which are antagonistic to the whole. These qualities are now appreciated for their »culinary« value and sensual stimuli just because they can no longer be taken seriously as means of expression. »Culinary« qualities, thus, must be considered as an historic concept. We say, therefore, that »culinary« listening is specifically modern because the very qualities which are now »culinary« stimuli formerly did not exist as features. Of course, there are exceptions to this historical generalization which could be cited against us, for example, the case of Rossini^{oo} whom we have already mentioned, and a few other cases. Even if we admit that Rossini is an exception, there can still be no doubt that eighteenth-century music was almost entirely bound to the triad, comparatively poor in »tasty« chords and also devoid of melodic »inspiration« in the sense created by romanticism. As a whole, it could not possibly have been listened to in this »culinary« fashion, as if the listener were tasting it, as people now listen to Guy Lombardo⁴³ as well as the rich and flavored sound of a modern symphony orchestra playing so that every bar »melts in your mouth«.⁴⁴ This issue has been discussed somewhat broadly and in historical terms not unintentionally. We wanted to show by an example that questions apparently insoluble because of the difficulties of listener-research, can be resolved by a feature-analysis.

Footnote nn (*cont.*)

in itself but with a horizon of infinite possibilities, come very close to this idea of the fragment. The same holds good for some of the most interesting pieces by Schumann in his early period. We quote here as a particularly significant example only the last of the famous »Kinderszenen«: »Der Dichter spricht.« The fact that Schubert's famous B minor Symphony, by no means one of his last works, remains unfinished may also have something to do with the same tendency.

^{oo} Here, again, more detailed analysis would show an historical origin rather than an invariant musical trend toward these qualities. Rossini, in a way, can be considered one of the last representatives of the great, Neopolitan opera school beginning in the seventeenth century: Characteristic of this school were the strong expressive tendencies. The sensual charms of Rossini were shells of the expressive elements of the early Neopolitans just as today the pseudo-impressionist ninth chord is the shell of the expression of certain Wagnerian chords. It is safe to say that sensual charm in music always has an historic dimension and can be understood only in relation to expressive tendencies which originally created the »sensual« material but have since disappeared.

2 A Social Critique of Radio Music¹

Some would approach the problem of radio by formulating questions of this type: If we confront such and such a sector of the population with such and such a type of music, what reactions may we expect?^{a*} How can these reactions be measured and expressed statistically? Or: How many sectors of the population have been brought into contact with music and how do they respond to it?

What intention lies behind such questions? This approach falls into two major operations:

a.) We subject some groups to a number of different treatments and see how they react to each.

b.) We select and recommend the procedure which produces the effect we desire.

^{a*} I am glad of the opportunity to discuss with you some of the basic issues of Music Study which, in a few more weeks, will come forward with its first major report. The Music Study pursues a methodological line somewhat different in emphasis from other work done at the Project. The approach here taken may be called a »Social Critique of Radio Music«.

Today, I hope to convey to you briefly an idea of what this approach is. I. Permit me to explain what is meant by a social critique of radio and how it applies to music.

II. I will demonstrate the relation of its method to empirical procedures.

I.

The alternate method would approach the problem of radio by studying its effects upon the population while regarding the structure of the tool, the structure of society and the function the tool performs in it as something given. It would formulate questions of this type: If you confront such and such a sector of the population with such and such a type of music, what reactions may we expect?*

The aim itself, the tool by which we achieve it, and the persons upon whom it works are generally taken for granted in this procedure.^{b*} The guiding interest behind such investigations is basically one of *administrative technique*: how to manipulate the masses.^{c*} The pattern is that of market analysis even if it appears to be completely remote from any selling purpose.^{d*} It might be research of an *exploitive* character, i. e. guided by the desire to induce as large a section of the population as possible to buy a certain commodity. Or it may be what Paul F. Lazarsfeld calls *benevolent* administrative research, putting questions such as, »How can we bring good music to as large a number of listeners as possible?«²

I would like to suggest an approach that is antagonistic to exploitive and at least supplementary to benevolent administrative research. It abandons the form of question indicated by a sentence like: How can we, under given conditions, best further certain aims? On the contrary, this approach in some cases questions the aims, and in all cases the successful accomplishment of these aims under the given conditions.^{e*} Let us examine the question: How can good music be conveyed to the largest possible audience?

^{f*}What is »good music«? Is it just the music which is given out and accepted as »good« according to current standards, say the programs of the Toscanini concerts? We cannot pass it as »good« simply on the basis of the names of great composers or performers, that is, by social convention.^{g*} Furthermore, is the goodness of music invariant, or is it

^{b*} The actual results, figures and particularly proportions between figures would pertain mainly to the interrelationship between aim, technique and result.*

^{c*} How can a given, more or less central agency handle most successfully given groups or numbers of persons in such a way as to induce them to behave according to the aims of the central agency? The logical form of such investigations is moulded according to the ideal of a skilled manipulation of masses.*

^{d*} For I am fully aware that this type of research applies to intentions so highly divergent that it seems arbitrary to speak about administrative research in general.*

^{e*} The danger involved in not questioning the aims and their accomplishment, is that the radio industry's conception of its mission may become transformed into the fundamental presupposition of the social researcher. This, however, applies to benevolent administrative research no less than to exploitive results. No doubt, a question as, e.g., how can more good music be made available to more people, is a question of benevolent administrative research. By taking such notions as good music or listening to good music as something given, and being concerned merely with the interrelationship of aim and effect instead of analyzing the aim, the tool and the subjects more radically, the results may easily turn out to be directly opposite to the very aim which they are supposed to further.*

^{f*} What appears to be generally accepted – good music as a reality in itself – struck me as full of traps and fallacies.*

^{g*} This raises the question of how to establish criteria.*

something that may change in the course of history with the technique at our disposal? For instance, let us take it for granted – as I do – that Beethoven really is good music. Is it not possible that this music, by the very problems it sets for itself, is far away from our own situation? That by constant repetition it has deteriorated so much that it has ceased to be the living force it was and has become a museum piece which no longer possesses the power to speak to the millions to whom it is brought^{h*}? Or, even if this is not so, and if Beethoven in a musically young country like America is still as fresh as on the first day, is radio actually an adequate means of communication? Does a symphony played on the air remain a symphony? Are the changes it undergoes by wireless transmission merely slight and negligible modifications or do those changes affect the very essence of the music? Are not the stations in such a case bringing the masses in contact with something totally different from what it is supposed to be, thus also exercising an influence quite different from the one intended? And as to the large numbers of people who listen to »good music«: *how* do they listen to it? Do they listen to a Beethoven symphony in a concentrated mood? Can they do so even if they want to? Is there not a strong likelihood that they listen to it as they would to a Tchaikovsky symphony, that is to say, simply listen to some neat tunes or exciting harmonic stimuli? Or do they listen to it as they do to jazz, waiting in the introduction of the finale of Brahms' First Symphony for the solo of the French horn as they would for Benny Goodman's solo clarinet chorus? Would not such a type of listening make the high cultural ideal of bringing good music to large numbers of people altogether illusory?

These questions have arisen out of the consideration of so simple a phrase as »bringing good music to as large an audience as possible«. None of these or similar questions can be wholly solved in terms of even the most benevolent research of the administrative type.^{i*} One should not study the attitude of listeners, without considering how far these attitudes reflect broader social behavior patterns and, even more, how far they are conditioned by the structure of society as a whole. This leads directly to the problem of a social critique of radio music, that of discovering its social position and function. We first state certain axioms.^{j*}

a.) We live in a society of commodities – that is, a society in which production of goods is taking place, not primarily to satisfy human

^{h*} – though those millions may express enthusiasm about what is brought to them by their announcer.*

^{i*} They affect those notions which are taken for granted by the very setting of that type of social research.*

^{j*} These axioms, incidentally, do not lay claim to systematic completeness but are intended rather as characteristic instances.*

wants and needs, but for profit. Human needs are satisfied only incidentally, as it were. This basic condition of production affects the form of the product as well as the human interrelationships.^{k*}

b.) In our commodity society there exists a general trend toward a heavy concentration of capital which makes for a shrinking of the free market in favor of monopolized mass production of standardized goods; this holds true particularly of the communications industry.

c.) The more the difficulties of contemporary society increase as it seeks its own continuance, the stronger becomes the general tendency to maintain, by all means available, the existing conditions of power and property relations against the threats which they themselves breed. Whereas on the one hand standardization necessarily follows from the conditions of contemporary economy, it becomes, on the other hand, one of the means of preserving a commodity society at a stage in which, according to the level of the productive forces, it has already lost its justification.

d.) Since in our society the forces of production are highly developed, and, at the same time, the relations of production fetter those productive forces, it is full of antagonisms. These antagonisms are not limited to the economic sphere where they are universally recognized, but dominate also the cultural sphere where they are less easily recognized.^{l*}

How did music become, as our first axiom asserts it to be, a commodity? After music lost its feudal protectors during the latter part of the eighteenth century it had to go to the market. The market left its imprint on it either because it was manufactured with a view to its

^{k*} What this means concretely for our present purpose, we will have to discuss later. For the time being, it may suffice to state that music is no exception to this axiom: that it is, by and large, a commodity, and that music itself, as well as so-called musical life, cannot escape the grasp of universal commodity production.*

^{l*} Permit me to apply these principles directly to our field of research, in order to make clear the concrete meaning of the principles themselves and to convey a general idea of what the social critique of radio is and how our *Music Study* has approached the task of illustrating and exemplifying a social critique of radio through empirical research.

In radio – and this is one of our leading theses – all music tends to become a commodity. It is all the more necessary to emphasize this statement, as huge numbers of people accept the commodity character of music as a matter of course and as something natural, and are therefore blind to the implications it has. The principal task of our approach, is to question what everybody knows and accepts as given and inescapable – that is, to challenge the givenness of the given. Music today functions, by and large, not as an art form but as a commodity. And this preeminently in radio, despite the fact that nobody apparently has to buy a ticket of admission to radio music.*

selling chances, or because it was produced in conscious and violent reaction against the market requirements. What seems significant, however, in the present situation, and what is certainly deeply connected with the trend to standardization and mass production, is that *today the commodity character of music tends radically to alter it*. Bach in his day was considered, and considered himself, an artisan, although his music functioned as art. Today music is considered ethereal and sublime, although it actually functions as a commodity. Today the terms ethereal and sublime have become trademarks. Music has become a means instead of an end, a fetish^{m*}. That is to say, music has ceased to be a human force and is consumed like other consumer goods. This produces »commodity listening«, a listening whose ideal it is to dispense as far as possible with any effort on the part of the recipient – even if such an effort on the part of the recipient is the necessary condition of grasping the sense of the music. It is the ideal of *Aunt Jamimas'* ready-mix for pancakes³ extended to the field of music. The listener suspends all intellectual activity when dealing with music and is content with consuming and evaluating its gustatory qualities – just as if the music which tasted best were also the best music possible.

^{n*}Famous master violins may serve as a drastic illustration of musical fetishism. Whereas only the expert is able to distinguish a »Strad« from a good modern fiddle, and whereas he is often least pre-occupied with the tone quality of the fiddles, the layman, induced to treat these instruments as commodities, gives them a disproportionate attention and even a sort of adoration. One radio company went so far as to arrange a cycle of broadcasts looking, not primarily to the music played, nor even to the performance, but to what might be called an acoustic exhibition of famous instruments such as Paganini's violin and Chopin's piano. This shows how far the commodity attitude in radio music goes, though under a cloak of culture and erudition.

(b) Our second axiom – increasing standardization – is bound up with the commodity character of music. There is, first of all, the haunting similarity between most musical programs, except for the few non-conformist stations which use recorded material of serious music; and also the standardization of orchestral performance, despite the musical trademark of an individual orchestra. And there is, above all,

^{m*} ,something adored without no immediate relation to its actual being.*

^{n*} I mention here an example, perhaps over-drastring for making myself understood, pertaining to the concept of commodity, namely the role played by actual fetishes, say by famous master violins.*

that whole sphere of music whose life-blood is standardization: popular music, jazz, be it hot, sweet, or hybrid.^{o*}

(c) The third point of our social critique of radio concerns its ideological effect. Radio music's ideological tendencies realize themselves regardless of the intent of radio functionaries. There need be nothing intentionally malicious in the maintenance of vested interests. Nonetheless, music under present radio auspices serves to keep listeners from criticizing social realities; in short, it has a soporific effect upon social consciousness.^{p*} The illusion is furthered that the best is just good enough for the man in the street. The ruined farmer is consoled by the radio-instilled belief that Toscanini is playing for him and for him alone, and that an order of things that allows him to hear Toscanini compensates for low market prices for farm products; even though he is plowing cotton under, radio is giving him culture. Radio music is calling back to its broad bosom all the prodigal sons and daughters whom the harsh father has expelled from the door. In this respect radio music offers a new function not inherent in music as an art – the function of creating smugness and self-satisfaction.

(d) The last group of problems in a social critique of radio would be those pertaining to social antagonisms. While radio marks a tremendous technical advance, it has proved an impetus to progress neither in music itself nor in musical listening. Radio is an essentially new technique of musical reproduction.^{q*} But it does not broadcast, to any considerable extent, serious modern music. It limits itself to music created under pre-radio conditions. Nor has it, itself, thus far evoked any music really adequate to its technical conditions.

The most important antagonisms arise in the field of so-called musical mass-culture. Does the mass distribution of music really mean a rise of musical culture? Are the masses actually brought into contact with the kind of music which, from broader social considerations, may be regarded as desirable? Are the masses really participating in music culture or are they merely forced consumers of musical commodities? What is the role that music actually, not verbally, plays for them?

Under the aegis of radio there has set in a retrogression of listening. In spite of and even because of the quantitative increase in musical

^{o*} We hope to develop a consistent presentation of musical standardization by linking up the essentials of all our studies on light popular music, of which I may mention in passing the study on plugging. For the moment, we leave this point undeveloped, since we will offer some pertinent examples in another context later.*

^{p*} An important group of problems connected with this concerns radio's promotion of the idea of universal participation in culture by the radio population through radio music.*

^{q*} But it avoids a serious relation to advanced modern musical compositions.*

delivery, the psychological effects of this listening are very much akin to those of the motion picture and sport spectatoritis which promotes a retrogressive and sometimes even infantile type of person. »Retrogressive« is meant here in the psychological and not a purely musical sense.^{r*}

An illustration: A symphony of the Beethoven type, so-called classical, is one of the most highly integrated musical forms. The whole is everything; the part, that is to say, what the layman calls the melody, is relatively unimportant. Retrogressive listening to a symphony is listening which, instead of grasping that whole, dwells upon those melodies, just as if the symphony were structurally the same as a ballad. There exists today the tendency to listen to Beethoven's Fifth as if it were a set of quotations from Beethoven's Fifth. We have developed a larger framework of concepts such as atomistic listening and quotation listening, which lead us to the hypothesis that something like a musical children's language is taking shape.

As today a much larger number of people listen to music than in pre-radio days, it is difficult to compare today's mass-listening with what could be called the elite listening of the past. Even if we restrict ourselves, however, to select groups of today's listeners (say, those who listened to the Philharmonics in New York and Boston), one suspects that the Philharmonic listener of today listens in radio terms. A clear indication is the relation to serious advanced modern music. In the Wagnerian period, the elite listener was eager to follow the most daring musical exploits. Today the corresponding group is the firmest bulwark against musical progress and feels happy only if it is fed Beethoven's Seventh Symphony again and again.^{s*}

1. In analyzing the fan mail of an educational station in a rural section of the Middle West, which has been emphasizing serious music at regular hours with a highly skilled and resourceful announcer, one is struck by the apparent enthusiasm of the listener's reception, by the vast response, and by the belief in the highly progressive social function that this program was fulfilling.⁴ I have read all those letters and

^{r*} The analysis of retrogressive listening – retrogressive is meant here in a psychological and not purely musical sense – appears to us to be one of the most important tasks a social critique of radio music has to fulfil.*

^{s*} II.

Let us consider now the methodological aspects of a social critique of radio music. I suggest the following procedure: I shall give an example which may show you how I came to follow the present line, I shall then try to describe where we see the safeguard of our approach against arbitrariness and uncontrolled imagination, and finally, I shall say something about the relation between critical theory and empirical investigation in our work.*

cards very carefully. They are exuberant indeed. But they are enthusiastic in a manner that makes one feel uncomfortable. It is what might be called standardized enthusiasm. The communications are almost literally identical: »Dear X, Your Music Shop is swell. It widens my musical horizon and gives me an ever deeper feeling for the profound qualities of our great music. I can no longer bear the trashy jazz which we usually have to listen to. Continue with your grand work and let us have more of it.« No musical item was mentioned, no specific reference to any particular feature was made, no criticism was offered, although the programs were amateurish and planless.

It would do little good to explain the standard responses by reference to the difficulty in verbalizing musical experience: for anybody who has had profound musical experiences and finds it hard to verbalize them may stammer and use awkward expressions, but he would be reluctant, even if he knew no other, to cloak them in rubber stamp phrases. I am forced to another explanation. The listeners were strongly under the spell of the announcer as the personified voice of radio as a social institution, and they responded to his call to prove one's cultural level and education by appreciating this good music. But they actually failed to achieve that very appreciation which stamped them as cultured. They took refuge in repeating, often literally, the announcer's speeches on behalf of culture. Their behavior might be compared with that of the fanatical radio listener entering a bakery and asking for »that delicious, golden crispy Bond Bread«.

Another study led to a similar observation. A number of high school boys were subjected to an experiment concerning the role of »plugging« in achieving popularity for popular music. They identified, first, those songs played most frequently on the air during a given period – that is, those songs rating highest according to the *Variety* figures – with those they regarded as the most popular ones according to general opinion. Further, they identified those songs which they regarded as most popular with those they happened to like themselves. Here it is particularly opportune to make clear the approach of a social critique. If we took such a case in isolation, it might appear that radio, by a kind of Darwinian process of selection, actually plays most frequently those songs that are best liked by the people and is, therefore, fulfilling their demands. We know, however, from another section of our study, that the »plugging« of songs does not follow the response they elicit but the vested interests of song publishers.⁵ The identification of the successful with the most frequently played is thus an illusion, an illusion, to be sure, that may become an operating social force and in turn really make the much-played a success: because through

such an identification the listeners follow what they believe to be the crowd and thus come to constitute one.^{t*}

The standardization of production in this field, as in most others, goes so far that the listener virtually has no choice. Products are forced upon him. His freedom has ceased to exist. This process, however, if it were to work openly and undisguised, would promote a resistance which could easily endanger the whole system. The less the listener has to choose, the more is he made to believe that he has a choice: and the more the whole machine functions only for the sake of profit, the more must he be convinced that it is functioning for him and his sake only or, as it is put, as a public service. In radio we can witness today something very similar to those comic and paradoxical forms of competition between gasolines which do not differ in anything but their names. The consumer is unwilling to recognize that he is totally dependent and he likes to preserve the illusion of private initiative and free choice.^{u*} Thus standardization in radio produces its veil of pseudo-individualism. It is this veil which enforces upon us skepticism with regard to any first-hand information from listeners. We must try to understand them better than they understand themselves. This brings us easily into conflict with common sense notions, such as »giving the people what they want«.^{v*}

^{t*} This shows how problematic the notions of like and dislike in light music are, and shows further clearly the fruitful results which can be harvested from an approach based upon an understanding of standardization in radio and the commodity character of radio music.*

^{u*} The more standardization in radio proceeds, the more it must take into account the psychological trends of its listeners which consist in their unwillingness to know themselves to be totally dependent and their desire to see preserved private initiative and free choice.*

^{v*} Dr. Lazarsfeld once characterized my approach by a joke from the *New Yorker*: An old Negro cook who believes in metempsychosis shows to her mistress a dog playing in the street and hints at the probability that the dog might be the reincarnation of an old man. The mistress, well aware of her cook's crotchet, replies cautiously that this might easily be the case, but that the dog is playing with some children, which certainly would not be the thing for that old man to do. »That's all right«, replies the cook, »but I am not so sure about them children either.« I am afraid I have to take up the challenge and identify myself with the old Negro cook. In our situation we do not have on the one side the social mechanism like radio operating on human beings and on the other side human beings as a sort of *tabula rasa*. I not only suspect radio, but I'm not so sure about the listener's primary reactions even in cases where they appear to be non-standardized, spontaneous, and differentiated, for they may still depend on the standardizing agency. Only by means of a fundamental social critique are we able to arrive at such insights, and I do not regard it as scientifically odd in this field that in a good many cases results that are partly deduced from theoretical viewpoints come closer to reality than »facts« which, as we penetrate them seriously, may show a meaning opposite to what they pretend to be.*

2. This raises the question of controls and safeguards against biased imagination.^{w*} Music is not a realm of subjective tastes and relative values, except to those who do not want to undergo the discipline of the subject matter. As soon as one enters the field of musical technology and structure, the arbitrariness of evaluation vanishes, and we are faced with decisions about right and wrong and true and false. I should like to give some examples of what I call musico-technological control of sociological interpretation. I mentioned above the social tendency toward a pseudo-individualism to hide the increase of standardization. This tendency in today's mass-produced music can be expressed in precise technical terms. Musical analysis can furnish us with plenty of materials which manifest, so far as rhythmical patterns, sound combinations, melodic and harmonic structures are concerned, that even apparently divergent schools of popular music, such as sweet and swing, are essentially the same. It can further be shown that their differences have no bearing on the musical essence itself. It can be shown that each band has assumed certain mannerisms with no musical function and no other purpose than to make it easier for the listener to recognize the particular band – such as, say, the musically nonsensical staccati with which Guy Lombardo likes to end certain legato phrases.^{x*}

And now an example from the field of serious music.^{y*} If we analyze a score of a Beethoven symphony in terms of all the thematic and dynamic interrelationships defined in the music, develop the necessary conditions of fulfilling its prescriptions by a performance, and then analyze the extent to which these prescriptions can be realized by radio, the proposition that symphonic music and the radio are incompatible becomes concretely defined and, so to speak, measurable. Here again the formulation of research problems is affected by our critical

^{w*} If we regard listener reactions mainly as a function of the existing system and not as final data upon which interpretation should be based, the social processes working on the listeners are then susceptible to a socio-scientific analysis – as distinct from a natural-scientific analysis which accepts the world as given, because it can find no other way to take it. And it is the exactitude of this analysis which I regard as our foremost bulwark against arbitrariness. The danger of arbitrariness cannot be easily dismissed, and it certainly prevails as long as we move in the field of sociological generalities. Fortunately, however, in musical research we have some means of overcoming this danger.*

^{x*} Such statements bring notions like pseudo-individualization of standardized products into empirical relief.*

^{y*} If we make a sociological statement like the following, »Symphonic music is conceived in terms of uniqueness of performance and therefore is in contradiction to mass reproduction«, this would be an abstract proposition whose relation to research problems would be open to great skepticism.*

outlook. I suspect people listen to serious music largely in terms of entertainment.^{z*} Our technical analysis allows us to formulate this suspicion in exact terms. Studies on the »Radio Voice« have shown that with regard to such categories as the prevalence of sound colors, emphasis on detail, the isolation of the main tune, and similar features, the symphony on the air becomes a piece of entertainment. Consequently it would be absurd to maintain that it could be received by the listeners as anything but entertainment.^{aa*}

3. Entertainment may have its uses, but a recognition of radio music as such would shatter the listener's artificially fostered belief that they are dealing with the world's greatest music.

^{z*} Such a suspicion is certainly justified in a situation where we know from other fields of cultural activity (such as the motion picture or novel reading) to what extent the idea of entertainment replaces today the conscious, responsible and concentrated reception of art.*

^{aa*} And our empirical procedure would now be to formulate research problems concerning those musical criteria by which it is made entertainment and to show the extent to which they impose themselves on the listeners and the extent to which they interfere with the listener's artificially fostered belief that they are dealing with the world's greatest music.*

3 The Radio Symphony: An Experiment in Theory^a

The Problem

To make a study of what radio transmission does musically to a musical structure or to different kinds of music would be a vast undertaking. It involves problems of a great many types and levels, concerning the material and the technicalities of transmission,^b which can be solved only by the close collaboration of analytically minded musicians, social scientists, and experts on radio engineering. Here would appear the problem of the role played in traditional serious music by the »original« – that is, the live performance one actually experiences,

^a The author wishes to express his indebtedness for editorial assistance to Joseph Maier and George Simpson.¹

^b Of the related problems, which may very well basically affect the structure and the meaning of broadcast music, we refer only to one: the problem of the hear-stripe. Even if the set functions properly, the »current«, namely, the thermal noises, can be heard. These continuous noises constitute a hear-stripe. The hear-stripe, which of course varies with the quality of the set, tends to disappear from the musical surface as soon as the performance takes shape. But it still can be heard underneath the music. It may not attract any attention and it may not even enter the listener's consciousness; but as an objective characteristic of the phenomenon it plays a part in the apperception of the whole.

One might venture to suggest that the psychological effect of the hear-stripe is somewhat similar to the awareness of the screen in the movies: music appearing upon such a hear stripe may bear a certain image-like character of its own. Since at the present stage in technical development – particularly by means of FM – this undercurrent of noise is supposed to be abolished, the present study does not take into broader consideration this particular aspect of the field.

as compared with mass reproduction on the radio. Or one would have to investigate to what extent the technical conditions of jazz in themselves establish a configuration of quasi-mechanized technique with quasi-subjective expression weirdly analogous to that of the actual mechanization of radio transmission with the quasi-expressive ballads with which our radio programs are jammed. Attention must be accorded to chamber music, which structurally is best suited to radio transmission but which, for socio-psychological reasons, is very rarely heard over the air.^c

It is not our intention to do more than suggest the significance of such problems here. Instead of elaborating them systematically to their fullest extent, we restrict ourselves to one example analyzed in detail in order to demonstrate concretely the implications as well as the complexity of the field. We are primarily concerned with pointing out the fact that serious music as communicated over the ether may indeed offer optimum conditions for retrogressive tendencies in listening, for the avalanche of fetishism which is overtaking music and burying it under the moraine of entertainment. The statement of the problem and the model analysis which we offer here are in the nature of a challenge to musical and social research. We are undertaking an experiment in theory.

The subject matter of this experiment in theory is the fate of the symphony and, more specifically, of the Beethoven symphony, when it is transmitted by radio. The reasons for this approach are sociological and musical. A typical statement exhibiting official optimism presents claims that today »the farmers wives in the prairie states listen to great music performed by great artists as they go about their morning housework«.^d The Beethoven symphony is popularly identified with such great music. The truth or falsity of such complacent statements

^c The fact that a majority of listeners prefer »symphonic« music to chamber music can be accounted for as follows:

- a.) the factor of primitive and spectacular strength of sound, its »publicity character«;
- b.) a multicolored structure is more attractive to the untrained ear than a unicolored one;
- c.) the specific symphonic intensity and emphasis, a feature, in which chamber music is more or less lacking;
- d.) the structure of symphonic music of the »classical« period is often simpler than that of chamber music of the same period. This holds good particularly for the question of polyphony. The texture of classical chamber music is generally more polyphonus than that of symphonies. Polyphony, however, to most listeners is the main obstacle to understanding.

^d Dixon Skinner, »Music Goes into Mass Production«, *Harper's Magazine*, April, 1939, p. 487.

concerning the spreading of great music, however, can be gleaned only by an investigation into their presuppositions, namely, the naive identification of a broadcast with the presentation of a live symphony.

The musical reasons for the choice of the symphony as instance become clear in the course of the analysis. Beethoven is selected not only because he is the standard classic of cultural sales talk in music, but also because his music exhibits most clearly some of the features we regard as particularly affected by radio transmission. Earlier symphonic music is less exposed to changes by radio because the problem of sound volume and the issue of dynamic development play a lesser role than in Beethoven; the later romantic symphony is less characteristic because it does not offer the central problem of the radio symphony: the problem of the fate of the »integral form«.

Characteristics of the Symphony

Even those who optimistically assume that radio brings great symphonic music to people who never heard it before, concede that symphonies brought to the overburdened hypothetical farmer in the Middle West are somewhat affected and deteriorated by radio transmission. But in principle they maintain that these differences matter only to the musical snobs^e who know so much about music in general and about symphonic music in particular. The finer shades and differences – so they say – are of no importance to the layman who must first become acquainted with the material. Better a symphony that is not quite as good as it is supposed to be in Carnegie Hall, than no symphony at all. Whoever dares to oppose such a view is likely to be regarded as an esthete who has no true sympathy for the needs and desires of the people. Yet the social analyst must risk being castigated as a misanthrope if he is to pursue social essence, as distinct from the façade.

Analysis of a radio symphony must rid itself of the common sense view that the alterations brought about by radio have no significant bearing on the symphonic purpose. To begin with, it must cast-off the conventional definition of symphony which asserts that it is merely a sonata for orchestra.^f For insight into the changes a Beethoven symphony suffers in radio transmission depends upon the specific understanding of symphonic form as it crystallized and maintained itself in the comparatively short period of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

^e Cf. Robert West, *S-o-o-o-o You're Going on the Air* (New York: Rodin, 1934), p. 56.

^f Bekker, *Die Sinfonie von Beethoven bis Mahler*, Berlin 1918, p. 8.

This specific understanding is not furthered by analyzing the symphony in stereotyped terms such as exposition, development, repetition, or even more subtle ones such as the antagonism of the two main subjects of the exposition,^g their »bridge«, their conclusion, the way they develop and undergo their modified recurrence. However easy it may be to identify all those typical constituents of form in every Beethoven symphony, they are essential not abstractly, but only within the interplay of the inexchangeable content of each work. Such schematic identification actually is *too* easy: any approach starting from the mere recognition of those invariants, tends to deliver listening up to a mechanical process in which any symphony can be replaced by any other which has the same framework.

If reference to those terms does not add much in the actual following of a specific work, it is even less helpful in achieving an understanding of the meaning and function of symphonic form *per se*.^{h*}

^g The »dualism« of themes which is, by most commentators, urged as the main characteristic of the sonata form in general and the symphonic form in particular, actually plays only a minor role in Beethoven. Generally the »second« theme is by no means in marked contrast to the first theme (as it is, for instance, in the first movement of romantic symphonies even as early as Schubert's C major and B minor) but is carefully »mediated« with the first theme to avoid any sharp contrast which might endanger the unity of the whole movement. Further, in Beethoven the so-called second theme is very seldom »one« theme but, in most cases, a unity of manifold thematic ingredients so that it is often difficult to identify one particular thematic *Gestalt* as »the« second theme. This is especially apparent in one of Beethoven's most famous symphonic pieces, the first movement of the Ninth Symphony. The replacement of the actual Beethoven symphony by patterns of late romanticism is reflected even in the way in which musical commentators talk about it: they mistake it for Tchaikovsky.

^{h*} The late German musicologist, Paul Bekker, in a paper on the symphony from Beethoven to Mahler, has stated the problem very clearly. »A sonata for orchestra, that does not say anything«, for it does not explain »why Beethoven did write that sonata especially for orchestra« (Paul Bekker, *op. cit.*, p. 8, a paper read before the Frankfurt/M. »Vereinigung für neue Kunst« in 1918). The notion of sonata does not convey what is essential for symphony: that the idea of the sound *volume* determined the choice of the orchestra as a medium. The reason that Bekker advances for this, is that Beethoven, while executing a symphonic device, »was at the same time composing an ideal picture of space and audience« (*ibid.*, p. 13). From here he proceeds to what he regards as the essence of symphony: its power to »create a community« (*ibid.*, p. 17).

No doubt, Bekker's theory is open to a great deal of criticism. He still remains within the sphere of German nineteenth century aesthetics, particularly of Wagnerian wish-fantasies, when attributing to symphony the power of creating a community within a world where the individuals are so radically alienated from one another that the attempt to bridge the gulf between them cannot possibly be restricted to the realm of art, but must touch upon the very structure of society itself. If, on the other hand, he conceives of the power of symphony merely in terms of the

What characterizes a symphony when experienced in immediate listening, as distinct not only from chamber music, but also from orchestral forms such as the suite or the »tone poem«, is a particular intensity and concentration.^{i*} This intensity rests musically upon the incomparably greater density and concision of thematic relationships of the symphonic as against other forms. This density and concision are strictly technical and not merely a by-product of expression. They imply first a complete economy of craft; that is to say, a truly symphonic movement contains nothing fortuitous, every bit is ultimately traceable to very small basic elements, and is deduced from them and not introduced, as it were, from outside, as in romantic music.^j

Secondly, this economy itself does not reside in a static identity, as in preclassical music. It is not content with mere repetition, but is intrinsically bound up with variation. If everything in a Beethoven

Footnote h* (*cont.*)

ephemeral feeling of elation and togetherness of the audience during the performance, he is thinking of that power in terms of a means to produce psychological drunkenness. This drunkenness, however – the notion was first critically developed by Nietzsche against Wagner – tends less to unite men than to make them forget that they are disunited. Such ambiguities are caused by too great an aloofness from the technical musical processes within symphony. His vagueness in matters of composition forces him to have recourse to such problematic psychological notions as Beethoven's »picture of an audience«. Yet, apart from its obvious shortcomings, Bekker's theory expresses something deeper than the usual formalistic reference to the symphonic schedule. One must only transfer it from the sphere of sociological generalities to the inherent technicalities of symphony, in order to arrive at a more precise social identification of symphony.*

^{i*} As against Bekker, the medium in which the individuality of the listener is sublated and integrated is no community, either real or fictitious, but the organizing principle of the work of art itself, which is pointing, in a mediated manner only, to the possibility of a real community. In other words, the process of integrating and sub-lating the individual into a whole, is represented by a proper musical process. While the purely musical moments correspond to the »individuals«, the totality of the work of art corresponds to the production and reproduction of social life.*

^j Extreme examples of this characteristic are evident in some few works of Beethoven in which the first and second themes are actually identical and only presented in a different mode, as in the first movement of the »Appassionata«. Such cases are exceptions, but only in the sense that they bring to the fore a tendency which operates to one degree or another latently throughout Beethoven's mature works. The identity of the basic motifical content of apparently widely divergent themes of a Beethoven movement can be demonstrated in a less obvious yet striking example – the »Waldstein Sonata«. Here the character of the second theme, in E major – its »cantability« – is actually very different from the character of the first theme in C major – its quick pulsation. Yet the second theme is based upon an »inversion« of the intervals of the first theme, within the space of a fifth. One may characterize this technique in Beethoven as that of universal variation. In later composers this technique has been employed only by Brahms and by the Schönberg school to any large extent.

symphony is identical in its ultimate motifical content, nothing is literally identical in the sense of plain repetition, but everything is »different« according to the function it exercises within the development of the whole. A Beethoven symphonic movement is essentially the unity of a manifold as well as the manifoldness of a unity, namely, of the identical thematic material. This interrelationship of perpetual variation is unfolded as a process – never through mere »statement of detail«. It is the most completely organized piece of music that can be achieved. Every detail, however spontaneous in emphasis, is absorbed in the whole by its very spontaneity and gets its true weight only by its relation to the whole, as revealed finally by the symphonic process. Structurally, one hears the first bar of a Beethoven symphonic movement only at the very moment when one hears the last bar. Romanticism failed to produce symphonic works of this exacting character because the increase in importance of the expressive detail as against the whole, rendered impossible the determination of every moment by the totality. While listening to a typical romantic symphony one remains fully conscious, sometimes all too conscious,^k of the time it consumes, despite the immensely progressive novelty of the details. With Beethoven it is different. The density of thematic interwovenness, of »antiphonic« work, tends to produce what one might call a suspension of time consciousness.

When a movement like the first of Beethoven's Fifth or Seventh Symphonies, or even a very long one such as the first of the »Eroica« is performed adequately, one has the feeling that the movement does not take seven or fifteen minutes or more, but virtually one moment. It is this very power of symphonic contraction of time which annihilates, for the duration of the adequate performance, the contingencies of the listener's private existence – thus constituting the actual basis of those experiences which, in commentator phraseology, are called the elatedness of an audience as a result of the sublimity of the symphony.

The Role of Sound Intensity

To what extent are the inherent constituents of the Beethoven symphonic form realized by radio?

To start from the most primitive fact about symphonic music: it may be stated in terms of »absolute dynamics«, the meaning of which is well-known from the visual sphere, particularly from architecture. A cathedral acquires an essential condition of its actual function, as well as its aesthetic meaning, only in proportion to the human body.

^k The famous slogan about Schubert's »heavenly lengths« applies to this fact.

A model of a cathedral in table size is something totally different from the actual cathedral, not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. On the Campo Santo in Genoa, there is a tomb in the form of a diminutive imitation of the Milan dome. The building itself, which is of highly questionable architectural value, becomes plainly ridiculous in miniature: the impression one has is much like the one received upon seeing the sugar-coated architecture of wedding cakes. The question of absolute dimensions in architecture has its counterpart in music in the question of absolute dynamics.

The power of a symphony to »absorb« its parts into the organized whole depends, in part, upon the sound volume. Only if the sound is »larger«, as it were, than the individual so as to enable him to »enter« the door of the sound as he would enter through the door of a cathedral, may he really become aware of the possibility of merging with the totality which structurally does not leave any loophole. The element of being larger may be construed comparatively in terms of the intensity range; that is to say, the intensity range of symphonic sound must be larger, because of the exigencies of symphonic form, than any musical range the individual listener can conceive of producing himself either by singing or playing.¹ Absolute symphonic dimensions, furthermore, carry with them the existence of an experience which it is difficult to render even in rough terms, but which is, nonetheless, fundamental in the apperception of symphony and is the true musical objective of technical discussion of auditory perspective: the experience of symphonic space. To »enter« a symphony means to listen to it not only as to something before one, but as something around one as well, as a medium in which one »lives«. It is this surrounding quality that comes closest to the idea of symphonic absorption.

All these qualities are radically affected by radio. The sound is no longer »larger« than the individual. In the private room, that magnitude of sound causes disproportions which the listener mutes down. The »surrounding« function of music also disappears, partly because of the diminutions of absolute dimensions, partly because of the monaural conditions of radio broadcasting. What is left of the symphony even in the ideal case of an adequate reproduction of sound colors, is a mere chamber symphony.^m If the symphony today reaches masses who

¹ This largeness of sound has nothing to do with noisiness, but simply with the necessity for enclosing the listener. It is not a matter of loudness but of a wide range between minimum and maximum sound.

^m Here, as in innumerable other cases, radio is an executor of musical and social tendencies which have developed extraneous to it. In musical production itself, independent of radio, the form of chamber symphony and other hybrids between

have never before been in touch with it, it does so in a way in which their collective aspect and what might be called the collective aspect of the symphony itself, are practically eliminated from the musical pattern – which becomes, as it were, a piece of furniture of the private room.

One must be careful not to derive therefrom a premature judgment on radio, or try to »save« music from it. The abolition of the »surrounding« quality of music on the radio has its progressive aspects. This »surrounding« quality of music is certainly part of music's function as a drug, the criticism of which, inaugurated by Nietzsche and revived by such contemporary writers as Jean Cocteau, is justified and has been considerably furthered by radio. The drug tendency is very clear in Wagner where the mere magnitude of the sound, into whose waves the listener can dive, is one of the means of catching the listeners, quite apart from any specific musical content. In Beethoven, where the musical content is highly articulate, the largeness of the sound does not have this irrational function, but is the more intrinsically connected with the structural devices of the work, and is therefore also the more deeply affected by broadcasting. Paradoxical as it may appear, a Beethoven symphony becomes more problematical as a broadcast than the music of a Wagner opera.

Threat to the Structure

This may be made clear by such a well-known piece of music as the first movement of the Fifth Symphony. It is characterized by its simplicity. A very short and precise motif, the one with which it opens, is conveyed by an unabating intensity of presentation. Throughout the movement it remains clearly recognizable as the same motif: its rhythm is vigorously maintained. Yet there is no mere repetition, but development: the melodic content of the basic rhythm, that is to say, the intervals which constitute it, change perpetually; it gains structural perspective by wandering from one instrument or instrumental group

Footnote m* (*cont.*)

orchestra and chamber music, have gained an ever-increasing importance, since Schönberg's *Kammersymphonie* (1906). Whatever the merits of this development for composition itself, the transformation of a Beethoven symphony into a *Kammersymphonie* by radio, certainly undermines what is conventionally regarded as a main asset of radio transmission, namely, its seemingly collective message. It is hard to reconcile the experience of collectivity with that of »chamber«. The German musicologist, Paul Bekker, went so far as to define symphony by its collective message, by its community-building power. Obviously, this theory loses its point when the situation of symphony listeners becomes one of complete atomization, such as symbolized by millions of individuals scattered among their various »chambers«, at the same time as the symphony they get is a chamber symphony.

to another and appearing sometimes in the foreground as a main event, at other times as a mere background and accompaniment. Above all, it is presented in gradations, dynamic developments, the continuity of which is achieved through the identity of the basic material. At the same time, this identity is modified by the different dynamic grades in which the basic motif occurs. Thus the simplicity of the movement is inextricably bound up with an elaborate richness of texture: the richness prevents the simple from becoming primitive, while simplicity prevents richness from dissipation into mere details. It is this unity within the manifold as well as this manifoldness within that unity which constitute the antiphonic work finally terminating in the suspension of time-consciousness. This interrelationship of unity and manifoldness, and not only the loudness of the sound, is itself affected by the dynamic reductions of radio.

First of all, the whole building up of the movement upon the one simple motif – the creation *ex nihilo*, as it were, which is so highly significant in Beethoven^{n*} – can be made understandable only if the motif, which is actually nothing in itself, is presented in such a way that from the very beginning it is underscored as the substance of everything that is to come. The first bars of the Fifth Symphony, if rightly performed, must possess the characteristic of a »statement«, of a »positing«.^{o*} This positing characteristic, however, can be achieved only by the utmost dynamic intensity. Hence, the question of loudness ceases to be a purely external one and affects the very structure of symphony. Presented without the dynamic emphasis which makes out of the Nothing of the first bars virtually the Everything of the total movement, the idea of the work is missed before it has been actually started. The suspension of time-consciousness is endangered from the very beginning: the simple, no longer emphasized in its paradoxical nature as Nothing and Everything, threatens to degenerate into the trite if the »nothingness« of the beginning fails to be absorbed into the whole by the impetus of the statement. The tension is broken and the whole movement is on the verge of relapsing into time.

It is threatened, even more, by the compression of the dynamic range. Only if the motif can develop from the restrained pianissimo to the striking yet affirming fortissimo, is it actually revealed as the »cell« which represents the whole even when exposed as a mere monad. Only within the tension of such a gradation does its repetition become more than repetition. The more the gradation is compressed – which

^{n*} as well as for the German philosophy of his time*

^{o*} [. . .] a »statement«, or, as those German idealist philosophers would have put it, of a »positing«, a *Setzung*.*

is necessarily the case in radio – the less this tension is felt. Dynamic repetition is replaced by a mere ornamental, tectonic one. The movement loses its character of process and the static repetition becomes purposeless: the material repeated is so simple that it requires no repetition to be understood. Though something of the tension is still preserved by radio, it does not suffice. The Beethoven tension obtains its true significance in the range from Nothing to All. As soon as it is reduced to the medium-range between *piano* and *forte*, the Beethoven symphony is deprived of the secret of origin as well as the might of unveiling.

It could be argued that all these changes by radio turned the symphony into a work of chamber music which, although different from symphony, has merits of its own. A symphony, conceived in symphonic terms, however, would necessarily become a bad work of chamber music. Its symphonic simplicity would make itself felt as poverty in chamber music texture, as lack of polyphonous interwovenness of parts as well as want of extensive melodic lines developed simultaneously. Simplicity would cease to function in the symphonic way. Clearly, a Beethoven symphony played on the piano by four hands, although it is only a one-color reproduction, is to be preferred to a chamber music arrangement, because it still preserves something of the specifically symphonic attack by fingers striking the keys, whereas that value is destroyed by the softened chamber music arrangement, which, by virtue of its mere arrangedness, easily approaches the sound of the so-called salon orchestra. Radio symphony bears a stronger resemblance to the chamber music transcription than to the simple yet faithful translation into the mere piano sound. Its colorfulness is as questionable as it would be in a salon arrangement. For the sound colors, too, are affected on the air, and it is through their deterioration that the work becomes bad chamber music. Symphonic richness is distorted no less than symphonic simplicity. While trying to keep the symphonic texture as plain and transparent as possible, Beethoven articulates it by attaching the smallest units of motifical construction to as many different instruments and instrumental groups as possible. These smallest units together form the surface of an outspoken melody, while their coloristic differentiation realizes at the same time the construction and all its interrelationships underneath the surface. The finer the shades of motifical interrelationships within the construction, the finer necessarily the shades of changing sound colors. These essential subtleties more than anything else tend to be effaced by radio. While exaggerating conspicuous contrast, radio's neutralization of sound colors practically blots out precisely those minute differences upon which the classical

orchestra is built as against the Wagnerian, which has much larger coloristic means at its disposal.

Richard Strauss, in his edition of Berlioz' *Treatise on Instrumentation*, observes that the second violins – never quite so brilliant and intense as the first violins – are different instruments, so to speak, from the first.^p Such differences play a decisive part in the Beethovenian articulation of symphonic texture: a single melody, subdivided between first violins, second violins and violas, becomes plastic according to the instrumental disposition – that is to say, the elements of the melody which are meant to be decisive are played by the first violins while those intended rather as incidental are played by the second violins or violas. At the same time, their unity is maintained by the fact that they are all strings playing in the same tonal region. Radio achieves only unity, whereas differences such as those between first and second violins are automatically eliminated. Moreover, certain sound colors, like that of the oboe, are changed to such an extent that the instrumental equilibrium is thrown out of joint. All these colors are more than mere means of instrumental make-up, that is, are integral parts of the composition which they as well as the dynamics articulate; their alteration consummates the damage wreaked by radio upon symphonic structure. The less articulate symphony becomes, the more does it lose its character of unity and deteriorates into a conventional and simultaneously slack sequence, consisting of the recurrence of neat tunes whose interrelation is of no import whatever. Thus it becomes ever more apparent why it is Beethoven who falls victim to radio rather than Wagner and late romanticism. For it is in Beethoven that the idea of articulate unity constitutes the essence of the symphonic scheme. This unity is achieved by a severe economy of means forbidding their reduction, which is inevitable by radio.

Trivialization

In the light of the preceding analysis, the hackneyed argument that radio, by bringing symphony to those formerly unfamiliar with it, compensates for its slight alterations tilts over into its opposite: the less the listeners know the works in their original form, the more is their total impression necessarily erroneously based on the specific radio phenomena delivered to them. And these phenomena are, in addition, far from being structurally consistent. One is tempted to call them contradictory in themselves. A process of polarization sets in through

^p Hector Berlioz, *Instrumentationslehre*, edited by Richard Strauss (Leipzig: Peters, n. d.), p. 64.

radio transmission of the symphony: it becomes trivialized and romanticized at the same time.

The trivialization of symphony, first of all, is bound up with its relapse into time. The compression of symphonic time is relaxed because the technical prerequisites have been made blunt. The time the radio symphony consumes is empirical time. It is in ironic keeping with the technical limitations imposed by radio on the live symphony that they are accompanied by the listener's capacity to turn off the music whenever he pleases. He can arbitrarily supersede it in contrast to the concert hall performance where he is forced, as it were, to obey its laws. It may be questioned whether symphonic elation is really possible or desirable. At any rate, radio expedites its liquidation. Its very sound tends to undermine the idea of spell, of uniqueness and of »great music«, which are ballyhooed by radio sales talk.

But not only the spell and the high-flown notion of symphonic totality falls victim to mechanization. The decline of the unity, which is the essence of symphony, is concomitant with a decay of the manifold comprehended by it. The symphonic particulars become atoms. The tendency toward atomistic listening obtains its exact and objective technical foundation through radio transmission.^q The meaning of the music automatically shifts from the totality to the individual moments because their interrelation and articulation by dynamics and colors is no longer fully affected. These moments become semi-independent episodes, organized mainly by their chronological succession.

The symphony has often been compared with the drama. Though this comparison tends to overemphasize the dualistic character, the dialogue aspect of symphony, it must still be admitted that it is justified insofar as the symphony aims at an »intensive« totality, an instantaneous focusing of an »idea« rather than an extensive totality of »life« unfolding itself within empirical time.^r It is in this sense that the radio symphony ceases to be a drama and becomes an epical form, or, to make the comparison in less archaic terms, a narrative. And narrative it becomes in an even more literal sense too. The particular, when chipped off from the unity of the symphony, still retains a trace of the unity in which it functioned. A genuine symphonic theme, even if it takes the whole musical stage, and seems to be temporarily

^q This tendency is perhaps the most universal of present-day listening on the sheerly musical level. It is furthered by features as divergent as musical recognition contests that put chief emphasis on the isolated detail, the »theme«, just as books that tell the reader how to memorize the main tunes of famous symphonies by subjecting them to certain words, and the standardization of popular music where the whole is so stereotyped that only the detail fetches the listener's attention.

^r Cf. Georg Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans* (Berlin: Cassirer, 1920), p. 31.

hypostatized and to desert the rest of the music, is nonetheless of such a kind as to impress upon one that it is actually nothing in itself but basically something made »out of« something else. Even in its isolation it bears the mark of the whole. As this whole, however, is not adequately realized in the phenomenon that appears over the air, the theme, or an individual symphonic moment, is presented like something from a context itself blurred or even absent. In other words, through radio, the individual elements of symphony acquire the character of quotation. Radio symphony appears as a medley or potpourri insofar as the musical atoms it offers up acquire the touch of having been picked up somewhere else and put together in a kind of montage. What is heard is not Beethoven's Fifth but merely musical information from and about Beethoven's Fifth. The commentator, in expropriating the listener's own spontaneity of judgment by prating about the marvels of the world's immortal music, is merely the human executor of the trend inherent in music on the air, which, by reassembling fragments from a context not itself in evidence, seems to be continually offering the reassurance: »This is Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.« The image-character of radio cannot be altogether explained by abstract reference to physical conditions alone, but these conditions must be shown at work on the symphonic structure, wrecking havoc on musical sense.

Quotation Listening

The issue of »quotation« is inseparably bound up with the structure and significance of symphonic themes themselves. Sententious precision which summarizes the meaning of preceding dramatic development or situation, is an age-old ingredient of dramatic structure. The sententious passages, by reflecting upon the action, detach themselves from the immediacy of the action itself. Through this detachment they become reified, emphasized, and facily quotable. The abstract generality of maxims for practical life into which they translate the concrete idea of the drama, brings them close to the banal. At times the sententious moments supersede concrete dramatic sense altogether. There is the revealing joke about elderly ladies who express delight in *Hamlet* with the single reservation that it consists of quotations. In the realm of music, radio has realized a similar tendency and has transformed Beethoven's Fifth Symphony into a set of quotations from theme songs.

The symphonic theme of the Beethoven period may structurally very well be compared with the sententious element of the drama. It consists in most cases of the triad. It is based on the triad harmonically

and it circumscribes the triad melodically. As the triad is the general principle of major-minor tonality, the triadic theme has a touch of »generality« itself; it is, to a great extent, interchangeable with other triadic themes. The striking similarity between the material of movements as totally different as the Finale of Mozart's G minor Symphony from the Scherzo of Beethoven's Fifth, bears witness to this generality. This generality of symphonic theme is balanced by its precision, which is in the main achieved by one short and distinct rhythmical formula apt to be remembered as well as to be repeated. Musical commentators have often compared symphonic themes with mottoes in literature, and German musicology frequently alludes to »head motives« (*Kopfmotive*) as opening a symphonic movement.

All this points up the sententious character of the symphonic theme. It is this character that offers the theme up to the process of trivialization by radio. The triviality characteristic of live symphonic themes serves a double purpose: that of »generality« transcending the specific case in which they appear, and their existence as a mere material for self-development. Radio interferes with both these purposes. Being atomized, the symphonic theme fails to show its »generality«. It calls for significance just as it is. From the viewpoint of consistent symphonic construction it would be possible to imagine a substitute for the famous second theme of the first movement of Schubert's B minor Symphony – the so-called »Unfinished«. The radio listener who does not care much for the movement and waits for the theme would get the shock of his life if it were replaced by another. Moreover, the theme that sticks out because it has lost its dynamic function, can no longer fulfill its truly musical role – which is to serve as a mere material of what follows – as soon as everything that follows is visualized only from the viewpoint of the undeveloped material of the theme. Hence, in the isolation of the symphonic theme, only the trivial remains. And in turn it is the triviality of the symphonic detail which makes it so easy to remember and own it as a commodity under the more general trademark of »culture«.

For by sounding like a quotation – the quintessence of the whole – the trivialized theme assumes a peculiar air of authority, which gives it cultural tone. Only what is established and accepted as a standard social value is quoted, and the anxiety of the listeners to recognize the so-called Great Symphonies by their quotable themes is mainly due to their desire to identify themselves with the standards of the accepted and to prove themselves to be small cultural owners within big ownership culture. This tendency again springs from the »electrocution« of symphony by radio, without taking into account radio's social authoritarianism. It has already been mentioned that radio tends to

present symphony as a series of results rather than a process. The more a particular result is set off against the process in which it gains creation, the more it ceases to be »the problem« of its own treatment. Within the symphonic process the theme has its fate. It is »disputed«; by radio the theme becomes definite. In the process of symphonic development it is not conceived as something rigid but fluent, even in its seemingly dogmatic first presentation. By radio even its musically remote transformations sound like themes of their own. If one could say, exaggeratedly, that in symphonic music nothing is theme and everything is development – which holds good literally for some modern symphonic music, particularly for Mahler – one could say as well that by radio everything becomes »theme«. The emphasis which every symphonic moment acquires through the radio voice is unlike the emphasis which the symphonic theme possesses in its live »positing«. As positing, it owes its emphasis to the potentiality for process which it contains within itself. By radio it becomes emphasized because that process has been broken through and the theme absolutizes itself in its mere present subsistence, in its being as it is. It is this literal-minded and pharisaical self-righteousness of the theme which transforms it into quotation.

It must be emphasized that the substitution of quotation for reproduction does not mean a greater faithfulness to the original but just the opposite. Quotation is reproduction in its decline. While genuine reproduction would stand in a tension-like relation to its object and realizes it by again »producing« it, quotation-reproduction sheds all spontaneity, dissolves all tension toward the object and seizes upon all particulars of the object as fixed and reified items. It is essential to the object, that is, the symphonic original, that it be reproduced in the sense of being produced again rather than of being photographed in degenerated colors and modified proportions. A Beethoven symphony is essentially a process; if that process is replaced by a presentation of frozen items, the performance is faithless even if executed under the battle cry of the utmost fidelity to the letter.

Romantization

Radio symphony promotes the romantization of music no less than its trivialization. The authoritarian theme, the »result« replacing the process and thus destroying symphonic spell, acquires a spell of its own. The history of symphonic musical production after Beethoven itself reveals a shift from the totality aspect to the detail which bears a strong resemblance to the shift which the Beethoven symphony suffers through radio. The shift after Beethoven took place in the name

of subjective expression. Lyrical expression tends to emphasize the atom and separate it from any comprehensive »objective« order. Radio disintegrates classical music in much the same way as romanticism reacted to it. If radio atomizes and trivializes Beethoven, it simultaneously renders the atoms more »expressive«, as it were, than they had been before. The weight which falls upon the isolated detail conveys to it an importance that it never has in its context. And it is this air of importance that makes it seem to »signify« or express something all the time, whereas in the original the expression is mediated by the whole. Consonantly, radio publicity proclaims the »inspiration« of symphonic themes, although precisely in Beethoven the movement, if anything, is inspired and not the theme. It is the romantic notion of melodic inventiveness which radio projects upon classical music strictly so-called. Details are deified as well as reified.

This has paradoxical consequences. One might expect that radio, since it affects the freshness of sound colors, makes them less conspicuous than in live music. Precisely the opposite is true. Together with the structural totality there vanishes in radio the process of musical spontaneity, of musical »thinking« of the whole by the listener. (The notion of musical thinking refers to everything in musical apperception that goes beyond the mere presence of the sensual stimulus.) The less the radio phenomenon evokes such thinking, the greater is the emphasis on the sensual side as compared with live music, where the sensual qualities are in themselves »better«. The structural element of music – the element that is defamed by many listeners as »intellectual« though it constitutes the concreteness of the musical phenomenon even more than the sound – is skipped over, and they content themselves with the stimuli remaining, however shop-worn these stimuli may be. In romantic music and even in the romantic interpretation of Beethoven, those stimuli actually were the bearers of musical »expression«. Deteriorated as they are now, they still maintain something of their romantic glamour. Certain of them today, through the radio, assume such a glamour even though they never had it before, because their institutionalization casts about them a social validity which listeners credit to the music. That is why the atoms, sentimentalized by radio through the combination of triviality and expressiveness, reflect something of the spell which the totality has lost. To be sure, it is not the same spell. It is rather the spell of the commodity whose values are adored by its customers.

In the symphonic field those works surrender themselves to radio most readily which are conglomerates of tunes of both sensual richness and structural poverty – tunes making unnecessary the process of thinking which is anyhow restrained by the way the phenomenon

comes out of the radio set. The preference for Tchaikovsky among radio listeners is as significant a commentary on the inherent nature of the radio voice as on the broader social issues of contemporary listening habits. Moreover, it is very likely that Beethoven is listened to in terms of Tchaikovsky. The thesis that music by radio is no longer quite »serious« implies that radio music already prejudices the capacity to listen in a spontaneous and conscious way. The radio voice does not present the listeners with material adequate to such desiderata. They are forced to passive sensual and emotional acceptance of predigested yet disconnected qualities, whereas those qualities at the same time become mummified and magicized.

Is Symphonic Music »Spread«?

This shows the necessity for starting from the sphere of the reproduction of musical works by radio instead of from an analysis of listener's reactions. The latter presupposes a kind of naive realism with respect to such notions as symphony or »great music« on the air. If that music is fundamentally different from what it is supposed to be, listener's statements about their reactions to it must be evaluated accordingly. There is no justification for unqualifiedly accepting the listener's word about his sudden delight in a Beethoven symphony, if that symphony is changed the very moment it is broadcast into something closely akin to entertainment. Further, the analysis invalidates the optimistic idea that the knowledge of the deteriorated or even »dissolved« radio symphony may be a first step toward a true, conscious and adequate musical experience. For the way a symphony appears by radio is not »neutral« with regard to the original. It does not convey a hollow one-colored effigy which can be »filled« and made more concrete by later live listening. The radio symphony's relation to the live symphony is not that of the shadow to the robust. Even if it were, the shadow cannot be given flesh by the transfusion of red blood corpuscles. The changes brought about by radio are more than coloristic; that they are changes of the symphony's own essential structure means not only that this structure is not adequately conveyed but that what does come out opposes that structure and constitutes a serious obstacle against its realization. Beethoven's musical sense does not match with the postulates it evokes itself when transmitted on the air. Reference may again be made to the coloristic element. The radio phenomenon produces an attitude in the listener which leads him to seek color and stimulating sounds. Music, however, composed in structural rather than coloristic terms does not satisfy these mechanized claims. The color of a Beethoven symphony in live performance as well as by radio is

incomparably less radiant, more subdued not only than those of Wagner, Richard Strauss, or Debussy, but poorer even than the supply of current entertainment. Moreover, the coloristic effects which Beethoven achieves are valid only against the ascetic background of the whole. The cadenza of the oboe in the beginning of the repetition of the first moment of the Fifth Symphony is striking only as a contrast to the bulk of the strings; as a coloristic effect in itself it would be »poorer«, and it is the misinterpretation of such relations which leads some of today's happy-go-lucky routine musicians who are nothing but competent, to such ingenious statements as that Beethoven was not able to score well. If radio, however, brings into the limelight just such particles as the oboe cadenza, may it not actually provoke those opinion statements and even a resistance within the listeners – a resistance which is only superficially compensated by the official respect for established values – because the symphony fails to satisfy the very same demands which it seems to raise? But the resistance goes beyond unfavorable comparisons between the full seven course dinner in color of Whiteman's rendition of the »Rhapsody in Blue« and the frugal meal of the symphony in black and white consumed, as it were, as a meal merely. The transformation of the symphonic process into a series of results means that the listeners receive the symphony as a ready-made piecemeal product which can be enjoyed with a minimum of effort on his part. Like other ready-made articles radio symphony tends to make him passive: he wants to get something out of it, perhaps to give himself up to it, but, if possible, to have nothing to do with it, and least of all to »think« it. If it is true that the experience of the actual meaning of symphonic structure implies something like an activity of concrete musical thinking, this thinking is antagonized by radio presentation. It is significant that the same listeners who are allegedly overwhelmed by symphonic music are also ever ready to dwell upon what they call their emotions as against what they call »intellectual« in music. For it is as certain that actual musical understanding, by transcending the isolated, sensual moments of music and categorizing them by the interconnection of the past and the coming within the work, is bound to definite intellectual functions, as it is certain that the stubborn and spiteful adherence to one's private emotional sphere tends to build a wall against these experiences – the very experiences by which alone a Beethoven symphony can be properly understood. Great music is not music that sounds the best, and the belief in that sound is apt to tilt over into frank hostility against what, though mediated by the sound, is more than sound. It is highly doubtful if the boy in the subway whistling the main theme of the Finale of Brahms' First Symphony actually has been gripped by

that music. By the way he picks out that tune he translates it into the language of »Only Forever«. ² It may well be that this translation falls into an historical process, the perspectives of which go far beyond the limits of traditional aesthetics.

If this be true, one should not speak about spreading music while that spreading implies the abnegation of the same concepts of musical classicism, in the name of which serious music is handled by radio. At least no responsible educational attempt can be built directly upon the radio symphony without taking into consideration that the radio symphony is not the live symphony and cannot therefore have the same cultural effect as the live symphony. No such educational attempt is worth undertaking that does not give the fullest account of the antagonistic tendencies promulgated by serious music in radio.

4 Analytical Study of the *NBC Music Appreciation Hour*

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Introduction

The purpose of the present study is to point out that radio, at its »benevolent« best, in a nation-wide, sustaining program of purely educational character, fails to achieve its aim – namely, to bring people into an actual living relation with music. This will be demonstrated by an investigation into the printed material for 1939–40, issued by the broadcasting network itself. That material bears the title *NBC Music Appreciation Hour Conducted by Walter Damrosch*, and includes the *Teacher's Guide*^a and four *Student's Worksheets*,^b published by the Columbia University Press, New York, 1939. Although the broadcasts do not follow the printed text in every little detail, the texts still provide a definite and authoritative statement of the viewpoint and method of the *Hour*, and a judgment of the *Hour* may be based upon them as representative of the broadcasts.

It will be shown that not only is the purely musical part of this program insufficient musically and pedagogically, but that it also leads to a fictitious musical world ruled by names of personalities, stylistic labels, and pre-digested values which cannot possibly be »experienced« by the audience of the *Music Appreciation Hour*, since the program presents the material in a way designed, wittingly or unwittingly, to foster conventional, stereotyped attitudes, instead of leading to concrete understanding of musical sense. We are aware that this analysis may be taken as petulant annoyance of musical expertise and as hypercritical. We are not, however, impervious to certain excellent ideas which the *Music Appreciation Hour* contains. We may mention here the following passage in Charles H. Farnsworth's »Introduction to Series C«:

The basis of all music is the feeling of movement that the rapid passing from one tone, or chord, to another produces in us, called »ideal motion«. The way this ideal motion is put together produces what we call form in music. In other words, it gives sense to music. The mind must tie up, as it were, what we have heard with what we are hearing.

The four series of the *Hour* manifest some sound experience, if not always of actual musical understanding, at any rate of the behavior of young people toward music in general, and it is

^a *The Teacher's Guide* is meant to be used by classroom teachers in schools where the *Music Appreciation Hour* is a lesson on Friday afternoons.

^b *The Student's Worksheets* are the »textbooks« used by the young students (varying in age from elementary through highschool) in the given schools.

beyond doubt that much energy and thinking have been expended in its preparation.

But its failure is due to deeper causes. We regard as the most important of these causes the ideological trend mentioned in the paper »On a Social Critique of Radio Music«. Radio, as an economic enterprise in an ownership culture, is forced to promote, within the listener, a naively enthusiastic attitude toward any material it offers, and thus, indirectly, toward itself.^c This »promotional« bias of radio is a permanent obstacle to achieving an adequate relation with the material, and, preeminently, with serious musical material. How this operates will be shown more concretely in the following study, and is not always mentioned explicitly. It will be easy for the receptive reader to construct the links between the general social critique and the findings of this special analysis. It should be reiterated, however, that we do not blame particular individuals for the failure of an undertaking such as the *Music Appreciation Hour*, but rather the system within which it works; a system, which, in this particular sense, exercises a devastating influence by using its own putative unselfishness and altruism as an advertising medium for selfish purposes and vested interests. If, in addition, we cannot conceal that in certain matters of actual musical competence serious deficiencies here turn up, we do not wish, even in this circumstance, to score the persons involved. They fall victim to an institution which, for reasons of »representation«, must first think in terms of famous names or men in executive positions, instead of estimating their quality distinct from any social considerations of institutional aggrandizement, and which is particularly hampered by the necessity, actual or presumed, of placing in the radio limelight the well-known name of a musician who, whatever his merits in the past, cannot today be expected to be sufficiently equipped to deal with the totally new questions arising in the field of radio musical education.

The nature of the material itself prescribes the following main divisions: I. An investigation of the purely musical and pedagogical qualities of the *Damrosch Music Appreciation Hour*. II. A study of its cultural implications from the standpoint of what may be called the promotion of musical Babbitry.¹ Naturally, these divisions overlap in many cases. In general, one may regard the cultural deficiencies as being closely linked with the musical and pedagogical wants and conversely.

^c Hadley Cantril and Gordon Allport, *The Psychology of Radio* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1935), p. 66.

I Pedagogical and Musical Analysis

The general pedagogical aim of the four courses is to lead the students from the outside of music to the inside.

To sum up the music study in the four courses: we can call the A series, dealing with the orchestral family, the physical aspect; the B series, the imaginative aspect, because of its accompanying ideas and activities; the C series, the intellectual aspect, as in it we observe the structure and forms of pure music; while in the D series a spiritual aspect appears and our attention is focused on the meaning of music as expressing the life and times of the composer.^d

Although much can be said against such a procedure, and although a mental »approximation« of art experience is not ultimately a firm foundation for music education, but rather the understanding of an art work is a sudden, spontaneous, and fundamentally new attitude, nevertheless it is not essential for our criticism to call this procedure into question. It may suffice to mention that a person who is in a real living relation with music does not like music because as a child he liked to see a flute, then later because music imitated a thunderstorm, and finally because he learned to listen to music as music, but that the deciding childhood experiences of music are much more like a shock. More prototypical as stimulus is the experience of a child who lies awake in his bed while a string quartet plays in an adjoining room and who is suddenly so overwhelmed by the excitement of the music that he forgets to sleep and listens breathlessly.

Without entering upon the discussion of the psychology of the genesis of response to music, the pragmatic validity of the »outside-inside« process of musical education emphasized by the *Music Appreciation Hour* is here granted. Even accepting it as a learning tool, it is still necessary to set up a number of postulates with which a pedagogical enterprise of this kind must comply in order to avoid defeating its own purpose. These postulates would, no doubt, be accepted by the sponsors of the *Hour*, too. They may be summed up as follows:

1.) If one accepts pedagogically the way from »outside« to »inside«, the principle must be qualified so as to provide safeguards against the means becoming substituted for the end. The means, in the case of the *Hour*, largely coincide with the »outside« of music; for instance

^d »NBC Music Appreciation Hour Conducted by Walter Damrosch«, New York, Columbia University Press, 1939. *Student's Worksheet*, »Introduction to Series D«.

the musical instruments which, according to the *Teacher's Guide*,^e are to be shown on cards »for eye preparation«. The external features of music must not become obstacles to real understanding.

2.) If the pedagogical purpose is avowedly serious, that is to say, if actual musical understanding is meant to be developed, as opposed to mere dissemination of information about music, an education from the simple to the complex, step by step and well-planned, must be achieved. Any planless juxtaposition of divergent or non-cohering materials is strictly to be avoided.

3.) The theoretical explanations must bear a direct, clear-cut relation to the concrete musical examples. In particular, the examples must not contradict the explanations in their very essence. Otherwise confusion is promoted.

4.) The explanations must be characteristic as well as specific. That is, each item of material must be chosen in such a way as to allow for full articulation of particular musical characteristics specifically distinguished from such characteristics of other material. This requires, on the one hand, distinguishable musical examples and, on the other hand, musical concepts that are definitively and not accidentally correlative.

5.) If, for pedagogical reasons, the whole truth cannot be told, at least nothing but the truth should be told. In other words, erroneous information, faulty or partial explanations, and inadequate or forced examples are, under no circumstances, justifiable.

6.) The course must not employ notions or associations contradicting the essence of the musical material or the background of the material.

How does the *Music Appreciation Hour* comply with these postulates?

1.) *The Procedure from Outside to Inside*

The procedure from outside, that is to say, from things of the external world from any given descriptive content of music, to the inside of music, namely, to its structure and its »meaning«, recommends itself as in keeping with what is known of child psychology. But since, in music, the visible tools are of no value in themselves, and since music has »content« of sense imagination only incidentally, which content, even in many obvious examples of »program« music, remains somewhat ambiguous and arbitrary, the essential structure of music offers stiff resistance to the psychologically recommendable procedure. Only

^e Ibid., *Teacher's Guide*, p. 13.

the utmost tact can combine at one and the same time the psychological desideratum of programmatic and the structural requirements of musical language. The *Music Appreciation Hour*, in spite of some compensating remarks, has failed utterly, by its almost exclusive emphasis on external objects, to achieve a well proportioned combination. This may be partly accounted for by the fact that Dr. Damrosch's musicianship stems from the »*neu-deutsche*« tradition and suffers from that school's unbridled exaggeration of the descriptive side of music. The dangerous implications of this procedure are evident from four examples selected from totally different fields:

a.) The preface to the *Teacher's Guide* contains the following statement:

Irrespective of the order followed, however, the attractiveness of Series A depends to a large extent on the degree to which the children can become familiar with the various orchestral instruments as *personalities*, and not merely disembodied sounds. Hence the importance of using large colored cards of instruments or even partly bringing actual instruments into the classroom whenever possible.

As a matter-of-fact, the overwhelming majority of orchestral music actually uses the instruments as »disembodied sounds« and not as »personalities«. Cases where instruments figure as »personalities«, either imitating something (as the E flat clarinet may imitate a donkey), or as a symbol for an individual, are rare, random phenomena. Beyond that, the discovery of the »personality« of the instruments, of each instrument having its own voice and speaking for itself is a late development. Although instrumental characterization occurred occasionally already in Gluck's time, it has gained headway only since the days of Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner.

In serious music the instrumental sound is a mere function of the structure of the whole with no intrinsic value as an individual sound. To shift attention from the outset of a music education program to the personality of the instruments, means to distract pedagogy from the important to the subsidiary. The contradiction between the anticipation and the material presented makes itself felt very soon. In a Haydn symphony the instruments do not talk as personalities, but function within the coherence of parts. A child waiting for the individual voice of the flute and its »message« will necessarily be disappointed or strive to hear it by eliminating all musical sound »extraneous« to what can appropriately be termed the fetishistic attitude toward music.

The prevalence of »technique-mindedness« is a problem which has been posed by Thorstein Veblen and John Dewey in this country,

namely that the extravagant development of technical productive powers has outstripped present institutional capacity to control and master them socially. This is reflected psychologically by men becoming emotionally more closely bound to the tools themselves (the means) than to their human function (the end), which latter, in a great many cases, is obscured and gains no overt expression. There is a grave danger to the psychological development of young people involved here, and music education should face this threat and consciously grapple with it. It cannot make inexpedient concessions to technique-mindedness without impairing its social value. Education must attempt to counterbalance the hegemony of the tool.

b.) Section 2 of the *Teacher's Guide* quotes from a bulletin issued in October, 1931 by Miss Susie L. Williams, Supervisor of Music in the Dallas public schools, which contains the following statements:

Occasionally test class out on the themes. Themes should be frequently played and *followed*. Let children point to notes and hum (where possible) as the theme is played.^f

We may point here to the analysis contained in the study of *The Radio Symphony* concerning the over-emphasis placed upon the theme by radio and the general habit of quotation and atomistic listening. The theme being the »outside« of music and the structure its »inside«, the tendency toward atomistic listening (which is a major problem for the social critique of radio music) is here expressly furthered by the *Music Appreciation Hour*. The idea that the theme is the »easiest« in music, leads again to a shifting of the attention from the whole to the part. It might be argued here that this is a procedure which commends itself to common sense, and that it would be a high-brow postulate to expect elementary musical education to lead to an understanding of a complex form from its totality and not from its themes. To this objection the reply is that the difficulty can very easily be overcome. The following method is suggested: Play or sing some well-known nursery rhyme such as »London Bridge is Falling Down«: The children are able to follow the tune as a whole and to memorize it very easily. It probably would never occur to them that it has a »theme« as distinguished from the development. The next step is to analyze the tune and show that it is developed out of one fundamental motif which is repeated, varied, and so on, and show concretely how this is done. Then explain that a symphonic movement follows fundamentally the same line, and that a symphonic theme basically plays no other role

^f *Ibid.*, p. 13.

than the motif does in the nursery rhyme. Of course the concept of theme from the very beginning would appear here too, but only as mere *material* of the movement and not as its aim or essence. What must be strictly avoided is the idea that serious music fundamentally consists of important »themes« with something more or less unimportant between them, and this idea is expressly furthered by the *Music Appreciation Hour* by testing students on themes.

The notion of theme should not disappear, but ought to be given its rightful place and thereby gain its true significance. The pupils should be made to feel, although in different terms, that a theme is a sort of »statement« which obtains its meaning only within a functional unity and not as a thing in itself. If this character of the theme were demonstrated by analysis of a folk tune, and if the similarity between the musical structure of the folk tune and the developed musical form were made clear, one could easily show the *difference* between them as well. That is, one could demonstrate that the unity of the folk tune is an »immediate« unity, a unity in which the parts do not dissociate themselves from one another, whereas the unity of serious music is an articulated unity consisting in the function of parts marked by contrast or, at least, by difference. This would explain the fact that while the theme in the symphony plays fundamentally the same role as that played by the motif in the folk song, the symphonic theme becomes conspicuous as such, while this is not true in the case of the motif of the folk tune. In other words, the analysis should lead to a dual postulate: that in listening to articulated music one ought to be able to distinguish the parts, and to build out of them a unity by becoming aware of their functional interrelationship. All this sounds fairly involved when explained in words only, but could be made clear to any child by the use of concrete examples. The *Music Appreciation Hour*, however, as soon as higher art forms are involved, insists only upon the articulation and overlooks the functional unity. In this way the articulation ceases to be articulation at all and becomes a disintegration of the work: The elements of articulation actually degenerate into mere atoms.

It should be noted that behind this urging of the atom or theme, there lies again a fetishistic concept of music, the cultural implications of which will be considered later. There is a strong suspicion that children are drilled on themes in order to »recognize« music by some outside sign, so that they may win music appreciation contests, victory in which is considered the acme of success in schools throughout the land. Although the instigators of the *Music Appreciation Hour* do not mention this idea as a leading force in their approach, it cannot escape attention that, in spite of many and enthusiastic words about music, the drill and contest idea plays a large part in the *Hour's*

activities. In any case, it is disastrous to promote »That's it!« responses to symphonic music whenever the theme occurs. The theme is one element of the composition and an important one, but when this element is hypostatized as the composition's »content« the stream of music is destroyed and replaced by the automatic recognition of what is, after all, one of the composition's tools among others. This example, by the way, appears to us to illustrate most concretely what is meant by the »reification« of music.

c.) The second concert of Series B, called »Animals in Music«, includes Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*, about which it has to say:

The *Ride of the Valkyries* describes the flight of the horses through the clouds. We hear their galloping hoof beats (horn and cello), their neighing (wood-winds), the battle song of the maidens (trumpets and trombones), and their weird battle cry (strings).

Here again the psychological approach clashes with the structure of the music. The *Ride of the Valkyries*, like all the corresponding parts of the *Ring*, is a piece of »nature symbolism«, an attempt to translate, as it were, phenomena of nature such as the rainbow, fire, the thunderstorm, into the language of the myth. The *Ride of the Valkyries* is what may be called a musical mythologizing of the thunderstorm. The Valkyries and horses are the mythical entities in which music tries to transfigure clouds, storm, and lightning. Only on this level, and not as a primitive naturalistic description, does the *Ride of the Valkyries* have meaning. The naturalistic features hinted at in the *Hour* appear continually in the composition, but only in the sense in which elements of waking life appear in dreams, not as straight-forward elements of a narrative. Therefore it is very difficult to identify them, and a child who would try to notice the neighing of the horses in any naturalistic sense would at once be at a loss. Of course, it might be too difficult to explain to children the actual implications of a piece like the *Valkyries' Ride*, but by giving them the primitive, descriptive explanation, they are misled in a way not only jeopardizing the meaning of the music, but also raising a conflict between what they were told and what they are actually hearing. It would suffice to tell them something about the Valkyries in general and the ride rhythm. In attempting to make this more concrete and to interpret it in terms of »outside«, only the opposite is achieved. Moreover, it should be noted that the idea that Wagner's aim approximates that of a musical circus director creates an atmosphere of workaday matter-of-factness which necessarily affects, most unfavorably, the whole complex of the child's experience of the music, the nature of which is entirely incompatible with a

matter-of-fact anticipation, »Now come the horses, and now the Valkyrie's cry.« There is a fettering of the child's imagination which is forced, at any cost, to associate certain prescribed pictures with the music. The artificial *naïveté* of such an approach is likely to annoy children rather than please them, and it would not be surprising if the more alert and less conforming children were to call any such attempt to interpret music in circus terms stupid.⁸

d.) The second concert of Series D presents a Bach program preceded by a short biographical sketch of the composer. While characterizing him very aptly as »both at the end of one era and the beginning of another; for he was the last great composer of the polyphonic school and, at the same time, he laid the foundations of all modern music«, it goes on, »Bach was born in the little town of Eisenach, Germany, in the very shadow of the Wartburg Castle, which is also known to us as the setting for one of the great scenes of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*«. Here again the attempt is to make the approach more concrete by some outside reference, and the attempt is perilous. The link, Bach–Eisenach–Wartburg–*Tannhäuser*–Wagner, is purely fortuitous and has no basis within the music of either composer; therefore it does not help the student to understand anything, but has the contrary effect. If we assume, as evidently the authors of the *Hour* do, that the pupil knows something about *Tannhäuser* and the Wartburg, then we must also assume that he has certain associations linked with the Wartburg, such as knights, medieval glamour and might, shining armor, and beautiful maidens. If the reference is to be of any assistance in understanding Bach's music, the pupil will approach the music with these associations. He will, of course, be bitterly disappointed as there is absolutely nothing in Bach's music to suggest any of these features.

There again the expectation of something which is not forthcoming may easily lead to disillusionment and to distrust of the whole approach. Incidentally, it betrays an astonishing lack of taste to introduce Bach, of all people, in terms, so to speak, of an operatic hero. The hero-worship fostered by the *Music Appreciation Hour*, appears to confuse the boundaries between the composer and his creatures. They all sleep in the same pantheon of greatness, indiscriminately adored from outside.

⁸ Ever concomitant with the musical knowledge thus inculcated is the more general framework in American education which accords the accolade of »brightness« to those who imbibe knowledge with an attitude of deference and obeisance. A revulsion by a youngster against the *Music Appreciation Hour* would inevitably be accompanied by a revulsion against the educational process which is its universal setting. The *Music Appreciation Hour* fits into the backward, corrupting influence of reactionary, non-spontaneous education just as a poor theme fits into a poor symphony.

2.) *The Pedagogical Procedure*

a.) Each series has an introduction by Charles H. Farnsworth stating the fundamental concepts of the section. These introductions contain, as suggested before, the most valuable ideas of the *Hour*. But they contain them in the form of statements which are, for anyone not thoroughly familiar with musical structures, absolutely incomprehensible. Instance the following from the »Introduction to Series B«:

We often say we do or we do not remember how a melody goes. This »go« of music is called »ideal motion«. It is the real stuff out of which music is made, much as forms and colors are the real stuff out of which the beauty in the arts of painting, architecture, and sculpture are made. The study of how this ideal motion of music is turned into artistic musical forms is reserved for Series C.

This is an attempt to describe music as a structural unity, but it fails for two reasons. First, though it is very effective to start with »how a melody goes«, the transition from this obvious notion to the »go« of music in general remains totally obscure. It is very difficult for a child, or even an adolescent, to grasp that, in a definite sense, the most complex symphonic form »goes« in the same way in which one says that a melody goes.^h The practical issue for pedagogy is to show precisely in what way this occurs, as we tried to sketch above, instead of merely asserting that it does. Second, the term »ideal motion«, as it stands, does not convey any clear meaning even to an adult reader and cannot possibly be understood by a youngster. Probably what is meant here is that musical motions are motions taking place not indiscriminately in the external world but within their peculiar sphere of structured sound. This, however, ought to be explained. The term »ideal« carries with it totally different associations, such as the perfect, the Platonic pattern, which confuse the issue. The obscurity of this fundamental, and basically sound statement, proves doubly disastrous because the thesis about ideal motion is made the leading hypothesis of Series C, on which all the explanations of musical forms depend. Although the introductions may be sufficiently clear to the functionaries of the *Music Appreciation Hour*, the task of conveying fundamental notions by lucid terms has not even begun.

b.) The lack of pedagogical consistency is evident, not only in the conceptual foundation, but also in the actual explanation of music.

^h The comparison with painting, architecture, and sculpture where no time-element enters makes it even more difficult to grasp.

A procedure which uses technical terms without even roughly explaining them, is pedagogically unsound. Specific examples of this are the use of the terms motet and madrigal, introduced in the first concert of Series D. It is also pedagogically unsound to make reference, when something is to be explained, to an explanation that is to follow later, particularly when the later explanation does not refer to the preceding case and remains vague in itself. This applies to the discussion of the relation between the overture and the sonata form. The worksheet for the ninth concert of Series C («The Overture») reads: »The sonata form will be treated fully in the work-sheet for the next concert of this series, which deals with the symphony.« In other words, in the overture concert young people are confronted with a musical form which is not explained to them as such, and the explanation is postponed to a later date without the relation between symphony and overture being shown. This is the more astonishing, as it is precisely the relation between the overture and the first movement of the symphony of the Beethoven type that offers one of the rare opportunities for making good use of the outside-inside approach. It is comparatively easy to explain, in terms of the plot, the dramatic character of the overture. Then one can point to the dramatic contrast between the two main subjects in an overture such as the well-known and structurally simple Beethoven overture to »Coriolanus« which, in form, coincides perfectly with the structure of a symphonic movement. After this has been achieved, one may go on to the symphony and seek to explain it as a drama without any external plot such as in an overture as a purely musical drama in itself. Insufficient as such an explanation would necessarily be in the light of a full and mature understanding,² it does lead along the right track in the early musical education of children and adolescents. It would underscore the dynamic character of the symphony.

The approach from the overture to the symphony falls into three distinct pedagogical steps: first, description of an overture in terms of its dramatic plots; then, translation of these terms into the specifically musical terms of the structure of the composition; and finally, explanation of a symphonic movement in the structural terms gained from this musical analysis of the overture. This opportunity is completely fumbled by the *Music Appreciation Hour*.

c.) Even more sorely trying to sound musical education is a sequel on musical forms as presented in Series C. It is evidently based upon the assumption that, by and large, this historical development of music coincides with the development from the simple to the complex, and that, therefore, historical review of musical forms leads step by step to actual understanding. This idea, however, is palpably absurd. From

the standpoint of pedagogical inculcation the comparatively old form of the fugue is one of the most difficult, and the layman finds it a hard task to understand a fugue. In Series C, the fugue as a lesson topic appears as early as the third concert, preceded only by »Folk Melodies in Great Music« and »Round and Canon«. None of the elements necessary for an understanding of the fugue is provided by such antecedents. This deficiency becomes aggravated in that the whole fugue concert itself is a distortion.¹ The correct procedure is to discuss the form of the fugue in contrast to its counterpart, the sonata form; then to elaborate the similarities and particularly the contrast between the two most elaborate and, as they may be called, »integral« musical forms. Thus, light could be thrown upon both the fugue and the sonata forms. It could be made clear, for instance, that the fugue is a fundamentally static, and the sonata a fundamentally dynamic form, a point which is totally missed in the section about the sonata form, and which could be shown very easily by comparing the simple Bach fugue, or one of the short fugues by his immediate predecessors such as J. K. F. Fischer, with a simple Beethoven sonata. The pedagogical insufficiency of the fugue concert becomes the more striking because this concert does not present the fugue in its elementary and characteristic form (say, the Two-Part Fugue in E minor from Bach's »Well-Tempered Clavichord«), but presents rather involved or uncharacteristic fugues. It is scarcely going too far to assert that no pupil who wants to learn something about the fugue is capable of getting any clear-cut idea about the form from a concert at such an early stage of the whole course. At that point it can lead only to academic talk and not to any true understanding.

d.) The same type of pedagogical inaptitude is in evidence in the *Hour's* discussion of composers in Series D. It presumes an artificial, unilateral, evolutionary development of music serially in time, as the guideline for pedagogical development of the young.

The second concert of Series D is a Bach program, incidentally a very uncharacteristic one, consisting only of arrangements. The third concert is devoted to Händel. At such an early stage Bach is too difficult, and a concert devoted solely to Händel will bore the pupils. It is far more fruitful to start from what is known to be the actual standard of musical consciousness within the pupil – from what he, himself, considers as his »normal« musical language. So far as serious music is concerned, this »normal« musical consciousness of the mass of pupils is centered in a certain type of emotional, late romantic music, such as is represented by the works of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. If one

¹ Ibid., *Student's Worksheet*, Introduction to Third Concert, Series C, »The Fugue«.

does not want to take this approach – and we are cognizant of the grave objections that can be offered from an aesthetic point of view to such a procedure – then of the great composers, the one closest to the »normal« consciousness of the youngster undoubtedly is Schubert. He should, therefore, be given a Schubert concert at the beginning; one which would include certain symphonic Schubert pieces, such as the first movement of the B minor Symphony or of the big C Major Symphony. The pupils will have comparatively little difficulty in following the stream of this music. It is also very easy in these pieces, with their marked contrasts of themes, to illustrate their skeletal structure.

From this point it is easy to approach Haydn. One has to show how these forms work within Haydn, and at the same time that Haydn, while harmonically more primitive than Schubert, attains a higher degree of thematic density than we find in, say, the first movement of Schubert's C Major Symphony. On the other hand, Haydn's more complex structure is not difficult to grasp because of the simplicity of the harmonic and melodic elements involved.

The discussion of Haydn leads smoothly into Mozart, and the differences in their respective methods of composition can now be shown and understood. Mozart's consists mainly of minimal contrasts, of very small elements, as against the straightforward type of development exemplified in Haydn.

Three concerts such as these are sufficient preparation for a Beethoven concert. Beethoven should be treated as the center of musical history with good conscience. His looking-backward can be demonstrated by some of the more polyphonic devices of his late period which constitute a good pedagogical transition to a discussion of Bach. A none too difficult example of this is the last movement of the piano sonata, opus 110. His tendency to simplicity should be noted and related to Händel as in the famous religious song, »Die Himmel rühmen des Ewigen Ehre«, whereas his expressive elements can be interpreted as being related to romanticism (and this is actually done by the *Hour* but unfortunately to the exclusion of much else), and ought to be demonstrated by references first to Weber and Schumann (who are omitted in the composers series), and then to Wagner.

Some mention should be made, at this point, of the presentation of a pedagogically suitable Bach program. One ought to play an instrumental piece such as the famous »Air« from Bach's Third Suite for the Orchestra in D Major, which, from the outset, refutes the idea that Bach has »no melody«. Then Bach's power of expression should be demonstrated. This could be done by some examples which are as striking as they are simple. They could be taken from Bach's *Passion*

After *Saint Matthew*, where he treats one choral tune (*O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*) in different ways, according to the expression of the poetry in each verse. Particular emphasis should be placed upon the strophe, *Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden*. These chorals are entirely non-contrapuntal and cannot fail to impress anybody sensitive to music. The use of a choir in a Bach concert would be a good means of varying the presentation. Finally, one ought to offer one of Bach's larger instrumental pieces, not in an inadequate orchestral setting through »arrangement«, but in its original clarity and economy of means. Here we suggest as particularly appropriate the first movement of the B minor Sonata for flute and piano, which combines the utmost melodic intensity with rich polyphonic work. It should be noted that in none of these suggestions here is the fugue mentioned.

3.) *Explanation and Example in the Music Appreciation Hour*

As to the adequacy of explanation and example, we need offer but one typical case, selected again from the fugue concert. It is particularly striking and shows the confusion which necessarily must be created if the relationship between text and example is not stringently controlled.

The introduction to the fugue concert places its main emphasis upon the difference between the fugue and the canon. The soundness of this procedure is moot. In any case the first thesis of the introduction reads: »The subject (that is to say, the theme of the fugue) is given out in full before the second voice enters.« The first example is the Fugue Number One from Bach's »Well-Tempered Clavichord«, arranged (for some abstruse reason) for string orchestra by Dr. Damrosch. This fugue, however, is a canonic fugue; that is, a fugue where, throughout the whole movement, except for the very beginning, each part begins with the subject *before* it has been played in the preceding part (*Engführungsfuge*). In other words, it precisely contradicts the first thesis of the explanation of the concert. Whereas the explanation tries, with much ceremony, to make clear the difference between the canon and fugue and sacrifices every other consideration to this distinction, the very first example it presents destroys it, since it is a hybrid form between fugue and canon, being canonic in its details and fugal in its total setting. Naturally, the pupil becomes confused and unable to distinguish which is which.

4.) *The Question of Characteristic Examples and Specific Explanations*

As to the necessity of using characteristic examples and specific explanations:

a.) The material itself is very often uncharacteristic and, therefore, does not permit any specific explanation. Thus, the eleventh concert of Series B, »Dances of America«, only incidentally presents a syncopated piece and therefore fails to bring out what every American boy and girl certainly would like to know, that is, the principle of syncopation in American dance music. Moreover, in the fifth concert of Series C, the main example of the variation form is the prelude to *L'Arlesienne* by Bizet, which is only partly variations and is very unspecific for the purpose of making clear the variation principle. A clear and simple example would be the variation movement of the »Surprise Symphony« by Haydn. Further, the »modern suite« (eighth concert, Series C), has no specific form-idea at all and is, therefore, not at all suited for contrast, as a form type, with the »classic suite« (seventh concert, Series C), which is a more or less regular sequence of certain types of stylized dance forms.

b.) The explanations are unspecific, also, in the case of historical features such as the development of a composer. We offer the following example, taken from the Verdi program, the sixth concert of Series D:

The next twenty years accounted for eight more operas, ending with *Aida*, which is musically the far more imposing and is marked by a more elaborate and subtle use of the orchestra. Then after a gap of sixteen years, came his last two masterpieces, *Othello*, and *Falstaff*, which reveal a still more mature and complex idiom.

About the terms »more elaborate« and »more mature« nothing is said. Any attentive pupil must wonder what the changes in Verdi's style actually consisted of; namely the shrinking of the flowing tunes to their very nucleus by elimination of any cheap repetition or continuation. The explanation of the *Music Appreciation Hour* strongly reminds one of the famous pamphlet issued by an imperial Austrian government about hydrophobia among dogs: The first day the dog is ill, it is sad and draws its tail between its legs; the second day, the dog becomes still sadder and its tail droops between its legs even more.

c.) Highly significant in all these several failures is that not only are the examples uncharacteristic, but the explanations of the most important individual musical forms employ a conceptual framework so unspecific and undifferentiated as to make it impossible to understand

the differences between forms which are actually divergent. Thus the main point of musical education insofar as musical forms are concerned is missed.

The fourth concert of the Series C deals with the »Three-Part and Rondo Forms«. The explanation starts with a concept of structural symmetry and develops, as its most elementary form, the three-part song form or ternary form (A–B–C). The rondo form is explained as a logical extension of three-part form.

If we should think of two-part form as being similar in pattern to the cross-section of a piece of bread (A) with jam (B) and three part form is being like a sandwich (B representing the filling and A the enclosing slices of bread), then rondo form may be likened to double-decker and triple-decker sandwiches in which slices of bread are separated by various kinds of filling.(!) There are several types of rondo, but in each type there is a principal musical idea which reappears again and again in example:
 »A–B–A–C–A–D–A«–»A–B–A–C–A–B–A«.

This is a typical example of what we mean by unspecific explanation. It is not, in itself, wrong; that is, one can break down schematically the form of the rondo into the repetitions of one main section, A, interrupted by alternative sections, B, C, D, and so on; but one can explain, in this way, practically every form, not only the sonata form (which is actually called by the *Music Appreciation Hour* an »elaboration of three-part form«), but even a form which has nothing to do with the rondo, such as the fugue, which consists of sections where the same theme appears in different parts, and of interludes between these sections. It is obvious that a scheme that can be applied to such divergent forms does not help to explain anything. The specific characteristic of the rondo, which has been missed, is that the different sections of the rondo are essentially different in themselves and are, so to speak, on different levels. The literal meaning of the term »rondo« is round dance, and the idea behind the form is that of a refrain or chorus interrupted by »couplets«, »Gänge«, or alternative passing themes. Whenever the theme reappears in a rondo, it has the effect of a distinct refrain against which the other musical events are more or less incidental. Insofar as structural unity in the rondo form is not the main essential, and interconnection between the main events – namely, the recurrence of the refrain – is quite slack in order to emphasize the re-entrance of the refrain, the rondo form may be called an »open« form. It is this looseness which accounts for the comparative ease with which the structure of rondos can be taught, as compared with »closed«, integral forms such as the fugue and the sonata. In this way one fosters

real insight into the essential structure of the main musical forms. It is astonishing that the *Music Appreciation Hour* has failed to perceive this, since the rondo recommends itself as easy to convey to young Americans, particularly of high school age. The formal structure of all American jazz hits, which are well-known to youngsters, is primarily based upon the difference between the verse and refrain, particularly in the sheet versions for piano. The music educator can play any hit on the piano and point to the difference of weight, articulation, and of what may be called »definitiveness«, which exists between the chorus and the verse. Then he could proceed to the rondo and point out that between the rondo theme and alternate themes, there exists, fundamentally, the same relationship as between the chorus and verse in the jazz tune. He could go on to explain that in a hit the relationship between chorus and verse is mechanical and rigid, whereas in the rondo form it is highly flexible and yields to the necessities of the concrete composition. Thus the instructor can reach a point where it is possible for him to demonstrate [to] the pupils, step by step, in what sense present-day market music is primitive and undeveloped as against serious music, while, at the same time, there is nothing learned or scholarly in serious music which cannot be developed by a keen understanding of even the most trivial musical events of everyday life. It would be astonishing from the viewpoint of educational psychology (which is today so much to the fore in American normal schools and teacher's colleges), as well as of musical education, in which field Dr. Damrosch and his collaborators are held to be pathfinders, that no such attempt has been made by the *Music Appreciation Hour*, were there not the apparatus of the social critique to explain the fundamental causes for this and other shortcomings.

The devastating effect of the unspecific explanation of the rondo becomes even more obvious when the *Hour* has to deal with the most important type of musical form, the sonata. As the sonata is again explained in terms of the three-part song form, no specific contrast with any other musical form, and particularly with the rondo, is made evident. On the other hand, the sponsors of the *Hour* feel that the sonata is something essentially different. Their lack of specific concepts, however, impels them to talk about the sonata form in a general way which explains little and is apt only to frighten pupils.

Pedagogically, nothing is more perilous than to employ in explanation the warning that the subject matter in question is difficult. This is what is done in the case of the sonata: »The *intellectual movement*,^j

^j Italics added.

requiring the greatest amount of thinking on the listener's part – and the greatest amount of ingenuity and skill on the composer's part.« The danger in the use of the term »the intellectual movement« must be particularly noted. It is underscored later when it is contrasted with the second movement of the symphonic form which »gives our heads a rest and appeals to our hearts«. There is no such thing as a »head« part and a »heart« part. The »intellectual« is nothing but the necessity to »tie up«, as Mr. Farnsworth has it, what we have heard with what we are hearing, and, it may be added, what we are to hear, in *immediate musical perception* and by no means in any »intellectual« conceptual reflection upon the music.

To understand the sonata means to listen in the right way, nothing more and nothing less. How does the *Music Appreciation Hour* help to foster such listening? The sonata form is explained by the *Hour* in totally schematic terms such as, exposition, development, and recapitulation. One can only expect that when the highschool boy who first hears that the sonata form is so very intellectual, is told that its form is simply A–B–A, he will judge music to be much ado about nothing.

The instructor simply ought to take some easy, yet characteristic example of the sonata form, such as Beethoven's little sonata for piano in G Major, Opus 49, Number 2. One can show that whereas in the rondo the refrain is marked and distinct from the other parts, here in the sonata all the parts are closely linked, no theme has a definite preponderance over any other theme, the slightest bits of motifical material are used, and nothing appears throughout the piece that has not been developed out of these small motifical units. This would lead to a coherent understanding of the principle of »development« which governs the whole sonata form and not only the middle section officially called development.

The recapitulation should not be explained in mechanical terms by the alteration of the exposition's scheme of modulation. One should clearly show the function of the appearance of the second theme in the recapitulation, in the main key and not in the dominant key. It should be demonstrated that it serves to counterbalance the harmonic forces of the development and to establish an harmonic equilibrium which has been destroyed by the modulatory elements from the very beginning. After such an analysis, which sounds much more complicated in theory than it actually is in practice, one could introduce without any difficulty the notion of »dynamic« forms as against static forms, and thus achieve a real understanding of the sonata.

At least three points ought to be made perfectly clear in order to give the pupil a real understanding of this form, without which Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven must remain closed books to him.

1.) The principle of general development, or the dynamic principle, as underlining the sonata form.

2.) The closeness and complete motifical economy of the sonata form (which it has in common with the fugue but from which it differs in its fundamentally dynamic character).

3.) The sonata as the attempt to achieve musically complete unity within the manifoldness.

Instead of such insights, the pupil is bored by the formalistic scheme and, at the same time, fed empty phrases about intellectual effort and skill, which must either repel him or spur him on to erudite babbling.^k

5.) *Misstatements in the Music Appreciation Hour*

a.) So far we have dealt with uncharacteristic and unspecific explanations within the material of the *Music Appreciation Hour*. The instruction given by the *Hour*, however, is not merely unspecific; it contains gross errors and misstatements which jeopardize any value that it might otherwise have had.

It has been postulated here that if, for pedagogical reasons, the whole truth cannot be told, then at least nothing but the truth should be told. The following example shows how the idea that there are certain things one should not tell children, leads the *Hour* into misstatements which necessarily promote an effect opposite to what it is intended to achieve.

The ninth concert of Series D is devoted to Wagner. The third item on the program is the »Love Duet«, from Act Two of *Tristan and Isolde*. The term »love duet«, stemming from the older opera form, is a symbol of an operatic world against which Wagner struggled all his life and is a travesty of Wagner's conception of the music drama. The part in question is, of course, »*O sink hernieder, Nacht der Liebe*«. The pedagogues of the *Hour* cannot resist giving a brief account of the plot of *Tristan*. The principal passage about the second act reads as follows:

There the unhappy pair meet to seek brief moments of joy in each other's presence, while Isolde's maid, Brangäne, stands guard in the watchtower above. But even such momentary happiness is marred by the knowledge that night conveys only fleeting oblivion, that the stark

^k What the educators of the *Music Appreciation Hour* think of musical form in general may be illustrated by the following redundant definition: »Form should be analyzed as *nicely controlled imaginative thinking, leading to certain crystallized FORMS*.« (NBC. Music Appreciation Hour conducted by Walter Damrosch, *Teacher's Guide*, p. 12)

reality of the day will soon return, and that death alone can bring them liberation from those now-hateful bonds which they cannot honorably break – his as loyal liege of King Mark, and hers as Mark's queen.

This is *Tristan ad usum delphini* – a purged *Tristan*. The lovers neither »seek brief moments of joy in each other's presence«, nor have they any twinges of conscience about »breaking those now-hateful bonds«. The *Music Appreciation Hour* evokes the idea that they simply suffer, because for reasons of conventional morality they cannot get together. As a matter of fact, they do get together, and adultery is the presupposition of the whole *Tristan* plot. If one is afraid to speak about adultery, one should not speak about *Tristan*. One had better not even play it. The assumption, however, that an adolescent would not suspect the true story when faced with the plot of *Tristan* is absurd. But talking about *Tristan* in a coy, old-maidish manner, necessarily creates an atmosphere of giggling and dark staircases. The idea that young people would be »corrupted« by *Tristan* when they can get *Film Fun*³ at any newsstand, is preposterous as well as hypocritical. But this is only one consequence of the gerontocratic attitude which does not recognize children and adolescents as people.

b.) One can ascribe misstatements such as those about *Tristan* to a misconception of pedagogical function, but there are a great many points within the *Hour* which can be attributed only to inadequate knowledge in the field of music.

Misinformation begins in the elementary Series A. The introduction to the fourth concert there states: »The piano is not often used as a part of the orchestra, since its tone is quite different from that of the other instruments«. Neither statement nor the reason given is valid. The sound of the piano is no more alien to the »regular« orchestral sound than the sound of certain other orchestral instruments such as the kettle-drums, and certainly the big drum, which cannot give any definite tone.¹ Every musical scholar knows that the function of the

¹ That the piano, during the nineteenth century, was seldom used as an orchestral instrument, can be accounted for by the fact that the piano, like the organ, can play whole harmonies and not only single tones. Therefore it was regarded as a microcosm, a second orchestra in itself, which replaces the whole orchestra rather than functioning as a member of it. This, however, has nothing to do with tone, as the *Music Appreciation Hour* claims.

In the age of the general bass, that of Bach and Händel, the ancestors of the modern piano were used without hesitation as re-enforcement of the orchestral harmony. The disappearance of the piano from the orchestra may partly be accounted for as a counter-reaction against this older habit, associated with a different musical style.

piano as an actual part of the orchestra rather than a solo instrument was discovered by Berlioz who treated it extensively in this category in his book on instrumentation. The authors of this introduction apparently do not know that the piano plays a vast role in the modern orchestra. Mention here may be made of three famous contemporary operatic works in which it fulfills this function: Richard Strauss' *Ariadne*, Franz Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*, and Alban Berg's *Lulu*.

The fifth concert of Series A contains the statement that, »In listening to orchestral music, it would be dull if all the planning were done by instruments of the violin family, since the ›voices‹ sound so nearly alike«. After this, any work for string orchestra, such as Mozart's *Kleine Nachtmusik*, must be regarded as exceedingly dull, and string quartets as the most contemptible form of music, because they offer even less coloristic contrasts than the string orchestra.

In the sixth concert of Series A, it is said that the double bassoon is used only for special effects. This held good more than a hundred years ago, for instance, in *Fidelio*. Since then the double bassoon is to be found in every orchestral score, functioning within the woodwind family, which otherwise has no deep bass instrument at its disposal.

The eighth concert of Series A deals with the trombone and the tuba. The introduction states: »The trombone is the tenor instrument, and the tuba is the bass« of the brass section. As a matter of fact the trombones themselves are what Dr. Damrosch calls a family, with a bass of its own having a very definite character quite distinct from the tuba. The tuba's function as the bass of the brass section cannot be accounted for by the trombone's being a tenor instrument, but by the fact that the sound of the bass trombone does not merge with that of the other orchestral instruments and has therefore been replaced, from the viewpoint of orchestral mixture, by the less obtrusive sound of the tuba. A glimpse into the score of Wagner's *Ring* would provide Dr. Damrosch and his assistants with sufficient information about the existence and function of the bass trombone.

In this context it should be mentioned that in the Beethoven concert of Series D, the theme of the last movement of the E Flat Major Piano Concerto is incorrectly quoted by the *Hour*. The theme has an up-beat which is noted by Beethoven before the double bar that separates the slow movement from the last movement which immediately follows it. This fact has been overlooked by the *Music Appreciation Hour*. By the omission of the up-beat, B-Flat, which determines the rhythmical structure of the whole theme, the theme becomes totally meaningless.

c.) All these items might be called minor points, although the sum total of errors of this sort means a considerable distortion of the

material presented. But gross faults are to be found even where basic concepts are concerned, as in the following examples:

1.) The introduction of Series C attempts to develop the basic notions of polyphony and homophony. The principal passage reads as follows:

This method of combining melodies is more often used where, instead of repeating exactly what has been heard before, as in the round, modifications are introduced. The principle, however, is the same. It is well described as »continuous repetition« and is called »polyphonic« music.

In contrast to this, there is a second way in which music is combined to form a complete composition. In this we complete what we started with and then introduce entirely new or contrasting music, after which we repeat what we first heard. This is described as »alternating repetition« and is called »homophonic« music, because one voice has the essential melody while the other voices, or parts, supply the accompaniment.

These definitions are untenable. Continuous repetition, or, as it is called in musical terminology, imitation, is one of the means employed in homophonic as well as in polyphonic music. The classical Viennese school is certainly more homophonic than polyphonic and still largely employs the technique of imitation, as is obvious in the simplest examples such as the beginning of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. On the other hand, there is no necessity for using imitation in polyphonic style. Every course in counterpoint, on the contrary, teaches one to treat several simultaneous parts melodically developed and independent of one another, first without reference to imitation, and later introduces the principle of imitation, in what is called in German, *Choralbearbeitung*. Again, in advanced modern music, where the principle of imitation is largely excluded as being too mechanical, we find vast structures that are purely polyphonic and entirely devoid of imitation (e.g. Schönberg's *Erwartung*). On the other hand, the principle of contrast by no means coincides with the principle of homophony. It is characteristic of certain homophonic composers such as Mozart, whereas in Beethoven we find compositions with practically no considerable contrast (for instance, the slow movement of the String Quartet, Opus 59, Number 2), as well as works full of contrasts. Above all, Wagner, who certainly was a homophonic composer, defined music as the art of transition, and his whole technique is based upon the principle of mediation, using contrast only upon rare occasions for decisive dramatic effects. These few references suffice to make clear that the pair of concepts arising from

»continuous repetition« and »alternating repetition« can by no means be considered as respectively descriptive of the pair, polyphony and homophony.

In the introduction to the second concert of Series C, a much better explanation of polyphony and homophony is given:

Polyphonic – which means »many-voiced« and denotes music which is formed by two or more different melodies going on at the same time. The art of combining melodies in this manner is called *counterpoint*. Polyphonic music is also called *contrapuntal* music.

Homophonic – which means »one-voiced« and denotes music in which the different parts are blended into a single mass, called *harmony*, above which one melody alone stands out. Homophonic music is also spoken of as *harmonic music*.

It is doubtful, however, that it helps much after the confusion created by the general introduction.

2.) The worst misstatements occur in the program about the fugue, which, from any point of view, is most inadequate of all. The introduction contains the following passage: »An extremely simple illustration of the opening measures of a fugue, showing how subject, answer, and countersubject are related, is as follows:

Subject Counter Subject

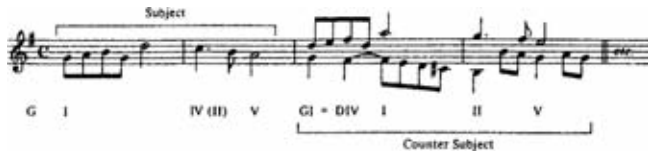
G I V I

NB: No IV or II step.

These bars could not be, as it is asserted, the »opening« bars of a fugue. They are merely examples of free imitation. It is the most elementary requirement of the subject of a fugue, which a student of composition learns in his first lesson on the fugue, that a fugue theme as stated in the opening measures must end with a »complete cadence«, employing as its harmonic basis, the fourth, fifth and first steps (*Stufe*) of the key, or their substitutes.^m The example given by the *Music Appreciation Hour*, however, contains only the first and the fifth, instead of a full cadence and is therefore grossly in error. The

^m Cf., Iwan Knorr, *Lehrbuch der Fugenkomposition*, (Leipzig, 1911), p. 1: »Dem Schlusse (of the theme of the fugue) müssen sich die üblichen Kadenzakkorde unterlegen lassen.«⁴

beginning of a fugue based upon the material offered by the *Music Appreciation Hour*, would read correctly as follows:



It must be emphasized that these are not subtleties which are fundamental facts about the fugue only for the expert. It is all the more necessary to handle them correctly, as the *Hour* itself introduces the difference between a literally faithful («real») and »free« («tonal») answer to the subject of a fugue. These two ways of answering a theme of a fugue, however, obtain their meaning only from the harmonic implications of the fugue theme. The alternations fulfill the function of avoiding in certain cases the overlapping of the cadence of fugue themes upon melodic events which do not fit, namely in cases where the fugue theme begins with the fifth step. As the answer begins in the dominant key, the fifth step could not be brought together with the first step of the old key with which the theme must end. This, however, is not the case in the example given by the *Music Appreciation Hour*. If it were answered correctly, it could be answered literally and not in the arbitrary way given there. Our counter-example shows that the literal answer would be entirely adequate. In other words, the example is not only wrong but it is also musically senseless with regard to what it is supposed to show.

There is a final gross error in the fugue concert that leads to false expectation and therefore to confusion. The last example presented in the fugue concert is the riot scene of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*. The *Music Appreciation Hour* says: »Into the music of this famous scene, Wagner has woven a fugue which admirably suggests the complexity of the action on the stage.« The fugue referred to is no fugue. We content ourselves here with quoting the greatest living authority on Wagnerian forms, Alfred Lorenz, who writes:

One word more about the riot scene. It is often incorrectly called a fugue, whereas, actually, it only opens with a fugato. If one insists upon a comparison of its form with polyphonous forms, it ought to be subsumed under the form of a choral fantasy, for the lines of the melody of this serenade. . . make a *cantus firmus* counterpointed by the other parts, as in a Bach choral.¹¹

¹¹ Lorenz, Alfred, *Der musikalische Aufbau von Richard Wagners »Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg«* (Berlin: Max Hesses Verlag, 1931), p. 108. [Adorno's translation.]

After the explanation of the fugue that the *Hour* gives at the beginning the pupils when listening will look for a fugue-like recurrence of the theme. As this does not occur in the »choral fantasy«, they will be at a loss, and the riotous confusion portrayed by the music will become their own. There is much talk about the fugue, but nothing is done which actually helps them to understand a fugue in its concrete musical logic.

6.) *The »Background« of the Music Appreciation Hour's Explanations*

The last postulate concerning pedagogical tactics was that the course must not employ notions or associations contradicting the essence of the material and its background. Failures in this field are not quite so simple to spot as those already dealt with, but as far as the general educational effect is concerned they are more decisive than any examined so far. These failures are mainly a matter of formulation. Three extreme examples of a trend of thinking which virtually undermines the whole course suffice for illustration.

a.) The sixth concert of Series B is concerned with »Motion in Music«. One of the examples presented is Schubert's »Cradle Song«. The commentator says: »Schubert was incredibly gifted as a writer of songs; when he was eighteen he had composed almost one hundred and fifty of them, and for the rest of his life, he averaged forty songs a year.« Although these statements are not incorrect, their tone is such as to promote an attitude toward music which can only be called barbaric. He speaks of Schubert's songs in terms of the output of a factory, stressing the quantitative element. The fact that the young Schubert had already written one hundred and fifty songs means nothing; some Tin Pan Alley composers could outnumber him very easily at an age as comparatively youthful for this day as Schubert's was for his, whereas Mahler, a great song composer, wrote, in his entire lifetime, no more than sixty songs. Particularly provocative is the term »averaged«, which necessarily carries the implication that it is a composer's duty to write as much as possible and that his achievement can be measured by the »average« he reaches. The notion of average is completely antagonistic to art. One passage like the one about Schubert's average, is liable to annihilate every notion of musical »giants«, musical sublimity, and so on, discussed in the course. As a matter of fact both means of appraisal, the quantitative way and the empty enthusiasm, are all too compatible.

b.) The fourth concert of Series D is a Haydn program. The introduction commits the following atrocity among others:

Haydn is often referred to as »the Father of the symphony«. He is that, and more. He developed and standardized the form which has been in constant use ever since, as the accepted form for symphonies, concertos, quartets, trios, and sonatas.

The allegation that Haydn »standardized« the sonata form, is a fatal blow to the life of musical forms. Standardization is a term applied to industrial mass production and not to works of art, but apparently the commentator is under the spell of the industrial age to such an extent that he does not even notice its inadequacy. Haydn crystallized the sonata form, not as a rigid standard, but as a highly dynamic framework responding to any impulse of the composer in the specific work he is writing. The standardized sonata form would cease to be a living form and would become nothing more than a schoolmaster's set of prescriptions. The real danger in such statements is that they promote the idea that it is the task of a composer to »make things easier«, as if it were Haydn's merit that after him it was easier to compose; actually and fortunately, it became more difficult after Haydn to write symphonies. Musical development is not like gadgeteering.

As long as the idea of making things easier prevails in musical education, no actual musical understanding can be expected to develop. Such understanding consists in the very spontaneity of the listener's response that is jeopardized by the feeling that everything has been settled for him by other people who have standardized the forms.

c.) The sixth concert of Series D presents a performance of the entire second act of Verdi's *Aida* by the Metropolitan Opera Company, certainly a good selection for presentation. In the introduction's treatment of the text, however, one finds the suggestion that Rhadames »places his love for Aida above his social position as a national hero«. The term »social position« carries with it associations of the Social Register. Rhadames, in the opera, has no more »social position« than does Lohengrin or Tristan; he is a mythical figure symbolizing a general human conflict. The conventionality and stuffiness of the term kills the very »imagination« which the course so often attempts to summon. In the first place, what good it would be for a youngster to dream about the pyramids and mysteries in Egypt only to learn that even there it is social position that matters; further, a mythical notion such as that of a national hero is distorted when it is treated as a profession leading to »social position« which could be occupied by another person as well.

There is much talk about »background« of musical education. An involuntary slip such as that about Rhadames, shows the shallowness of the »background« of imagination and fantasy out of which the

educators of the Music Appreciation Hour draw their categories. The world of *Aida* remains two-dimensional, as it were, when it is linked up with the notion of »social position«. But this is no longer a matter of purely musicological information and education. It leads to the broadest cultural criticism of the entire enterprise.

II The *Music Appreciation Hour* as Promoter of Musical Pseudo-Culture

We have shown in Section I the failure of the *Music Appreciation Hour*, pedagogically as well as musically, to establish any living relationship of actual, spontaneous understanding between the music it offers and its pupils. It even fails to convey any reliable information on musical matters. Even the basic concepts around which the instruction of the *Hour* is grouped, such as homophony and polyphony, the rondo, fugue, and sonata, remain obscure, and the pseudo-expert explanations provided by the *Hour* do not help to achieve clear understanding. What do they do instead?

a.) The notion of »appreciation«, as employed by the *Music Appreciation Hour*, is based upon the idea of music's effect upon the listener, interpreted in terms of »pleasure« or even »fun«. These principles, borrowed from the sphere of commercialized entertainment and shallow in themselves, lead, even if excusable as pedagogically expedient in inducing people to listen, to distortions of musical sense and cultural absurdities, at least if they are handled in the way the *Hour* handles them.

b.) The *Music Appreciation Hour* conceives of the »fun« one gets out of music as being practically identical with recognition. Although recognition may contribute to musical understanding, it is by no means identical with such understanding. Otherwise anything profoundly new would be excluded a priori. Actually, what occurs in the *Hour* is a shifting of the »fun« from a living-relationship with music to a fetishism of ownership of musical knowledge by rote. The idea is that of the musical spelling bee; the contest winner looms large behind appreciation. By influencing the pupils to recognize the established, the principle of fun, supposedly a principle based upon the listener's own needs and own spontaneity, is implicitly superseded by the desire for prestige attaching to recognition of the socially recognized.

c.) The authoritarian structure of this type of musical education, promotes a cult of persons instead of an understanding of facts. In the first place there is the name of Dr. Damrosch himself whose authority, at the same time, is a means of enhancing the prestige of NBC with the

listeners of the *Hour*. The actual measuring rod for musical personalities in the *Hour* is *success*. The conformist attitude of veneration for the successful is closely allied, in musical matters, with a profoundly reactionary attitude. These features of the *Hour* virtually produce musical pseudo-culture: the ideal music appreciator, from the viewpoint of the *Hour*, would be a musical Babbitt.

d.) The tendency toward musical pseudo-culture becomes most striking at the very point where the *Music Appreciation Hour* apparently tries to »activate« its listeners: in the tests that are appended to each worksheet. These employ a mechanical technique, are not applicable to concrete listening phenomena but only to the instruction given by the teacher, and are as a whole fit to promote only highly questionable information about music and not actual musical understanding.

1.) »Appreciation« and »Fun«

The course defines itself as »instruction in the appreciation of music«.^o The notion of appreciation is commented upon by Dr. Will Earhart in the *Teacher's Guide*: »To respond to rhythms and enjoy (which means ›appreciate‹) them as varied modes of motion.« The leading category of music appreciation is, in other words, the effect of music. Indeed, the *Teacher's Guide*, particularly in Dr. Earhart's comment on Series C, places an overwhelming emphasis upon the notion of musical effects, while totally omitting the notion of musical sense.

Appreciation would be the sum total of musical effects achieved within the listeners. It is a notion current in aesthetics since Aristotle's definition of tragedy as an art-form aimed to produce the responses of pity and fear in the spectator. Goethe was fully aware of its danger when he wrote: »The perfection of the artwork in itself is the eternal and indispensable postulate. What a pity that Aristotle, who always had the perfect before him, should have thought of the effect!«

It is not necessary here to go into any detailed refutation of »effect-aesthetics« which is bound up at least today with a market society, where every productive power is fettered by the necessity of being pecuniarily marketable and of exercising some desired effect upon a potential customer. Instead, we content ourselves with an analysis of the inherent inconsistencies to which this aesthetics leads the *Music Appreciation Hour* with regard to its conceptual framework as well as to the relationship which its theoretical aspects bear to the material presented by the concerts.

^o *Teacher's Guide*, p. 6.

a.) The psychological effect of a work of art on a subject may serve to bring him into relation with the work of art. But it is never the underlying principle according to which the work is structurally organized. It is a basic misunderstanding of »appreciation« to postulate that the effect of the work of art is identical with its sense and that a work is understood as soon as it exercises a certain effect, or that it is the intention of the work to create such an effect.

The confusion between the pedagogical use of the effect as a point of departure and the interpretation of the work of art itself in terms of effect leads in a vicious circle. The effect of an artwork upon the potential spectator or listener is something given. Pedagogy tries to start from this givenness of the effect in order to lead up to an understanding of the matter itself; but how is this possible if the matter itself is defined only in terms of the effect? If one were to start from the effect, the process of understanding urged by the *Hour* would be spurious for understanding; that is, the end would be nothing more than the beginning – namely, the effect.

In the case of fully adequate art experience, something of this sort may occur; given an ideal listener, his immediate apperception and the full meaning of the work would coincide. But this coincidence cannot be presumed to exist at that point from which music education has to start. In other words, the *Music Appreciation Hour* must not treat its pupils as if they were ideal listeners for whom the meaning of the work of art coincides with the effect it has upon them. It is precisely this, however, which is the attitude. We have mentioned the anomaly of starting from the effect in order to lead up to the meaning of the work of art which, in turn, is defined in terms of the effect.

b.) If starting from the effect and, at the same time, aiming toward the effect leads in a pedagogical circle, the idea of effect, even if taken in its utter abstractness, produces a further insurmountable difficulty with regard to the subject upon whom the effect is supposed to take place. The *Teacher's Guide* says:

The discussion may embrace [. . .] whether the piece »hangs together« almost to the point of monotony, or whether it moves on and on as fancy leads, to nowhere in particular, or whether it has *just enough* of »same« and »different« (unity and variety) to please us.^p

Who are the »we«? Certainly to a youngster with no musical experience, a piece of advanced modern music will appear to »move on and on as fancy leads, to nowhere in particular«, just because he is unable

^p *Ibid.*, p. 8ff.

to understand the subtle relationships which constitute the structure of such a piece or the complicated pattern of its form. Should the composer, therefore, be forbidden to write such a work? This would mean the inauguration of the line of least resistance as the ultimate quality of music and philistine self-satisfaction and ignorance would be the judge of its aesthetic value. It goes without saying that not only understanding but even pleasure, in the primitive sense urged by the *Hour*, vary with the subject and that something which »pleases us« as it is conceived by the *Hour* might repel a more highly developed musical consciousness and vice versa.

Behind the talk of the »we« who should be pleased is an untenable idea of »natural musical feeling«. This »natural musical feeling« does not exist; it is merely the veneer of historically changing attitudes and one may safely say that what is today called musically »natural« is mainly the residue of past convention.

c.) One does not know upon whom the effect is supposed to be exercised. Does the *Hour* regard effect itself as the desired effect as well as the actual one, between which it does not draw any articulate distinction? The *Hour's* educators do not hesitate to identify this effect with enjoyment, pleasure, or fun. Here lies the connection between the categories of consumer goods, particularly commercial entertainment and the sort of practical aesthetic advocated by the *Hour*. Something must be pleasing and worth its money to be admitted to the market. On the contrary, the work of art really raises postulates of its own and it is more essential for the listener to please the Beethoven symphony than for the Beethoven symphony to please him. None of these questions appears within the categorial framework of the *Music Appreciation Hour*.

Instead the term fun appears at different instances.⁹ The introduction to Series A asks: »What can we do to get the most fun from what the

⁹ An analysis of the specific role played by the notion of fun in popular aesthetics in the United States and, to a certain extent, also in England, shows it to be connected with notions such as humor, play, relaxation – in short, relief from boredom. This idea presupposes that art must not be »serious«, not even serious within the aesthetic sphere; it postulates, further, that it must be a matter of play, as against the exacting reality of actual living and, finally, it implies that the individual is not required to make much effort and can relax. These notions are by no means inherent in art, or, to say the least, do not completely define art even if one regards the element of play as one of its constituents. The notion of fun reflects a *social process* which mechanizes and oppresses the individual to such a degree that in his spare time he must have relief from his responsibilities. For our epoch this relief assumes, under the name of fun, the form of a retrogression to childhood. The adult who professes to have fun is molded after the pattern of the laughing, carefree, wanton boy who certainly does not exist as a musical listener. In our present society, with its line

radio fairy brings?« This is a compounded absurdity. The term fun, borrowed from the tritest spheres of everyday life, carries a touch of humor which, whatever its proper merits may be, is totally at variance with the serious music presented by the *Hour*. Moreover a fairy is supposed to be a being from a higher, spiritual world, who may bring elation, happiness, anguish, everything but fun. Finally, the phrase links the fairy with radio, a technical tool which is essentially scientific and by its very historical essence opposed to any »aura« such as that suggested by the use of the fairy – thus achieving association through anachronism.^r

Later the word »fun« is interpreted as follows: »Those who use their minds most actively are the ones who get the most fun.«^s Certainly it is sound to urge mental activity in music listening. But here again the term »fun«, while apparently simplifying the issue, actually makes it more obscure. For it is the listener's very mental activity which dispenses with fun as envisioned by the *Music Appreciation Hour*. Any music which one listens to spontaneously, that is, with active comprehension of its context, ceases to be »relaxing« and no longer brings amusement. Beyond that, one thing is certain: that serious music, be it listened to actively or passively, is of such a nature as not to promote fun. To get fun out of the slow movement of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* sonata or the C-sharp-minor quartet, would be more difficult than simply to understand them.

Even if one should take the term »fun« as a pedagogic exaggeration and substitute the more restrained term »pleasure«, it would not work more satisfactorily. It is interpreted by the *Music Appreciation Hour* in terms of gustatory listening: »The material of musical art is tone. It must be pleasing to us. Besides purity and beauty, tone has color, and the tone color affects us.« This type of attitude towards music is also found in Carl Seashore's *Psychology of Music*,^t and in Deems Taylor's *Of Men and Music*.^u

Footnote q (*cont.*)

of demarcation between work and leisure, the individual is oppressed not only while working but the effect of the oppression during the work process makes itself felt in his leisure as well. Even here, he cannot be a truly free and conscious human being, but must retrogress to childhood stages of his individual development in order to renew his adult working capacity. This mutilating effect of contemporary society upon the very spheres of life which appear, on the surface, to be exempt from the capitalistic process, accounts for the fact that the notion of fun becomes sacrosanct especially in the most highly industrialized countries.

A fully developed theory of the retrogression of listening will necessarily have to analyze all the implications of fun as an aesthetic norm.⁵

^r See the »Radio Voice«.

^s *Ibid.*, »Introduction to Series B«.

^t Carl Seashore, *Psychology of Music*, New York 1938.

^u Deems Taylor, *Of Men and Music*, New York 1937.

Musical hedonism, if handled in the atomistic and primitive way suggested by the *Hour*, leads to the idea of a café concert gypsy violinist playing a Beethoven concerto. It appears doubtful to us that this necessary consequence is actually the aim of the educators connected with the *Music Appreciation Hour*. Every musician is familiar with the phenomenon of the »too beautiful« tone which carries with it wrong associations; it is comparable to paintings in which a sunset or a girl as »natural objects« can be too beautiful, in naturalistic terms actually to fulfill the artistic intention of being structurally beautiful.

d.) The full consequence of the *Hour's* teaching in terms of effect and pleasure, in its inconsistency with the material offered in the programs, may be illustrated by the following quotation from the introduction to the eleventh concert of Series C, concerned with the symphony in general.

[. . .] the first movement makes us work in order to keep track of its complicated patterns, the second movement sets us dreaming, the third allows us to relax and play, and the fourth raises our spirits so that we are in a cheerful or exalted frame of mind at the conclusion of the work.

According to this view it is the idea of a symphony as a whole to make life more comfortable for its listeners. But why, then, go to the symphony at all? This aesthetics is certainly better served by Tin Pan Alley. Why, specifically, must the first movement »make us work in order to keep track of its complicated patterns«? Only to make the following dreams more pleasant to us. This is reminiscent of the famous recipe for happiness given to the poor: If one sleeps in a cold room, one has only to put one's foot outside the blankets until it is chilled, the more to enjoy its getting warm again when it is put back. As to the second movement, the description in terms of effect, namely of setting us dreaming, is decidedly inadequate. In a great many cases, for instance the slow movement of Brahms' Fourth Symphony, the pattern of the second movement is no less complicated than that of the first and is by no means »relaxing«. Is this movement, then, only another attempt to prepare us, by its very contrast, for the relaxation to follow? But this relaxation does not eventuate: the rollicking Scherzo is very short and the final Passacaglia imposes a new burden upon the tired business man. Is Brahms' Fourth Symphony therefore a bad work?

It should be added that the final reference to our »cheerful or exalted frame of mind at the conclusion of the work« is not only contradicted by a great many works such as the Brahms' Symphony mentioned but also presupposes an identity between the »aesthetic« mood of a work of art and the »naturalistic« mood of its listener, which by

no means exists. One may listen to a highly excited piece of music very attentively and fully understand it without becoming excited oneself. One of the main presuppositions for an understanding of art is the consciousness of the difference between art insofar as it is a world in itself, and the empirical reality of one's own existence. This fundamental fact about art has escaped the attention of the *Music Appreciation Hour*. This question is too difficult to be discussed with the *Hour's* listeners but the *Hour* itself ought to follow a procedure which would not lead to confusion of the aesthetic character of the work of art and the empirical reality of the pupil's life. This very confusion is furthered by the *Hour's* comments concerning effect and pleasure.

It might be objected that the elimination of terms such as »great work of art«, and their replacement by terms supposedly denoting the actual role of music for human beings, such as »fun« and »pleasure«, is progressive in itself. But this progress is spurious. The illusion of the sanctity of music is shattered by the *Music Appreciation Hour*, but it is replaced by the enchantment of the composers, conductors, and institutions that produce it.

Good musical education postulates respect for the work, evinced by the listener's preoccupation with its musical sense *per se*. It is not loaded with inculcating maudlin respect for the composer, whose merits it judges in terms of the concrete meaning and concrete achievement of his work. The *Music Appreciation Hour* destroys respect for the work, its meaning, and its achievement, by transposing it into the effect it has upon the listener and inculcating in him composer-fetishes which become virtually identical with the »fun« he derives from viewing a World Series baseball game.

The *Music Appreciation Hour* first cheapens music and then teaches its pupils to adore musicians as spiritual leaders. This contradiction, basic to the whole approach, makes any destruction of fetishism impossible.

2.) Recognition and the Musical Spelling Bee

a.) To the *Music Appreciation Hour*, the pleasure of music appreciation coincides with the pleasure of recognition. »Music is not ours to enjoy until it is ›out of the air‹ and ›in our heads‹.«^v Or, as formulated even more recklessly, »Music that is known and remembered until it can be whistled or sung or can be reviewed silently in the mind, becomes loved and is heard with appreciation.«^w The reification

^v *Ibid.*, *Teacher's Guide*, p. 8.

^w *Ibid.*, p. 9.

mentioned in Section I becomes even more evident when the function of recognition of music is overemphasized. A theme isolated solely for purposes of recognition and identification, is no longer part of the living musical process but is a thing owned. Or, as the *Teacher's Guide* states it characteristically in our last reference, it is »ours« or »in our heads«. »A piece of music, which has just at the moment come into our sensorium«, is compared by the *Music Appreciation Hour* to »a picture, a person, a building, a machine.«^x

Of course, as in all mental processes, recognition plays an important part also in musical experience. What is being called into question here is the emphasis. While apparently urging recognition in order to help people to »enjoy« music, the *Music Appreciation Hour* actually encourages enjoyment, not of the music itself, but of *the awareness that one knows music*. It becomes a deflected pleasure, not a spontaneous and immediate one. The pleasure involved consists of a fetishistic hoarding of information about music, which one enjoys as a miser enjoys the gold he has accumulated. This is closely related to the idea given passing mention in Section I, of the musical contest where the hoarded musical treasures of various individuals are, as it were, measured quantitatively against each other. They speak about pleasure, but they aim at identification. In a passage which we regard as the most significant of all, the *Teacher's Guide* lets the cat out of the bag:

Familiarity with the principal themes and observation of their use in a composition should lead to a better understanding of the music. It should also assist in the identification and naming of the composition.^y

Identification and naming of compositions should be only a supplementary means of helping the listener understand music. Though seemingly underemphasized here, the very categorizing of identification and naming as on a par with understanding shows to what extent the pedagogics of a musical spelling bee pervade the thinking of the educators of the *Hour*. Miss Williams, the author of the statement, has, so to speak, a double standard of musical morality. She has to speak about understanding but she knows that it is merely a matter of ideology and that what actually matters for the purpose of the *Hour* is identification and naming. This ambiguity is reminiscent of that in general education, where children are taught the ideals they ought to follow in life but are led to understand that they are to become good

^x *Ibid.*, p. 8.

^y *Ibid.*, p. 14.

businessmen, »adjusted« to conditions of practical living. The fact that musical knowledge is fostered as a by-product by this method is more than outweighed by the deterioration of music in functioning as a realm of »facts« about which one should be »informed«.^z

One consequence of this shifting of emphasis is that music, instead of being »lived« by the listener, is actually transformed into property, such as is suggested by the terms of »ours« and »in our heads«. We offer two more examples of this shifting of emphasis. They present themselves metaphorically but the frequency of the recurrence of this very metaphor throughout shows that it touches upon something fundamental: the property relation of men and music which is the main feature of »commodity listening«.⁶

The introduction to Series A states that the *Music Appreciation Hour's* intention is to make people »musically richer for life«. Sir George Grove, quoted in the *Student's Worksheet* of the seventh concert, on Beethoven, goes so far as to present Beethoven's revolutionary achievement – the discovery of subjectivity as a constitutive category within the structure of music itself – in the smug terms of property which is enjoyed generation after generation, although by this very transformation the essence of Beethoven's dynamics is distorted into its opposite. He called the Larghetto of Beethoven's Second

^z The importance of this trend in the *Music Appreciation Hour* may appear to be overemphasized. It can be grasped in its full implications only as part of a general trend in contemporary American musical life and musical education. One of the most popular American books on music currently, Sigmund Spaeth's *Great Symphonies: How to Recognize and Remember Them* (New York 1936) is devoted entirely and frankly to the purpose which serves as one of the guidelines for the more cautious *Music Appreciation Hour* as well. Mr. Spaeth assumes that »one of the chief reasons why people in general are not familiar with the great symphonies may be found in the fact that they cannot remember the tunes«. [Ibid., p. 2] Therefore, he tries to drill his readers in the recognition of themes by supporting them upon a foundation of words which are to be sung to the music, which are, at the same time, supposed to be comments on the music, and which are a process of simultaneously pigeonholing and listening which, in itself is corrupting. He advances the idea that these words »must be simple and direct enough to appeal to children, but not so silly as to offend intelligent adults«. [p. 4] How far he succeeds with this idea may be shown by the following examples. To the beginning of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, one is told to sing the words: »I am your fate! Come let me in.« [p. 97] To the famous second theme of the first movement of Tchaikovsky's »Pathétique Symphony«: »This music has a less pathetic strain, sounds more sane and not so full of pain. Sorrow is ended, grief may be mended, it seems Tchaikovsky will be calm again.« [p. 243] This shows what the final result of theme drill and recognition training may be. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that any person who applies the tactics recommended by Mr. Spaeth when listening to music, is, to say the least, completely lost to any musical understanding.

Symphony »the culminating point of the old pre-revolutionary world, the world of Haydn and Mozart« and adds that »it was the farthest point to which Beethoven could go before he burst into that wonderful new region into which no man had before penetrated, of which no man had even dreamed, *but which is now one of our dearest possessions*«. Thus does Beethoven become transformed into a musical Daughter of the French Revolution.

b.) This shift from spontaneous perception to recognition, identification, and possession, makes illusory the preoccupation with the listener's response and the apparent adjustment of music to the listener's wants, as is urged by the *Hour's* conception of music as pleasure or enjoyment: behind the fun is drill. Again Miss Williams makes a revealing confession: »Frequent drills on pronunciation of names should be given. Children should look at the pictures of instruments, composers, . . . while doing this.« This is no longer progressive education. While children are supposed to get the fun they want, they are actually being subjected to authority. Drill plays a larger role in the *Hour* than its humanitarian phrases would have one believe. The *Teacher's Guide* knows from the outset the disciplinarian function of music, and there is reason to suspect that the teachers aim to stress this function even more than the hedonistic one.

Marches, which appear in generous measure throughout the programs, may be used for school marching; if the school has eurhythmics, some of the music can be used for that purpose.^{aa}

It is not clear how this »use« of music can be reconciled with the purpose of making us »musically richer for life«, for it certainly enhances the appreciation, not of music, but of mechanical order. Music itself is cast in the terms of such order: a feeling of social conformity is conveyed by the physical regularity of musical sound vibrations.

3.) *Categories of Musical Babbitry*

The authoritarian tendencies are accentuated in the cult of personalities fostered by the *Music Appreciation Hour*. As previously mentioned, the *Music Appreciation Hour* shows scant respect for the works themselves but exhibits continuous obeisance to composers and particularly to the conductor. The cult of personalities is, to be sure, nothing new in music. The history of music is studded with complaints

^{aa} *Ibid.*, p. 9.

against this cult. Formerly, however, the cult of personalities, particularly of singers and virtuosi, was concomitant with an unplanned musical life not governed by an agency which held itself morally responsible for musical welfare. In the *Music Appreciation Hour* the personality cult is not a mere concomitant auxiliary effect but is strictly congruous with the entire approach. The agency which prides itself as being responsible for the musical welfare of the growing generation pursues a line long considered adverse to true musical experience, and unfortunately in keeping with incorrect fundamental postulates of music education. The function of the personality cult in music, which in certain previous eras (for example, in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century) had a progressive aspect, is today manipulated so as to fit in with a retrogressive cultural setting.

a.) The *Music Appreciation Hour* strives to cast a spell around the conductor. The elements of this spell, which are of vastly divergent origins, stem partly from a witchcraft notion of the mysterious powers of personality as such, partly from the seeming supernaturalness of a technical tool which weaves sounds from the ether. All this produces a false halo. The following statement from the »Introduction to Series A« is characteristic of an attitude which, by its very nature, must encourage a sort of advertising poetry in terms of hero-worship:

Mr. Damrosch [. . .] turns to the orchestra, waves his baton like a magic wand and instantly beautiful music is heard in thousands of school-rooms from Maine to California. No fairy story is more wonderful than this.

This magic of radio, which is no magic at all, is credited to the conductor.

The composers also have their rounds. They are called giants:

[. . .] our interest in the music of Bach and Händel, the two contemporary giants in music, is increased when we realize the contrasting differences in their lives.^{bb}

The same note is struck in the introduction to the twelfth concert of the same series:

While America has developed, so far as we can yet discern, no musical »giant« – no Beethoven or Brahms who stands head and shoulders above his fellow musicians [. . .]

^{bb} *Ibid.*, *Student's Worksheet*, »Introduction to Series D«.

It is highly dubious that concepts such as that of the musical giant which presupposes a dogmatic conception of genius based on analogies to wrestling and other sports, which in turn are based on an analogy to fairy stories – »there were giants in the earth in those days« – have any pedagogical value. But if they are to be used, one postulate is indispensable: it is up to the educator to show why these rather than others are the giants, instead of taking their position for granted.

The entire last series, which is aimed at the most mature pupils, focuses on great composers. But none of the concerts attempt to show why any of these composers is great. It would be a good idea to open a program in this course by telling the pupils: »You hear that Beethoven is a great composer, and this talk probably gets on your nerves. At least you must wonder just why he is great as compared with other composers. Is it merely because he put a final chorus in his Ninth Symphony, or because the opera *Fidelio* is based upon humanitarian ideas? Is it because he introduced subjective expression as a basic element of music? This last is certainly his most conspicuous achievement but if we want to understand Beethoven's music, we must get to know how it is realized within the structure of Beethoven's work and how, in its specific elements, this music is superior to other music.« Then one could compare Beethoven's music with that of his contemporaries. One should point out the specific elements of his technique, such as the strict economy of his compositions which utilize every bit of thematic material and present nothing which does not have a function within the whole.

One should show, further, how this music is inherently an attack upon the musical conventions of his time, and finally, by some characteristic examples, show what can be called Beethoven's tone. In this way, people can be made to understand why Beethoven really is great and that his greatness is not an empty historical convention. When they have learned this, they will stop calling him a giant and will, instead, see his uniqueness in its due proportions, not only historically but also absolutely. It should be emphasized that his specific qualities are by no means impervious to analysis in plain and concrete terms, as against the qualities of other composers.

If Section D were devoted to such questions, one could also arrive at an exposition of the differences between composers whose principal value lies in the fact that they adequately represent their time (for instance, taking the composers mentioned in Series D: Lully, Corelli, and to a great extent, even Händel) and such a composer as Beethoven, whose achievements are fundamentally individual achievements. The term greatness, in the case of these two types, has a completely different meaning and requires very different interpretation.

If this idea were developed, it could lead to a real understanding of the decisive trend in musical history, the rise of »subjectivity« – that is, that casting off by music of the chains of convention, which involved obliviousness to the public. Insight into this process can be employed in inculcating an understanding of advanced, serious modern music, which can then be interpreted in terms of the inheritance from Beethoven as regards music's immanent consistency.

Nothing of this sort is attempted by the *Music Appreciation Hour*. There is not even any discussion of the question »Why is this good music and this not?«, a question which can, within wide limits, be answered precisely and objectively. Instead, rubber-stamp values are accepted throughout the course.

A German philosopher named Rudolf Eucken once wrote a book called *The Philosophies of the Great Thinkers*.⁷ Georg Simmel said of this book, »Yes, they are great thinkers, but in raspberry syrup.« The *Music Appreciation Hour* presents great composers in raspberry syrup (regardless of nationality). To quote the »Introduction to Series D«:

What a glorious panorama of mountain peaks this series of concerts presents to us – heights of genius and aspiration, brilliant in undying forms of beauty, giving us of the musical planes those moments of quiet inspiration so needed in the hurry of everyday life!

b.) Above the mountain peaks, in the clouds, so to speak, dwells Dr. Damrosch himself. It is in particularly bad taste and closer to the circus tradition of showmanship than to »cultural education« for the *Hour* to indulge in high-pressure publicity for its own conductor. By shifting the listener's interest to Dr. Damrosch, NBC credits itself with disinterestedness in bringing musical culture to America's children. Throughout the discussion in the worksheets, a shrewd, propagandistic purpose prevails over the cultural veneer: the sponsors of the *Hour* are more interested in convincing the public of the brilliant job they are doing than they are in the job itself.

An important element in the *Music Appreciation Hour* revealed here by the social critique of radio is that while it functions as one of the few sustaining programs and, at the same time, as one of the few devoted to serious music, it is devised to show that NBC serves the public interest. In the setup of radio, not only the commercial programs but, indirectly, the sustaining programs as well, exercise an advertising function.^{cc} Dr. Damrosch is probably entirely unaware of this process.

^{cc} »The promotion booklets sent out by broadcasting companies to potential advertisers frankly regard radio as »the solution to a sales problem«. This solution, they

The *Teacher's Guide* contains two photographs of him, one a large frontispiece, the other with the orchestra. The emphasis this placed upon him is out of proportion to his actual achievement in the *Hour*. His musical performance is not of outstanding value (which fact is not necessarily detrimental in a prevailing pedagogical enterprise). Moreover, as neither the *Teacher's Guide* nor the *Student's Worksheet* is his handiwork, his actual function in the preparation and execution of the *Hour* cannot be as substantial as the publicity makes out.

Each series of worksheets contains another photograph of Dr. Damrosch, accompanied by a biographical sketch. In all four series it bears the significant headline, »Your conductor, Walter Damrosch«. The implications of this heading are virtually inexhaustible. We know two of them: first, the attitude which may be called, in terms of a current song-hit, the »Especially for You« attitude – that Dr. Damrosch, this splendid, great old man, this Wotan of classical music, descends from his other-worldly height to the classroom – perhaps even to the cradle – and gives all his loving energy to the little children whom he suffers to come unto him. Further, by being called »Your« conductor, he is, at the same time, made »your« leader, the man whose authority you must follow and in whom you must believe. It is an attitude which, again, can best be expressed in the Tin Pan Alley jargon, as found on the back cover of the hit, »Two Sleepy People«: »Follow your leader – Artie Shaw«.^{dd}

Footnote cc (*cont.*)

say, comes from ›creating valuable good-will; associating this good-will definitely with the product; performing unique missionary work; increasing distribution; widening the market; appealing to a desired and specific consumer group in a selective territory – at a receptive time.‹ Psychologically phrased: by broadcasting attractive programs (often not paid for) the industry creates in millions of individuals not only habits of listening but attitudes of favor toward the entire institution of radio. Listeners who are receptive and well disposed, sometimes even aglow with pleasure from the program, are likely to transfer this friendly attitude to the product advertised. If a specific product is mentioned in association with a particular attractive program the transfer is more intense and more certain, but any product lucky enough to be mentioned over the air derives some advantage from the benign psychological attitude (›good-will‹) of the listeners. Such is the argument. « (Cantril and Allport, *op. cit.*, p. 65).

^{dd} Here again the full implications can be understood in the light of the total setting of certain publicity-tendencies in contemporary American music life, which do not shrink from attributing qualities to the crack conductor which are, in other countries, reserved for dictators. The issue of the magazine *Life* for November 27, 1939, bears a huge photograph on its front cover showing Toscanini and his little granddaughter, Sonia, at the piano as if he were giving her a piano lesson. The issue also contains pictures and commentary devoted exclusively to domestic scenes of Toscanini and little Sonia. While he is shown playing hide-and-seek with her or while she jokingly takes a lesson in conducting from him, the text does not miss the opportunity to emphasize the authoritarian features of the great musician: »The

It is noteworthy that even in the worksheets for the smaller children, NBC does not forego the opportunity of advertising itself and Dr. Damrosch:

Then came radio. Mr. Damrosch saw that through this wonderful invention he could play to practically all the young people of the nation. With the aid of the National Broadcasting Company, he founded the NBC *Music Appreciation Hour*, and for eleven years he has been conducting these Friday broadcasts.

The same sort of statement is reiterated in a somewhat modified and less patronizing tone in the Introduction to the Series C and D for older children:

Realizing that through this wonderful new medium he might reach millions of listeners, whereas he had formerly played to mere thousands, he organized, with the cooperation of the National Broadcasting Company, the series of broadcast concerts known as the *Music Appreciation Hour*.

In this introduction, value judgments about Dr. Damrosch are foisted upon the pupils. In music education, evidently, no one is shocked by [a] statement such as: »Walter Damrosch has been, for many years, one of the truly great figures in the musical life of America.«

Finally there is the comment concerning Dr. Damrosch as a composer:

Because of his continuous activities as a conductor, Mr. Damrosch has had only limited opportunities to compose music.

Footnote dd (*cont.*)

world knows Toscanini as a great conductor with a fearful temper, an unflinching memory and the power to lash orchestras into frenzies of fine playing.« [p. 65] Or: »When he stands, small and silver-haired, in front of a symphony orchestra, he is a furious perfectionist who makes men play music as they can play it for no other man. It is a good guess that as many Americans know that Toscanini conducts an orchestra as know that Joe DiMaggio plays centerfield.« [p. 63] His tenderness to his grandchild has as contrasting background the Terror, and both are neutralized in a revolting jelly of humor such as: »One of the few people who are not awed by Toscanini, she gives hilarious imitations of his conducting, is probably the only person alive who dares argue with him about the technique of conducting.« [p. 66] Finally, the magazine gives a full-page photograph of the conductor alone at his trade-mark grand-piano with a grimace of artistic creation from which at any moment Beethoven will spring full blown.

If he hadn't given up everything for his little pupils, Dr. Damrosch probably would have averaged even more songs a year than Schubert.

c.) The criterion for according significance to personalities whose merits are reiterated but not analyzed, is evidently nothing more than success. The idea of business competition, that the best man is the one who beats his competitors, economically or occupationally, is unashamedly borrowed as a standard in music. There is no composer in Series D who escapes judgment in terms of the degree of his success. This leads to false statements or to ludicrous contradictions between terminology and actuality.

The Introduction to the Beethoven program, Series D, Number 7, reads:

Beethoven's genius did not have to wait for posthumous recognition. He rapidly rose to fame and became well-to-do. Long before his death, he had the satisfaction of knowing that he was considered the greatest composer of his time.

This satisfaction would have made Beethoven substitute for his criterion for estimating himself musically, the criterion of public approval and remuneration. Moreover, the eagerness to demonstrate Beethoven's business success is not borne out by the facts. Although Beethoven never actually had to starve, he never became »well-to-do«. He lived on a small pension granted him by a group of Austrian aristocrats. Some of them died, part of the grant was cancelled, and Beethoven had to struggle through long and disagreeable litigation proceedings in order to get his money. Later he fell into great financial difficulties because of the escapades of his ne'er do-well nephew. In 1821 or 1822 (the year is not definitely established) Beethoven was arrested by the police because of his ragged appearance, which would seem to belie his being well-to-do. Of course, any romanticizing about his poverty would be as reprehensible as the glorification of his wealth. It may not be the task of music education to make eleemosynary studies in composer biography but it is certainly even less its task to spread false information.

The notion of success appears again in the case of Wagner.^{ee} Here, however, another bit of patter is applied: that of *per aspera ad astra*, of the man who must struggle in his youth and is remunerated in his mature years. This is patterned after the newsboy-to-millionaire success story. And again the patter distorts reality.

^{ee} Introduction to the ninth concert, Series D.

Wagner's genius was slow in developing. His first two operas were total failures, and of little musical worth. At the age of twenty-nine, his *Rienzi* won him some recognition, but *The Flying Dutchman*, which followed, fared badly. Even his next two, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, which today enjoy immense popularity, were unsuccessful.

Rienzi did not win him »some recognition«, but actually was a roaring success which immediately gained him the influential and well-paid job of conductor at the Dresden Opera House. The story about the failure of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* is a legend which has been destroyed with overwhelming evidence by Ernest Newman in the second volume of his biography of Wagner. While Wagner lived under refugee conditions after 1849 (conditions which, by the way, did not involve the hardships which they sometimes imply today) *Tannhäuser*, in particular, became tremendously popular in the very Germany from which he was exiled and Liszt's first performance of *Lohengrin* in Weimar laid the foundation for the later recognition of Wagner as a reformer of the opera.

Wagner, who was a genius at borrowing money, never knew any real want throughout his life. These distortions are not important in themselves. They are important, however, as an index of habits of thought which are ever ready to alter the facts of history in order to establish present material values as past actualities – values which re-affirm only the ideology of contemporary ownership culture.

d.) The belief in career and success, since it is essentially belief in the justice of this world in rewarding merit, has its roots in a reactionary attitude. This attitude makes itself evident in the case of the *Music Appreciation Hour* in its standard of material values. The *Hour* fosters a bias against advanced modern music and adjusts its listeners to the musical *juste milieu*.

We cite three examples: First, the second concert of Series G, »Canon and Round«, gives as an example of the canon, an excerpt from the slow movement of Gustav Mahler's First Symphony.^{ff} Of all the music presented by the *Music Appreciation Hour*, this movement is as far as we can determine the only thing commented upon somewhat malevolently. This, without regard for the fact that this

^{ff} We cannot discuss here, in any detail, the fate of Mahler's music in this country. But it should be noted that Mahler is not represented in the most favorable way by his early symphonies in which he had definitely not yet developed full command of his technique. The first mature work is the Fourth Symphony. Instead of representing these latter compositions, even supposedly pro-Mahler stations such as WQXR (New York City) dwell upon his first three symphonies – from the first of which Dr. Damrosch quotes although it is by far the weakest.

movement cannot be understood fragmentarily through an excerpt but only as a whole. It is a first and, so to speak, awkward attempt of an exceedingly original composer to mobilize the »trivial« as an expressive element within a highly articulate musical language. The comment of the *Hour* is:

Even today his music is a subject for dispute. Some musicians consider him a great genius, others merely a gifted eccentric.

If it is bad taste to publicize Dr. Damrosch as one of the truly great musical figures of our time, it is in no better taste to publicize the illiterate conception of Mahler as a musical eccentric while maintaining the mock-neutrality of the observer who merely quotes some musicians' comments.

In contrast with the eccentric Mahler stands the real genius, Sibelius. According to the Introduction to the eleventh concert of Series D, he is »acknowledged to be not only Finland's greatest composer but one of the greatest composers of modern times«. This acknowledgment is highly disputable; at least the assertion about Sibelius' greatness ought to be substantiated.⁸⁸ But when the commentator of the *Hour* calls Sibelius »masterful in craftsmanship«, he must be pulled up short. If he were asked to show, in clear-cut musical terms, where the technical merits of Sibelius can be found, he would be unable to produce a satisfactory answer in musical terms. Even advocates of Sibelius among serious musicologists such as Ernest Newman concede that from the viewpoint of compositional technique Sibelius' work is of highly dubious quality, and they try to justify him by reference to other characteristics. Anyone who lauds Sibelius' craftsmanship shows that he either does not know what musical craftsmanship is or that he does not know Sibelius.

The third example, the last concert of Series D, is devoted to modern American composers and selects, as an example, the »Symphony in One Movement«, by Samuel Barber. The most significant sentence concerning this work reads: »His music is marked by appealing melodies, well-conceived formal design, moderation in the use of dissonance, and a sincerity and eloquence . . .« To cite a composer because he employs »moderation in the use of dissonance«, introduces a bias against advanced modern composition and even fosters the barbaric belief often found among non-musical persons that a musician who uses discords is one who is incapable of dealing with consonance

⁸⁸ See our critical analysis of Sibelius in the »Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung«, 7 (1938), p. 460 ff.⁸

or one who simply wants to make himself appear interesting. It is the latter belief, in particular, which is prompted by the linking up of »sincerity« with »moderation in the use of discords«. According to this point of view, a musician is sincere only if he speaks so-called musical common sense whereas one who does not bow to this requirement is virtually called dishonest.^{hh}

The *Hour* apparently gives no consideration to the structural necessity for »discord« in modern music (a notion which is anyhow senseless by itself because advanced modern music does not employ discords as opposed to concords but actually abolishes the idea of concord in the traditional sense and therefore makes the idea of discord meaningless). It makes no mention of the historical process that led to the prevalence of the discord in modern composition nor of the expressive function of the discord. To the *Music Appreciation Hour*, music must be as harmonious as they want people to pretend the world is. While the *Hour's* proponents profess a desire to educate

^{hh} The notion of the »natural« lies behind formulations of the *Hour* such as that concerning the moderate use of dissonance. This notion is a residue of past social convention and not a feature inherent in musical material itself. The emphasis laid upon the sincere, and on its concealed pseudo-normative correlate, the »natural«, is extra-musical but plays a vast role in general listening attitudes toward music.

A sociological interpretation of this cult of sincerity shows it to be founded upon attitudes such as the following:

1.) It implies the postulate that one should not do things differently from other people: that one not regard oneself as better than others. It implies a mechanical levelling tendency – a mistaken ideal of democracy. Whoever does not bow to convention makes himself conspicuous as either highbrow or addicted to »village-atheism«. Behind this pseudo-democratic ideal is actually the pervasive desiderate of following the manipulated patterns of ownership culture.

2.) The element of the »from man-to-man«, of cordiality, of »human interest«. One ought to talk to a stranger musically, as well as verbally, as if one were close to him, in order to make him forget the fundamental alienation of men. It is the very insincerity which produces a fawning cordiality between atomized, competing individuals, that is eulogistically acknowledged under the name of naturalness or sincerity. Musically, this results in the desiderate that music adapt itself to the emotional conventions of listeners and be regarded as sincere only to the extent that it succeeds in this adaptation even though the aesthetic expression of those emotions and indeed the emotional patterns themselves are little more than standardized verbalizations and actions.

But this cult of sincerity is not restricted to music. Cf. Cantril and Allport, *op. cit.*, p. 72, and pp. 208–9, especially the statements: »Whether to sound ›sincere‹ must correspond to inner conviction or whether it may be opposed is another question . . . Curiously enough, an insincere actor is often able to create more of an impression of honest conviction than an earnest but untrained speaker.« In other words, the fiction of sincerity is postulated as an adjustment to the conventional standards of the listeners. This general tendency is a model for understanding a much broader social trend – the labeling as ›insincere‹ and ›affected‹ of whatever speaks its own language.«

people musically, they actually reproduce the very prejudices which responsible musical education should seek to eradicate.

e.) The totality of these features of the *Music Appreciation Hour* is what we call the tendency to produce musical Babbitts – the promotion of a musical pseudo-culture that actually consists of some vague and largely erroneous information about music and the recognition of stiffly conventional musical values, instead of the promotion of a living relationship with music. Indeed, all the elements of this critical analysis fit within this musical pseudo-culture. Symptomatic of this are even elements nominally extraneous, such as the »drill« on »symbols for pronunciation«. The pseudo-cultural element here lies in the emphasis given to the pronunciation of names and, indeed, to their incorrect pronunciation: »Sanh-Sawnhss, Bahkh, and Bee-zay.« This instruction, of course, is intended to make the student capable of discussing music in drawing rooms (which he has never seen except in the movies). It has nothing whatsoever to do with music itself; one need not even pronounce Bach's name correctly in order to understand his music.

Musical Babbitry celebrates its greatest triumphs when it enters the emotional sphere: no one is more sentimental than the tired businessman and there's no one more willing to endorse such statements as »all of us are happy at times and sad at other times.«ⁱⁱ

The musical Babbitt has little forthright feeling for historical distance and for the inappropriateness of judging artworks produced at a different historical level in terms of contemporary values. To him everything can be measured and expressed in quantitative terms – the notion that everything can be expressed in terms of the money he spends for it. This attitude is evoked in the *Music Appreciation Hour* by benevolently patronizing statements such as, »Yet, in early times, much music was produced whose artistic perfection compares favorably with that of the great works of recent years.« Though there were no skyscrapers in Bach's time, his music was, after all, not so bad. The complement of this idea is, of course, that any contemporary composer who actually dares to write skyscraper music – as it were – is an intellectual ultra-modernist. These gaucheries are characteristic of the thinking of the musical Babbitt. We cannot here discuss the results of this sort of instruction upon the *Hour's* actual listeners. We can only say that if such philistinism crops up in the thinking of the musically-educated, then how can we hope that the musically-unaware will become better educated than their teachers? Of course, the *Music Appreciation Hour* may evoke a diametrically opposite response to

ⁱⁱ Series B, seventh concert.

what it purports to. But that is unlikely in a world where conformity is at a premium.

One last word about the problem of pseudo-culture as far as the material of the *Hour* is concerned. A disproportionately large amount of the programs is played in arrangements. Most of these are the work of either Dr. Damrosch's late father⁹ or of Dr. Damrosch himself. Probably the reason for this is that the *Hour* insists upon presenting only orchestral material, whereas its desire to teach music which is as simple as possible excludes the bulk of actual orchestral works and necessitates the scoring of music which is so simple that it was not conceived in orchestral terms. This means, therefore, that these works are presented largely in a form alien to their very essence. It is not inconsequential or a quirk of a composer that a composition has been written for the piano instead of for the orchestra. The presentation of such material in orchestral form means an artificial expansion of the music which, in many cases, is disastrous to its structure and its musical sense. Behind this practice there lurks the danger promoting the idea that »nothing is too expensive for our children«, and that therefore they must not content themselves with a piano piece but should have it rendered by the full orchestra. This *nouveau riche* attitude is an integral part of musical pseudo-culture.

The difficulties in the case of the sonata and the fugue would not have occurred if the *Hour*, instead of playing orchestral works, had been content with most elementary representations of these forms, which cannot possibly be orchestrated. We have cited the examples of Bach's E minor Fugue from the first volume of the »Well-Tempered Clavichord«, and the Beethoven piano sonata, Opus 49, Number 2. Frequently musical structures are more obvious to the layman when they are played mono-chromatically, by only a few instruments, than when they are beclouded by the orchestral apparatus. Any constructive positive change in the *Music Appreciation Hour* must take this into consideration.

4.) *The »Tests«*

It is difficult to say anything definite about the *Music Appreciation Hour's* effects without a large-scale program of student-listener research. Such an investigation would be of value only if it were carried through on a comparative scale, that is to say, if one were to compare the effects of music education of the type of the *Hour* with the behavior of non-educated youth, with the behavior of youth educated through private music lessons in the old-style, and finally with

the behavior of youth who are given structural music education. This research should be carried on by subjecting these different groups to actual musical tests instead of to more questions concerning their »frozen« knowledge about music. A corresponding research procedure was used in England some years ago in the field of painting and proved the great superiority of the structurally educated even against those with general Oxford and Cambridge education. Educational research of this type would be prerequisite to any valid plan fundamentally to improve the system of music education as followed in the *Music Appreciation Hour*.

The *Hour* does try to overcome radio's »one-way« structure and to activate its pupils. Each worksheet contains a set of tests whereby the achievements of the students are supposed to be appraised. But in no point is the danger of promoting musical pseudo-culture make itself felt more strongly than in these test sheets.

a.) There are insuperable objections to be raised against their very *structure*. Most of the tests apply the standard form of multiple-choice: »Check the correct phrase, then cross out the incorrect phrase.« This technique is a typical example of the transplanting of an administrative procedure to a field of human spontaneity to which it is essentially unsuited. It makes sense on a questionnaire for a survey of, let us say, the marital status of the population of the city of New York, to juxtapose the words »married, single, divorced«, with the instructions to check the correct word and cross out the incorrect ones. In music, where spontaneous behavior is everything and reflex-action nothing, any such procedure is absurd. Instead of providing space for the child's spontaneous reaction, he is forced into pre-arranged patterns and is made to follow *clichés* from above in order to be marked »correct« which is the counterpart of being stamped as a social conformist.

Our second main objection has to do with the mere spreading of information about music instead of bringing people into a living relationship with it. Pupils are tested only on what they have been taught about music, not about their actual musical comprehension. The questions on the questionnaires are related exclusively to the introductions and comments. This is the more dangerous since the tests apply not only to knowledge about certain facts mentioned by the commentators (which, to a certain extent, may be helpful in music education), but also to value judgments fostered by them, thus virtually forcing the children to repeat pat value judgments and to adapt themselves to given norms instead of judging autonomously.

b.) Examples from the tests:

»Does Grieg's *Morning* suggest dawn in Egypt only, or the break of day anywhere?«

(Series B, First Concert, question 1)

»Music that describes fairies is usually (light and graceful) (loud and noisy) (slow and clumsy).«

(Series B, Fifth Concert, question 2)

»Music adds to the beauty and meaning of words by making them (easier to pronounce) (appeal more strongly to our imagination).«

(Series B, Ninth Concert, question 1)

»Folk melodies are (seldom) (frequently) (invariably) employed by composers of concert music.«

(Series C, First Concert, question 2)

»Bach is famous today chiefly because he laid the foundations for (our modern music) (sonata form) (the orchestra).«ⁱⁱ

(Series D, Second Concert, question 1)

»Haydn is called ›the Father of the Symphony‹ because he perfected the (form) (mood) (style) of the modern symphony.«

(Series D, Fourth Concert, question 1)

»Mozart's talent (became evident) (began to decline) at an unusually early age.«

(Series D, Fifth Concert, question 1)

»His (Mozart's) association with Haydn (affected beneficially) (influenced adversely) the art of both composers.«

(Ibid., question 2)

ii This is an example of a question that is so difficult that it is impossible to answer, particularly since its basic notions have not been explained. The answer could not be the sonata-form which did not exist in Bach's time, nor the orchestra which he did not found. As for modern music – it is arbitrary to trace it back to any individual composer. In the text of the *M.A.H.* on which the question is based, it is actually correctly qualified. (See *infra* p. 260) »The remarks of some current commentators are of doubtful value, too sophisticated for the masses and too trite for the initiated. To say that Bach ›brushed‹ aside the narrow ideas of his predecessors and boldly strode out on new and unbroken paths means little to the listener who knows neither the nature of the ›narrow ideas of his predecessors‹ nor the characteristics of the ›unbroken paths‹. If he should know them already, then the comment is useless. The naive listener can best be aided by an elementary analysis of the composition to be played without too much effusion concerning the moods for himself.« (Cantril and Allport, *op. cit.*, p. 220)

- »Mozart's G minor Symphony appeals to the listener chiefly through the (descriptive realism) (sheer beauty) (emotional power) of the music.«
(Ibid., question 4)
- »Verdi's career was notable for its (brevity) (length).«
(Series D, Sixth Concert, question 1)
- »Throughout his career he (Beethoven) experiences (much sorrow and affliction) (constant happiness).«
(Series D, Seventh Concert, question 2)
- »The development of his (Beethoven's) personality (had no effect on his music) (influenced the development of his art).«
(Ibid., question 3)
- »The *Rosamunde Ballet Music* is (somber and cynical) (bright and cheerful) (boisterously merry) in moods.«
(Series D, Eighth Concert, question 4)
- »The first movement of the »Unfinished« Symphony is notable for its (ceaseless flow of melody) (brilliant and effective use of the brasses) (striking rhythmic effects).«
(Ibid., question 5)

c.) It is doubtful that any standardized test method is applicable to music, but if there must be tests at any price, they should at least be made intelligent. Everything should be done to make up for the »one-way« structure of radio which in itself tends to promote the rubber-stamp effect which is underscored by the rubber-stamped questions and the method of the *Music Appreciation Hour*.

We offer three examples of what we would regard as more sensible tests.

1.) One ought to play selections which one may safely suppose are not known to the majority of the pupils, without giving any information about these pieces. Then one should encourage the students to send written statements to the station concerning the formal structure of the works as well as the interrelationship between the structure and the concrete musical content of this very piece. In this procedure, especially when discussing characteristic answers of the students in the following session, particular care must be taken of one point which is totally missed by the *Hour*. That is that any given piece of music may be regarded as the resultant of two forces, namely, some pre-given form – however sublimated its pre-givenness may be, as in the case of

modern music – and the concrete, subjective intention of the specific composition. The students should be taught to follow up both these sides of any composition and particularly to understand how closely they are interconnected and how they exercise and influence upon each other. This procedure should be applied – so far as most elementary types such as cradle songs, etc. are concerned – to the most elementary courses.

2.) Play less widely known compositions and have the students guess, in written answers, the composer, the period, or the style of the work; though this, of course, only in more advanced courses.

3.) Play various instruments over the air without announcing them, and have the pupils identify them. Play ensemble pieces and have them name the instruments employed. Such tests could provide a certain control for the effect of Series A, provided, of course, that the whole disposition of this basic series is not fundamentally altered, as appears necessary to us.

After the student's answers have come in, the directors of the *Hour* should select characteristic ones, that is to say, answers which contain errors which recur particularly often, discuss them in the program following, point out why they are errors and explain what induced the student to make these specific ones. In this way the listener actually could be activated, to a certain degree. It should be noted, however, that these suggestions still remain within the framework of the *Hour* as it is and are therefore not sufficient to overcome its shortcomings in principle. A fundamental reform of the *Musical Appreciation Hour* would be faced with totally new problems in activating its pupils.

**5 ‘What a Music Appreciation
Hour Should be’:
Exposé, Radio Programmes on
WNYC and Draft**

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1 *Exposé for the Music Education Radio Course*¹

The course is an attempt to guide participants towards a true understanding of music, a living experience of music. One could define its aim most accurately as providing instructions for correct listening. Correct listening is not, however, the same as acoustically correct listening. It is not a matter of honing the ear, for example, so that it can better distinguish between correct and incorrect intonation or between a more pleasant and a more ugly tone in a voice etc. than before. On the contrary: these distinctions play such a disproportionately important part in the conventional mode of listening, from which the course is intended to emancipate listeners, that as little emphasis as possible will be placed on them. Correct listening rather means: grasping a given piece as a semantic context through the act of direct, spontaneous perception, as a semantic unity in which every aspect has its function within the whole. The listener should be able to follow musical logic of any piece – meaning the *specific* logic of any *specific* piece – spontaneously. Musical 'expression' forms only one part of that meaning, and the music's expressive or representational side will only be underlined in so far as it is connected to the purely musical meaning of the piece. The nature of that purely musical meaning cannot be stated abstractly or in advance, but can only be ascertained through the concrete experience of certain music. But it cannot do any harm to observe beforehand that, in the vast majority of existing pieces, this meaning largely corresponds to the fate of the fundamental themes and motifs presented in the course of any piece. It is this fate that counts – the inner history of every piece in itself, not the themes as such.^{a*}

In so far as the intention of the course is, to a certain extent, to enable the listener himself to compose the piece virtually in the act of listening by revealing the elements and relationships within a piece that constitute its musical sense, it stands in vehement opposition to any musical 'appreciation' or mere information about music, whether of a biographical or a historical nature. Everything must relate to the ideal of correct, spontaneous listening, and informational elements should only be introduced when they are necessary to assist correct listening – but never for the sake of 'knowledge' as such. The ideal of musical half-education normally served by *music appreciation* is called into question. It makes no difference whether a listener knows how many symphonies Brahms wrote or whether Beethoven went

^{a*} What we try to convey to our listeners is the dynamic unity of each selection of music, its inherent character of a process and not the 'themes' or melodies in themselves as isolated things.^{*2}

deaf, as long as he understands a movement by Beethoven or Brahms in the true sense, not through the application of schematic ideas. Naturally one cannot do entirely without musical terms or explanations, and that is certainly not our aim.^{b*} But they should not be communicated dogmatically and ‘learned’, but rather gained through achieving a concrete understanding and subsequently retained.

The course itself will not contain any references to typical *appreciation*; but it would perhaps assist an understanding of the plan to mention a few other characteristic differences:

(1) No final value judgements will be communicated. One should abstain in particular from attempting to convince listeners and advertising music, or praising masterpieces and great composers. One should rather help a group of people whom one can suppose to have a certain interest in music to listen with ever more precision, awareness and sensitivity. Instead of passing on critics’ clichés and a dusty pantheon from Handel to Sibelius, one should guide listeners towards true discernment and serious, critical independence. This independence does not spare the great masters, rather helping listeners to realize that all of reality’s unresolved and contradictory elements flow into the music; that it does not constitute a realm of untouched perfection. By not supplying any information about superficial musical values, one can enable listeners to judge music sensibly for themselves.

(2) This judgement should extend beyond mere enjoyment or displeasure. It will transpire that these are no more than the residue of past conventions. It will also be shown that the notion of ‘having fun with music’ is not suited to genuine musical experience. The notion of having fun is modelled on *commercial entertainment*, and is thus transferred from that realm and applied to aesthetic objects to which it is not suited. It is not simply that the musical ‘sense’ of a Beethoven sonata does not lie in the sort of fun one has by fleeing from one’s everyday routine to that of the sports field; it is actually impossible with serious music to have the kind of fun that is derived from commodities. That does not, however, mean that one should resort to typical German didacticism and become boring. On the contrary: the erosion of those clichés that include the notion of fun can itself be a sufficient source of amusement. One must in fact presuppose the *fun* attitude as a reality, as the natural point of departure. Not, however, by pandering to it, for example with the foolish claim that Beethoven is also *fun*, but rather by removing the *fun* base through a refinement of musical understanding. This will become clearer in the draft of the course.

^{b*} – just the contrary, we hope to explain basic musical notions throughout the course.*

(3) Correct listening primarily presupposes overcoming false and cursory listening. The latter could, broadly speaking, be described as atomistic or culinary listening: as listening to the individual 'tunes'³ constituting a piece, savouring individual harmonic and instrumental titbits. A central task will be to reveal these atomistic aspects as functions of the musical sense. This means an education from the inside, not the outside: i.e. there is no harm in beginning with a melody in the guise familiar to atomistic listening, but it must be examined in sufficient detail for it to point beyond itself, i.e. reveal itself as something containing elements of continuation, contrast etc. At the same time, those abilities already present in atomistic listening should be turned towards correct listening, in so far as the accurate perception of individual aspects and their differences constitutes a precondition for the discerning listening we are aiming for. It can be said that, in music, there is only an awareness of unity to the extent that distinctions are made between the manifold elements that combine to form this unity.^{c*}

– Equally, culinary listening should be used as a means to grasp the musical expression of certain passages more precisely and discerningly.

^{d*}(4) While cursory listening is atomistic at the microcosmic level, it is schematic at the macrocosmic level, i.e. it recognizes only the most generalized character of large-scale forms. Here too we are aiming for the opposite. For one thing, we are striving to let the formal types themselves speak, i.e. to state the sense and necessity, the function of forms such as sonata, rondo or fugue, and to develop these forms by pursuing their musical logic rather than postulating the finished scheme. But we also aim to use great works of music, especially by Beethoven, to show that traditional forms do not provide sufficient explanations in themselves, and that every work has its own concrete inner form which lies beneath the husk of the official form, so to speak, and is more important for our understanding. This, however, can only be shown once listeners have a certain knowledge of musical form at their disposal.

(5) One aim of correct listening is to listen to modern music in the proper way and to understand it, and to destroy the taboos that seal it off. Whoever listens to Beethoven correctly will also listen to Schönberg correctly, and the questions raised by listening correctly to 'classical music' circumscribe the problems of its contemporary manifestation: for we inevitably listen to all music from our own situation.

^{c*} We do not want just to destroy atomistic listening but to raise it to a level where it becomes an essential part of a complete and integrated musical sense.*

^{d*} The following two points will show their full importance only in the course for more advanced listeners which we plan after the present one has been completed:*

General Approach

The course is neither historically oriented – which would lead to boredom – nor structured according to genres that are already finished, so to speak, and then presented to listeners from the outside and ‘learned’. As we are concerned with a living understanding of music, it is important to avoid conveying educational material, instead following on from the living musical experience that one can assume among the audience: from the musical language they speak themselves. This language must then be refined in such a way that it leads to new experiences of musical language.

This language is probably not that of classicism, however, and not of Haydn, for example; that is why one cannot begin with him, despite his apparent simplicity.^{e*} It is rather a combination of the melodic-harmonic vocabulary of romanticism, which has become a form of colloquial speech to a certain extent. It would hardly be a misrepresentation to define the ‘average musical awareness’ of most young American listeners according to the musical material of a composer such as *Schubert*. Perhaps Chopin and Tchaikovsky would be even closer, but for critical reasons it is preferable to begin with Schubert, moving on from there to problems in both ‘classicism’ and later romanticism.^{f*}

The second element is *opera*, for example as found in the works of Bizet, Verdi and perhaps Wagner. For a number of reasons, however, this material should not be foregrounded in the first course, primarily because here the educational aim would be an understanding of opera as a unity, which can only be achieved in conjunction with real performances. For the moment we shall put the problem of opera on hold, but in certain cases fall back on operatic works that are characteristic in some other sense that is relevant to the course.

Finally, one can expect a certain familiarity with *jazz*. One should also take advantage of this: musical forms such as rondo and variation can be illustrated first using jazz, then serious music. Subsequently the

^{e*} By this ‘language’ we do not mean any musical language by which they could express themselves. We mean, rather, the sum total of all those melodic, and harmonic formulas, stimuli, conventions, and postulates which they are likely to regard as ‘natural’, that is to say, as neither obsolete nor highbrow, nor beyond their capacity of understanding. This ‘language’ has to be refined throughout the course to such an extent that it leads to new musical experiences, taking shape in new and broader musical language, to whose idiom they are accustomed. It is not the language of the so-called musical classics, not even that of Haydn, in spite of its apparent simplicity.*

^{f*} [Schubert], who provides a striking type of tune which more listeners are capable of understanding, and, at the same time, leads beyond the mere desiderate of tunefulness.*

differences would be determined, leading to an objective assessment of the two spheres, as opposed to a schematic separation in the manner of 'classical or popular?'.⁴ Issues of rhythm should also be addressed with reference to jazz, showing both their relationship to certain concerns in classical music and the fundamental contrast between them. The aim is to remove jazz from its position of dominance and objectively convince the listener of the meaning of true music; this aim, however, can only be reached in a process that would not hesitate to voice criticisms – such as the amusing fact that jazz is always the same, as well as demonstrating jazz recipes and inconsistencies.

We are expecting listeners of high school and college age, and will appeal to their experience without pandering to it. Avuncular undertones, personality cult⁵ and authoritarian elements should be avoided to the same extent as any appeal to superficial test or contest tastes. On the contrary: these should in fact be eroded through the course, also in a broader pedagogical sense extending beyond the music itself, as far as possible.

The half hour must be integrated into the station's overall schedule. The material should, if possible, be selected from the repertoire of the months in which the course will be broadcast. It is conceivable that one could devote an entire session to preparing for a special event in the station's schedule. But the station's material should also be used for critical purposes (Sibelius).

It is particularly important for us to avoid restricting ourselves to orchestral material, which already involves a certain risk of fetishism based on sheer volume and timbral opulence. The piano should be employed, followed by a gradual move towards understanding chamber music in particular, which is ignored in typical appreciation hours⁶ and poses the most fundamental problems of understanding. The piano should be used as link between the demands of culinary virtuosity and structural listening (for example an analysis of a Chopin piece, showing both what is new and rich about it and the somewhat impoverished, thin elements that lie beneath it).

Listeners should be encouraged to respond. Questions or objections voiced in letters should be addressed for a few minutes in each session. Possibly one could also arrange discussions with listeners – but only about the subject, not the method.

We want to go straight to the heart of the matter without any programmatic introductions, but perhaps after a few sessions one could offer a programmatic lecture about that episode at a different point in the schedule.

Exposé for the Course

We shall first of all present an exposé for an introductory course conceived as a series of 12 lectures, which we aim to follow with a course for advanced listeners. The course is to begin on the first Sunday in April. The following merely offers the general plan. The preparation of each individual lecture should take into account reactions to previous ones. Before the start of the course one should test the first, maybe also the second lecture on a group of pupils. This group could possibly be retained as a 'panel' for a continuing assessment of the method. A few lines on the tempo of the course,^{7g*}

1st Lecture

We will begin with the concept of melody. A very well-known and 'beautiful' melody will be played (second subject of Schubert's B minor symphony). We will then ask what is beautiful about this melody, and attempt to determine the individual elements of its beauty in purely musical terms. Here one should place particular emphasis on two aspects – multiplicity and relationships – and also grasp their 'expression' in its musical elements.

The question will be posed whether the melody comes from a song. It will be shown what is songlike about it, but also what makes it unlike a song. Here one should already show how the idea of uninterrupted melody in the principal voice is only one (very primitive) compositional possibility, and thus destroy the preconception that normally defines melody.

We will also show how this theme points beyond itself, how it is incomplete. This will enable a development of the concept of theme as a melodic element that is not complete in itself.

^{g*} It should be added that the following outline still leaves unsettled the question of the speed of the whole course. One has to avoid two dangers: on the one side to proceed so slowly that it becomes didactic, boring and trying; on the other hand, to go so rapidly that it is difficult for the listeners to follow. We have tried to set a medium course between these two possibilities which may still be somewhat on the rapid side. The facts on the tempo of the program can probably be ascertained during the testing of our programs before they are broadcast and the speed modified if necessary. The plan is intended to be flexible enough to allow for such modifications.

The condensed form in which the idea of the broadcasts is here presented sometimes forces us to use technical language. Of course, the phraseology of the broadcasts will be totally different and what is said in this memorandum is only the content of the broadcasts but never the same expression which will be employed during the broadcasts themselves. It will be attempted to make them as simple, colloquial and understandable as possible.*

It will then be stated that the theme appears within a context and has a function within it: that of contrast. At the same time, it will be shown how it is connected to the previous one. Then the listeners' attention will be directed towards the whole and the fate of those themes, and finally the movement will be played. At the end against 'Unfinished'⁸

2nd Lecture

The results of the first will be summarized and the movement characterized as a whole. This will include a renewed underlining of the song-like nature of the themes and the great distances between them. The reason for this lies in the song: expression in individual aspects (expression of the part versus the sense of the whole). It will be stated that this precisely what made Schubert's music something new, and that something was given up for it: the strict unity of the whole. This latter is always more difficult to grasp than the individual melodies. That is why we have begun with Schubert: because people today are used to listening to all music as a series of separate melodies, which is what this movement appears to be. We have seen that even this is more than a loose sequence of that kind; now we will examine a piece that was conceived as a unity from the start, and whose individual elements are entirely subordinated to the whole. It is simpler than Schubert in harmonic and melodic terms, but more difficult as a construction. The simplicity of the details, however, is helpful for an understanding of the whole.

Ad C major,
No. 7.⁹

We will select a movement from a Haydn symphony as an example. The themes will be played at the piano, and we will show that they are 1) less characteristic and 2) much closer together than those in the Schubert. Reference will be made to the function of triadic melodies in 'classicism'. It will be shown what is important to the composer:

1) the dynamic, developmental character. Nothing is complete in itself. One can already mention Beethoven here.

2) the significance of mediation. The intermediate section will be played and compared to the two transitional bars in the Schubert.

3) economy: everything is developed from basic source material. This is evident in the development section, the concept of which is introduced in passing as the developmental part of the basic material. The entire movement will be played; perhaps once before and once after the analysis.

3rd Lecture

In the first two sessions, the musical context, the unity of a musical work, has transpired as the sense of a composition, and correct

listening has been revealed as a mode of listening that realizes this context. The way in which this context is organized is what is known as musical form. Form must here be defined in relation to the material covered in the previous lectures.

We will now speak of different musical forms. The first two pieces analysed were both written in sonata form; we shall now examine song form, rondo form, fugue form, variations etc. These forms are generally presented as something ready-made, and their scheme, or recipe, simply given as a fact. This is rejected here. We wish to attempt an elucidation of certain musical forms on the basis of the immediate listening experience.

For this purpose we will draw on a medium familiar to listeners: jazz. We intend to examine jazz pieces that they all understand, that pose no problems, in order to see what insights into musical forms they can offer us.

1) We will use a sheet version to show the problem of couplet and refrain, their different respective weight, the opposition of solo and round dance (perhaps also referring to the ‘entries’ in the Haydn movement). But that is the essence of the *rondo*. Introduce rondo.

2) Use a different record (Duke Ellington Tiger Rag) to develop the principle of variation. The solo choruses in particular are variations of a basic material.

3) Use any pop song to illustrate song form, showing the idea of the bridge as that of mediation.

Russian Lullaby¹⁰

In all these cases the formal principle should be derived from an immediate experience of the music.

4th Lecture

The simplest of jazz pieces had been used to demonstrate song form, variation form and rondo. Now we will introduce examples of these from art music, pointing out how their meaning differs from that in light music.^{h*}

1) Song form. Example: Schumann’s *Träumerei*. Discuss in connection with the Schubert song, but sufficiently rich in relationships itself. Relate Berg’s fight against Pfitzner. Analysis of *Träumerei*, showing its richness compared to the schematic character of song form in jazz.

2) Variation form. The lack of punctuation in Ellington, the feeling of treating water. Essentially it is always the same. Rather as if each instrumentalist were placed in the same situation in order to take a

^{h*} This broadcast deals with two of these forms: *song form and variation form*.*

test.^{i*} There are a great many variations in 'serious' music – more or less everything until Beethoven – that are also mere circumscriptions.

e.g. the movement from Haydn's *Surprise Symphony*¹¹

Variation form becomes independent as soon as it is itself subjected to development. It then becomes a process in which a theme drifts from one fate to another. First a number of developmental aspects will be highlighted, with an analysis of the coda in particular, and then the whole piece will be played.

5th Lecture

3) Rondo. It will be shown how the idea of imbalance between parts is used for articulation, how each return of the theme is made into an 'aha' movement, and how mechanical repetition is transformed into development through variation. Here one must show the connection between rondo and variation, and conclude by describing variation as the core principle of all – in the broadest sense – modern (late bourgeois) composition. At the same time, one must bring out the developmental aspect of process. Characterization of the rondo as an open form. Difference between open and closed forms the opposite of openness and closure of the themes. Example of Mozart, perhaps rondo of the E flat piano concerto or the E flat symphony.

Return to the relationship between jazz and art music. Not a question of taste or of two spheres such as *popular* and *classical*. Rather a more objective one: standardized composition versus concrete composition. Point to the inconsistency of jazz.

Discussion of 'rhythm' in jazz. Definition in the sense of my theory of jazz. The aspect of rhythmic subordination. Point to two musical types. Foreignness of jazz. Against parrying and against rubato. The problem of classical music as that of sublating the two aspects within one. Rhythm is not simply rhythmic uniformity, but also rhythmic modification.

6th Lecture

We had spoken of the rondo as an open form. Its opposite is closed form as the more highly organized kind, i.e. as the form in which the unity of manifold elements is asserted more completely, and economy realized more strictly – in which nothing could be any different. The

^{i*} These variations actually do not vary to a great degree; they are only circumscriptions often of identical material. The same is the case in a great many variations of so-called serious music. As a matter of fact, until Beethoven most variations were mere circumscriptions. With Beethoven, however, the variation form becomes independent, that is to say, it subjects its theme to real change and development. It is no longer paraphrased – it has its fate.*

more rigorously constructed music is, the more ‘difficult’ it is to listen to, i.e. the more the listener has to participate in the composition instead of merely sitting back and surrendering himself to it. Explain through the comparison between light and difficult prose.

The characteristic closed form is the sonata. Again, it should not be demonstrated in its finished state, but rather developed through listening. Example: Mozart G major sonata first movement.^{j*} Play and analyse properly, especially the openings of the development and the recapitulation. Then derive the sonata scheme in its idea from that, pinpoint similarity and different to the rondo and variation aspects (development). Then play the movement again.

7th Lecture

Despite being a closed form, sonata form contains both a certain freedom and the aspect of multiplicity. There are, however, even ‘stricter’, more closed forms that are historically older. The most important of them is the fugue. As an example, analyse the E minor fugue form the first volume of the Well-Tempered Clavier and point out its simplicity, the peculiarity of the two-part counterpoint etc. First the principle of fugue must be stated, then the necessary modifications and the form. Finally it should be shown that, in spite of its strictness, the fugue can become a bearer of musical expression. To conclude, play the prelude and fugue in F sharp minor from the first volume W.T.C., placing particular emphasis on the new theme in the episode and its preponderance, and showing how the dynamic aspect comes to the fore and breaks through the rigidity and stasis of fugal form.

8th Lecture

Static and dynamic form. Beethoven and the principle of closed dynamic form. Point out that all music can be understood from the perspective of Beethoven, and that his music is, so to speak, the sum of all possible music. At the same time, however, that B[eethoven] is in fact a difficult composer to understand. The music is obscured by clichés that one must first clear aside; but then, in relation to present-day listening habits, it is difficult in itself.^{k*} These difficulties are connected to the conventional notion of melody. In order to prepare listeners for an understanding of B[eethoven], we will refer back to the start of the course and the discussion of melody.

^{j*} Here the analysis has to go somewhat deeper in order to show what necessitates the sonata form, what demands the sonata structure.*

^{k*} Further he is difficult because his music stresses the interconnections whereas the isolated details are nothing which contradicts present-day listening habits.*

1) it has transpired, using examples from Schubert and Schumann, that there are criteria for melodic quality. The criteria are not the typical ones, however. Normally one has the following expectations of a melody: that it should run continuously in the upper voice, that it should be 'singable', i.e. contain many steps of a second, that it should be symmetrical, i.e. constructed mostly in eight-bar periods, and that it should contain sequences that make it easier to remember (Tchaikovsky *Pathétique* second subject). For a melody to be considered beautiful it should be pre-chewed for the listener's convenience, so to speak. Give examples to illustrate all these expectations.

Then criticize them as primitive and schematic, and show how there are wonderful melodies that do not fulfil them (Schubert and Mendelssohn). Asymmetrical melodies, sequence-less and assembled melodies (Mozart), melodies with wide intervals (Aida final duet, perhaps early Schönberg). These melodies do, at least, accommodate the listener in their upper-voice character.

And what about Beethoven? He normally works with eight-bar periods, and also makes frequent use of simple sequences; simpler in that respect than Mozart or Schumann. But he compensates by flying in the face of two other conventional expectations: that of singability and that of upper-voice melody. Examples: the main themes of the 3rd, 4th and 9th symphonies, which follow triads and are hence heard more harmonically than melodically, resisting song; the thematic fragmentation [*durchbrochene Arbeit*] with a quartet example (from the adagio from op. 59, no. 1, or the second subject of the 9th Symphony.^{1*} The difficulty lies in getting hold of the very 'general' themes as such in the first place, but then jumping from one voice to another while listening. The demand for multi-dimensional listening. Here one should try out having a simultaneous commentary, i.e. play a particularly fragmented Beethoven piece^{m*} and show at the same time how events proceed; then maybe just play the piece.

9th Lecture

Following a very clear summary of the 8th lecture, we must ask the following:

2) Why does Beethoven do this, why does he make things so 'difficult', and why is he often so indifferent to beautiful melodies. Answer: because every theme is conceived as a part of the dynamic whole; it

^{1*} The principle of dialoguing the melody by making its elements appear successively in different parts, is to be described, and the idea of antiphonic music has to be expounded.*

^{m*} (perhaps the Fugate out of the slow movement of Opus 95)*

can never be complete in itself, as it would in a song, but is rather of a processual character.^{n*} The ‘generality’ of the themes makes them almost unimportant in comparison to the whole – they are like nothingness. Or the raw natural material that is used to produce something. Thematic fragmentation is the process, however – the dynamic totality itself is music as something in a state of becoming rather than being; as objectively binding, not individually coincidental. This, not his expression etc., is what truly makes Beethoven great.

Here we must then restrict the concept of melody and replace it with that of meaningful form. Listening to music does not mean hearing melodies, but rather hearing entire forms and hearing melody in its function. This, namely listening beyond limited melodic details, which are of little consequence, is the real task posed by B[eethoven]’s music.

But that is not simply an opposition to melody. Every true melody is a ‘form’, is articulated in itself. Refer to the first lecture. Use a very simple melody (children’s song) to develop the aspect of thematic transformation, then postulate that a large-scale piece should be listened to with the same wealth of relationships as this melody, except that these then no longer apply to one voice, but many.^{o*} One must learn to listen the first movement of the 9th Symphony as if it were only 16 bars long.

The slow movement of the 2nd Symphony should be taken as the example for this lecture. We will say that it is easy because it is so replete with upper-voice melodies, then give a brief characterization of early Beethoven; but emphasize that they must be listened to in terms of their relationships, not as a potpourri. The individual themes will be played and characterized and the connections between them explained. Then the entire movement will be played.

10th Lecture

It will be mentioned that Beethoven is considered the greatest of all composers. Many will have wondered if that is true or simply a cliché. Here one must point out the depravation¹² of Beethoven’s most popular pieces^{p*}, the idle talk about him etc. It is then our task to answer the question as to Beethoven’s greatness and significance with objective arguments, not propaganda.

^{n*} Even the smallest theme must contain the potentiality of the process within itself.*

^{o*} We may take some nursery rhyme, perhaps ‘London Bridge is Falling Down’, to show how ‘thematic workmanship’ takes place even within this nursery rhyme and then to show that one has to listen to a whole large piece of music as if it were one such melody; that is to say, with all the richness of motivic work shown in this melody, only that these harmonic interrelationships are no longer linked to one single part and that they now comprise dialogue and contrast.*

^{p*} the Moonlight Sonata, the Pathétique, the Fifth Symphony*

To achieve this, we will carry out a comparison between a Beethoven piece and another piece, also by a famous composer. I would recommend either one piano sonata each by Beethoven and Weber, for example B[eethoven] op. 110 and Weber A flat major, or 111 and a Weber sonata, or a symphony by Beethoven and one by Tchaikovsky. Here one will show Beethoven's superiority in concrete musical terms, then conclude by pointing out the Beethovenian 'tone', that aspect of his music that can no longer be directly expressed in positive technical categories. The lecture should end with a few observations on musical taste, likes and dislikes,¹³ the binding nature of musical judgements, and their limits.

11th Lecture

Now we shall follow the concrete musical life of an entire Beethoven piece through a combination of analytical observations, simultaneous commentary and finally performance. Here one should choose a work from Beethoven's 'classical' period and say a few things about the concept of musical style, and what makes it valid or invalid. As an example one should take either the first movement of op. 59 no. 2 or the first movement of the Appassionata. The quartet movement could perhaps be played by a live string quartet, which could stop and start as required; the Appassionata has the advantage of familiarity. In a certain sense, the analysis will draw on that of sonata form in the 6th lecture, which it will be refreshing. Its aim, however, is – in contrast to the schematic, external form – to reveal the specific inner form, the formal sense of a specific movement. In the Appassionata the great dialogue between the two manifestations of what is essentially exactly the same theme; in the quartet the uncovering of the relationship between the first and third bars. A few observations on the function of the formal schemes will conclude the lecture. It must become evident that every composition is the result of a confrontation between predefined material, predefined forms – as the historical dimension of the material – and the specific perspective of the actual piece, a confrontation in which each of these components gives rise to the others. The true measure of a composition's value is the depth and seriousness of this confrontation.

12th Lecture

The aspects of Beethoven's music so far defined should be summarized to form a picture of his 'style'. Here one should also say a few things about his development, the 3 periods and the relationship between them. Continue by saying that, on the basis of specific technicalities, the meta-technical can now be formulated. The question in this lecture

is: what is the sense of B[eethoven]'s compositional technique? – thus making the concept of musical sense become fully concrete. The technical aspects covered: dynamic theme, developmental character, economy, totality must be identified according to their human – their social – sense. The results of this identification lead to the philosophical sense of B[eethoven], to the critical and humanist motifs. This will be followed by saying that B[eethoven]'s 'tone' or 'expression' is nothing other than the reflection of this sense lying in Beethoven's approach in the individual aspects, which are charged with this force of the whole. After that (or before) the experiment with the start of the *Appassionata's* recapitulation. Perhaps also the adagio from op. 31, 2, second subject.^{14*} Here there should be an example from *Fidelio* to illustrate Beethoven's specific expression (*Dir werde Lohn* or *O Hoffnung lass den letzten Stern*). Then a few words about *Fidelio* and the 3rd *Leonore Overture*. Play that at the end.

10 March 1940
New York

2 Radio Programmes and Essays on WNYC

a) Inaugural Programme on WNYC, 22 February 1940

Today, as part of a festival devoted to modern American music, we will be presenting an hour's worth of music by Austrian composers currently living in America; not for the sake of 'honouring' those exile composers, or even to give a quantitative impression of the musical production that has now sought refuge in America. The duration of one hour and the names of four composers would not be sufficient for that. Our aim is both more and less than that: less because we are inevitably passing over many of those producing works today, but more because we will attempt to present, as if in a burning glass, aspects of the movement with the greatest musical depth. It is our conviction that this music, amid the multiplicity of styles found today, constitutes what is truly most compelling and necessary. We see this substance embodied by the music of Arnold Schönberg, whom we cannot do justice even by describing him as the true master among today's composers. For, as a composer, he is more than a composer: he has given music a new language, whose logic manifests itself with inexorable necessity through the union of music's previous elements. Schönberg's new formulation of musical language is the unifying element among the highly varied selection of works you will be hearing. The representative and responsible character of such an

undertaking is underlined by the performers involved: with the pianist Eduard Steuermann¹⁵ and the Kolisch Quartet as the chamber music ensemble, we will be listening to the musicians who have developed the authentic style for the performance of the music of which we hope to give you an impression today: all of Schönberg's piano and chamber works of recent decades have been premiered by these artists, who have themselves come from Schönberg's school of composition.

As far as Schönberg himself is concerned, you will hear the first two movements of his String Quartet in F sharp minor op. 10 [played by the Kolisch Quartet]. It is more than 30 years old, so a relatively early piece, but we have chosen it for quite specific reasons. I said earlier that Schönberg developed a new musical language from that of tradition; nowhere is this process more evident than in the F sharp minor quartet, whose very fabric describes the path from tonality to complete harmonic liberty. The first of these two movements is still genuinely in F sharp minor; but notice how the radical employment of all relationships within this key stretches the framework to the point where one feels as if, at any moment, a world of new sounds were about to force out all the familiar ones, which are merely being tolerated for now. Let me direct your attention towards something else. What one finds in this quartet is a reduction of musical language to its bare necessities in a way that is perhaps comparable to the struggle against the ornament in which modern architecture has been caught for the last 30 years. The themes are kept concise, there are no decorative additions, one finds no unclear 'continuations'; rather, everything is presented with the utmost precision and then expanded equally precisely, without a single coincidental note. The movement follows sonata form, but is extremely compressed and eschews anything superfluous. The second movement is a scherzo; not a humorous one, however, but rather, if I may say so, an expressionist one: a sequence of the most foreign and lonely musical visions recorded in shorthand, so to speak, with a total lack of surface harmony. A central factor is the constant changing of musical shapes: they are bound together by contrast, and anyone who wishes to listen to this piece properly must above all be able to follow this constant exchange of contrasting ideas and sense the inner bond between those contrasts – a bond that is loose and yet compelling, like a dream. In this changing of sounds, which seem to have come from a place of pure inwardness, there is no longer any regard for traditional material, only the compulsive force of expression and a musical logic that acts on every event without paying attention to any external laws. This expressionist piece is, at the same time, a virtuoso piece of the highest order: it explores the most unusual and extreme resources of the string quartet. It is

hardly an exaggeration to say that the path leading from the first movement of this quartet to the second constitutes the decisive transition, the one that takes it from conventional music to New Music. [Now we shall hear the Kolisch Quartet, whose members are Rudolf Kolisch, Felix Khuner, Jascha Vlissi and Stefan Auber.]¹⁶

Alexander Zemlinsky, from whom we shall be hearing five songs on texts by Maeterlinck, is very closely connected to Schönberg. Though only a little older, he was his teacher. You could indeed regard these songs, whose melodic warmth speaks directly to any unprejudiced listener, as a manner of connection extending backwards from Schönberg to the generation before him. You can already find many new sounds here, especially the use of fourths, and the richest explorations of all harmonic relationships within a given key – but also something of the tone of Mahler's marches, even Brahmsian romanticism. Every one of Zemlinsky's notes bears witness to the great tradition of Viennese composition, and in this context we are placing particular emphasis on his work, as it is precisely the depth and force of this tradition and its secure craftsmanship that permit Schönberg's innovation: in fact, I would go so far as to say – though I cannot expand upon it here – that this tradition of great Viennese music and Schönberg's radical innovations are identical to each other in the most profound fashion. Perhaps you will sense a little of this while listening to Zemlinsky's songs [sung by Olga Forrai,¹⁷ accompanied by Kurt Adler].¹⁸

Hanns Eisler, on the other hand, is a student of Schönberg from the younger generation. Critics often speak of music, for example that of Richard Strauss or Ravel, as 'witty'. This does not generally have a specific meaning; one normally thinks of some extra-musical association or other supposedly connected to such works. If one calls Eisler's music witty, on the other hand, this is justified in a precise musical sense. It is a music of constant punchlines: its nature is that of surprise and sudden shifts, but of a kind that, on closer inspection, reveals itself not simply as a whim, but rather as a very carefully placed element of the piece's technical framework. It is a music whose expressive language is that of the staccato: it has a certain impish suddenness, fluctuating between deceptive sweetness and intense aggression. This peculiarity, combined with a great compositional lucidity, has always made the music especially effective, as well as facilitating the inclusion of certain expressive elements that are more difficult to convey in much other modern music. The sonata you will hear today [played by Eduard Steuermann] is the piece that made Eisler well known. It dispenses with all extra-musical references and is a textbook example of incisive yet nonetheless 'absolute' music. One of its foremost characteristics is the drastic nature of its musical ideas.

[We will conclude this concert with Ernst Krenek's song cycle *Durch die Nacht*, sung by Rose Landwehr¹⁹ and accompanied by Paul Breisach.]²⁰ Ernst Krenek is not a member of the Schönberg school. I spoke earlier about the objective necessity of a reform in our musical language, however, and Krenek could be considered the living proof of this. He is not only one of the most multi-faceted musical artists of our time, ever exploring new stylistic approaches, but also one of the most successful European composers, known to the larger audience for his opera *Jonny spielt auf* and in smaller circles of music lovers for instrumental works of such extraordinary originality as his Second Symphony. As a mature man, long since established and recognized for his originality, he then joined Schönberg's school in so far as he adopted the technique of the latter's mature years, known as the 'twelve-tone technique', applying it practically and championing it theoretically. Krenek, who cannot remotely be accused of adherence to any school or party, thus acknowledged, with absolute freedom of choice, the necessity that led to Schönberg's results. The work you will hear today shows him on the way to these conclusions, and is particularly important as a document of that process. Unfortunately, we are entirely unable to reproduce the words of these songs in English in order to offer you some insight into the artistic sphere that gave rise to them. They were written by the great Austrian poet Karl Kraus – a poet who was perhaps the first to act truly seriously on the call for productive critique in German literature 200 years ago: in Kraus's work the poetic word is irrevocably allied, in all its depth and intensity, with the critical word. The path 'through the night' described in the songs is that of productive critique: the reverse of the terrible accusation 'what has the world made of us?' is the motto: 'I deny not God, but rather everything that denies him.' It is this symbolic interweaving of the critical and the productive, however, that I see as the true purpose of our new music. In this sense Krenek's song cycle is a programme for the music itself: a programme that music may not be able to fulfil on its own, but which it can formulated better and more purely than any other art. [Now: Miss Landwehr and Mr Breisach.]

b) First Programme, on or after 25 April 1940

α) *English version*²¹

(Broadcast Presented on or after April 25, 1940)

Introduction

Announcer:

This afternoon we're starting something new in a series of programs on understanding music. We know our listeners have had their fill of music appreciation broadcasts. This isn't another one.

Here at the station, at least, we think there is too much talk on the air these days about musical mountain peaks and starving yet immortal masters, with too little assistance in understanding the music itself.

We don't want to go to the other extreme and present a series of dry lectures on a subject already in danger of becoming hackneyed.

We have with us for this series Dr. Theodor Adorno, of the International Institute for Social Research and the Office of Radio Research, at Columbia University, who brings to the microphone his rich and varied musical background – and a new type of program arranged to give you music and the analysis of music side by side. Dr. Adorno believes that mere enjoyment of music is not enough. To him it is more than entertainment; it goes beyond it. The fullest experience comes only from a true understanding of the structure and not from blurred, half-hearted listening, or quasi-analysis. This, of course, demands a certain amount of effort from the listener.

* * *

We're going to play for you now a recording of the first movement in a symphony you all know well. If you haven't listened to it in a concert hall, or through broadcast recordings, you probably couldn't have avoided hearing it anyway – in a movie, an operetta, or on your neighbor's phonograph. It's Schubert's »Unfinished Symphony« – the one in B minor.

But listen to that first movement once again and keep your ears especially open for that famous melody you always associate with it, for it is this melody that Dr. Adorno has on his mind today.

* * *

[First movement of Schubert's B minor Symphony is played through recordings.]

* * *

Announcer:

Each of you has just heard the first movement of Franz Schubert's B minor Symphony.

If you can stop humming that melody long enough, Dr. Adorno has some fascinating things to tell you about it.

We present Dr. Theodor Adorno:

Dr. Adorno:

What is most important to you in music? I can almost hear you answering, »the melody.«

»But why?«, you say, »I remember it, and keep in mind while listening. I can hum it, and I do not have to strain my ears to hear it.«

It is natural enough for you to say this, even for you to say that all other elements – rhythm, harmony, instrumentation, and so forth, are only incidental to your enjoyment. And if music lacks melodic power, maybe you consider it worthless. Here I certainly would agree with you.

But you still haven't told me *why*. If you say, »I don't know of a reason. I just like some things, I dislike others«, you are leaving your musical taste to mere chance. If you say, »The melody pleases me, if I know it«, you are gambling again, this time allowing your opinion to be the victim of your own peculiar, subjective associations. After all, if you switched on the melody in your car, with your sweetheart or put it on the phonograph during your last hangover, or a bout of the blues, your opinion can't be very just. If you say soulfully, »This melody appeals to me on account of its ›expression‹«, you are talking in a vacuum.

But I have heard answers such as »I like this melody because it is beautiful for reasons of purely musical quality«; »Its well-built proportions appeal to me«; or, »I like a melody when it is original and rich in ideas.« If you reply in this vein, assuming you know what you're talking about, you are on the track, but have only gone part of the way.

Of course, you may enjoy music and yet remain at one of these points; but why stop? Isn't it reasonable to suppose that if you go on and explore music more deeply, you will get more out of it than you do now?

So let's start our exploration where you began it: melody. Taking the movement you heard, let's go on and see how it's built, and what makes *this* melody appeal to us. Suppose then, that we examine our melody as a close-up. Playing the entire thing and its parts frequently is the only way we're going to get this close-up effect, so let's listen to the second theme of the movement we heard before. Remember, you're not going to hear a complete work now, like a song. You're going to hear a *melodic fragment* out of its context, like a sentence without the rest of the paragraph. Only when we hear it as part of the whole movement – when and where it belongs – can it make complete sense to us. But for our purpose we have to examine this melody – or sentence – by itself. Here it is as the orchestra brings it in for the first time:

[Example: melodic fragment.]

Do you notice anything singular about this familiar melody? For my part I should say that it has a strange *rocking quality* . . . a kind of swaying, backward and forward. It seems fluid to me, it moves ahead like a ribbon unwinding. And yet, it remains where it began. Is this a circle? This is the sort of feeling we know from falling asleep!

At that instant, between waking and sleeping, time and thought slip away. But this is only an illusion. Actually, the outer world goes on where consciousness left it, and the inner world goes on, too. In fact,

nothing stops, but my own awareness of all this. And then I am asleep. But in that uncertain instant between awareness and oblivion of the world, in this partly awake, half-sleeping moment, I retreat to the mood of an older pre-existence; I find consolation in drowning away from the entanglements with familiar things, at the edge of consciousness, almost, we might say, at the fringe between life and death.

I don't know whether this is the way you feel but I hope it is, because if this *is* the way you feel, you will be making it so much easier for me to explain the faint sadness of Schubert's melody. After all, I have the feeling that all of us fall asleep in much the same way.^{9*}

But what has this to do with the music? Let's listen.

[Example is played on the phonograph during this entire paragraph.]

If we follow this melody we find that after a while it begins to fade, retreating, slipping away, until it is scarcely audible; we have lost it – it has stepped somewhere over the threshold of sleep. We come closer and closer to death.

[Example reaches point of tragic outburst.]

But abruptly comes a sudden, *tragic outburst*.

[Cut example here.]

And so we are reminded, by the music, how closely it comes to death.

[Repeat example.]

* * *

But let's not content ourselves with psychological comparisons. I want you to be able to translate what I've been saying in non-musical language, into terms of music itself.

Let's try it. I talked about the »*rocking quality*« of this melody. Maybe you got the idea of that *rocking* as the main element of the melody. But when you stop to think about it, isn't *rocking* *rhythmic*, rather than melodic? Listen:

[Example on piano: rhythm of the accompaniment.]

A steady, quiet motion, a running back and forth. And this is what we mean first when we say that this melody has *rocking quality*.

And it's kept up as long as the theme is played. It never comes in on the strong steps of the melody.

[Example: melody with accompaniment on the strong steps.]

It always comes a moment after these steps. In case you're interested, this is called an *off-beat* rhythm. This *off-beat* is certainly a quality of the rhythm, not a melodic characteristic. Played in this way,

^{9*} I should be embarrassed if, after all this explanation, I discovered that composers and the people who talk about them have a special way of falling asleep.*

always a moment after each of the strong steps of the melody [Example] the accompaniment slurs over rather than augments the melodic steps. In fact, it weakens the steps, and this is what partly accounts for the »*rocking*« effect in the music.

[Repeat example.]

Now don't go away saying Dr. Adorno claims that one of the melodies in Schubert's »Unfinished Symphony« has recently been heard rocking to and fro, or that now we are in possession of a rhythmic formula for writing rocking music.

The accompaniment alone hasn't any such quality, as I'll show you: for here is another, totally different melody, with exactly the same accompaniment [Example]. Does this melody *rock*? No. You'll agree that there's no sign of a *rocking quality* or of anything like *rocking* in it.

But let's hold on here. I started out to discuss the melody, and, logically enough, wound up talking about the accompaniment. Let's come back to the melody: perhaps it rocks within itself, even without the accompaniment. Take the melody as it appeared for the first time in the cello section and see how it is built. There's a *big* melody, and part of it is a *little*, or *model* melody [Example]. Everything that happens in the big melody stems from the *little* melody.^{1*}

The composer wants everything in his big melody to be welded together as tightly as possible, and therefore he relates all its changes to some pattern that remains unimpaired.

The *first two bars* make up the model: [Example] Now listen to the whole melody and notice how these *two bars* reappear again and again, though modified: [Example] Now look more closely at the two model bars themselves: [Example] There's an *interval down* [Example]; then an *interval back up*.

They make together a sort of *gentle summons*.

[Example: the whole summons.]

This »*gentle summons*« is definitely of an instrumental nature. In contrast, a *series of even steps* follows. This part of the model is more vocal, easily sung [Example].

We have heard the contrast. Now notice how unified the model is! This unity is even more important than the contrast. What causes it?

First of all, the model is held together by one single note; call it the

^{1*} I like to think of the *small* melody as a sort of paragon among melodies, a *little* »*model*« melody so perfect in its pattern that the *big* melody really has no choice but to imitate it. I even made up a little rhyme about it once, to make sure I'd remember:
 »*Big* melodies are copy-cats
 Of miniature melodic brats:
Little melodies in each score
 Denote the tunes they go before.«*

»critical« note, but make sure you understand what it is. The »critical« note. The single note »G«. The melody starts with it, the first bar ends with it, the second bar goes through and returns to it.

Remember, I told you before that the melody seems to go on, and yet, at the same time stands still. Here is my explanation of that effect.

Here not only the model but the whole melody is held together by the single note »G«. And what a conscientious little note this »G« is, this »critical« note! It stops at nothing. It takes on more and more important jobs. It starts off underlying the *model* melody and ends up as the foundation of the *big* melody, too, absorbing the entire movement of the melody. Nice going for one little note. Yet, notice how unobtrusively this note works. We hear it bustling in and around the melody but it never gets in the way. And it is the motion of this retiring but insidious little note which accounts, also, for the *rocking quality*.

[Perhaps phonograph or piano example.]

Are we there again? Let's not lose the *little model*, on the way, while we're going, like the music, in fascinating circles.

Just what happened to the *model*? Take *four bars* – the *first two* bars are the *model*, the last two are the *continuation* [Example: piano]. If we letter each *bar* we find that *bar C* equals *bar B* in the *model*, and *bar D* is the same as *bar A* in the *model*. Are you confused by the algebraic equations? I only want to make this point as clear as I can, because this small change is important. To repeat:

Bar C equals *bar B*

and

Bar D is the same as *bar A*.

When Schubert placed the *two bars* in this way, he determined the *structure* and *character* of the whole melody for he maintains the alteration of the sequel of the model bars throughout the melody. Two bars, more or less equivalent, always follow each other [Example]. By the similarity of the last bar of each group and the first bar of the following one, he links them up as if they were a chain. We could also express it in this way: One never knows exactly which bar is the first one of a group and which is the second.

I play the melody first as it is, and then as it could be and as one might expect it.

Notice the ambiguous effect. It is this that decisively gives the melody its *rocking quality*.

The same idea is expressed by a little German anecdote. Two people meet in the street:

»Where are you going?«, asks the first one.

»To the movies«, the other replies.

»What are they showing?«

- »*Quo vadis.*«
 »What does this mean?«
 »Where are you going?«
 »To the movies.«
 »What are they showing?«
 »*Quo vadis.*«
 »What does this mean?«
 And so on and on . . .

In order to find out what a stroke of genius this little device was, imagine his doing what a quack composer would have considered logical: continuing the melody without bothering to reverse the bars and so missing the entire point of the melody. This is how the quack would do it:

[Example of how a quack would do it.]

How trivial and obvious this sounds, compared with Schubert's own continuation. This is drivel. Or, more politely, mechanical symmetry. It's meaningless. If Schubert had failed to reverse the bars the way he did, he might just as well have scuttled the whole melody.

Let's venture further into the music. Our theme as a whole falls into two major parts: its first appearance in the cello, and then its repetition by the fiddles. Now, these parts are linked up again in a chain-link way.

[Example: cello part and repetition in the fiddles-recording.]

That was the *cello theme* and its repetition by the *violins*. Now get this: the *last bar* of the *cello melody* coincides with, and in fact becomes the first bar of the *violin melody*. Think of it as a *link* between the two melodic sections. Listen again now, and when we come to this juncture in the music, I'll say, »Now«.

[Example: recording – Dr. Adorno says »Now«.]

I can almost hear an exclamation from you of »Look here!« Was the composer actually conscious of all this as he wrote his B minor Symphony? No wonder he never finished it.«

In fact, I can hear remarks like »What's all this to me? This melody appeals to me on account of its ›expression‹. That's all I know and that's all I ever want to know. Schubert wasn't conscious of all this; he composed intuitively. Therefore let me listen intuitively, too, and do not bother me with *your* reversed bars and don't try to strangle me with the chain you tie around Schubert's neck.« Well, all I can say is, this train of thought doesn't convince me. Artists are really less naive in these matters than they are supposed to be. Maybe Schubert analyzed his themes, maybe he didn't. That's beside the point. The psychology of the composer does not concern us. We want to find out what he has

achieved in his music; and he has achieved everything he tried to make clear to you, no matter whether he was conscious of it or not. Even if he grasped all of it merely intuitively, this would be no guarantee that we could realize it intuitively, too. I, at least, would be too modest to pretend that I can become aware of all the richness of relationships, all the implications and unity within such a melody, at one stroke.

To get all this fully and concretely, analysis helps where mere vague impressions of the »beauty« and charm of music fail us.

So a few more words about the melody. Where does it go from the point where we left it? I said it consisted of wider *intervals* and even *steps*. Pursuing the fate of the melody we find that the *gentle summons* I spoke of receded further and further into the background. In the *bar* where the *violins* enter, we still find the original *interval* [Example: piano] but as it goes on, these get smaller and smaller until there is no *jump* at all [Example] and the melody moves along smoothly [Example]. The intervals relax until the melody becomes a *flowing line*. And this *fluid line*, like a ribbon unwinding, explains the feeling we get that the melody is describing the moment between waking and sleeping. In this way we prove our original non-musical description, through the evidence of the actual music.

This might seem far-fetched, but our evidence is strengthened in a later passage of the movement, when the melody is extended another *four bars*. These bars actually lead nowhere. They are just lengthening the process of fading away, casting again the spell of sleep, [Example: recording] this time unmistakably.

You know that this melody resembles a *song*, and yet the symphony goes on after the melody has faded away. That is because the nature of this melody, in spite of its song-like quality, is symphonic. It goes beyond its own limits. Within the small limits of a *song*, neither the *fading away* nor the *outburst*, which comes right after it could be fully justified. These elements are beyond the limits of purely lyrical balance. This isn't just a song; the melody here is part of a complete work. The vanishing of the melody could easily appear as a break, a gap. As a matter of fact, in most performances it sounds this way. In the score, however, there's a *melodic fragment* inside this *outburst* that we usually hear as a wild chord. This *fragment* of *melody* resembles the first *two notes* of the theme. [Example] A good performance should make this audible. We spoke of the *tragic* aspect of the lyrical melody, and music itself justifies this metaphor; the wild *outburst* comes from the theme itself.

Let's stop now, and listen for a few moments to as much of the music as we have time to hear. I want you to capture its unity and to see the melody we discussed in light of that. Remember, this melody acts as a contrast to the sections of the movement before and after it. It's only

one melody among many others, valid only in relation to other melodies, the most important of which are [Two examples].

[Part of the first movement, Schubert's B minor Symphony is played; fade-off during announcement.]

Announcer:

You have been listening to the first in a series of programs on understanding music, featuring Dr. Theodor Adorno, of the International Institute for Social Research and the Office of Radio Research, at Columbia University. This afternoon's broadcast was about the musical element, »*melody*«. Next time Dr. Adorno is going to tell you something more about what's meant by a *musical whole*, or a *musical entity*, and what it means to say that a melody is a »*theme*«.

This program was produced by Henrietta Yurchenco.²² Production of the script was by Flora Schreiber²³ and Paul Kresh.²⁴ Your announcer is [. . .].²⁵

β. *German version*²⁶

(Presented on or after 25 April 1940)

If one were to ask you what you consider most important in music, most of you would probably answer: melody. Melodies are what stay in your mind, what you remember. Melodies are the bearers of musical expression. Melodies are the true substance of music; you might consider everything else – rhythm, harmonization, instrumentation – secondary, but you will consider any music that does not prove itself through its melodic force worthless, whatever the music in question might be.

If, however, you are then asked what criteria you follow in judging a melody, I think you will find it a little harder to give an answer. Many people would say: no criteria at all. We like some and we don't like others. That would make every musical judgement a matter of pure chance, and essentially do away with the notions of good and bad music – which, on the other hand, most of you probably cling to. I do not think one should make it quite so easy for oneself. Other people would say: they like a melody if they know it. That does not depend directly on the actual melody, only on external circumstances that do not have any immediate connection to the quality of the melody. A third group of listeners would say: we like a melody if its expression speaks to us. And other listeners: because it is beautiful on account of its purely formal musical structure; because its proportions are well formed, because it is original and striking, because it is rich in 'ideas', because it flows, and however else they might put it. In most cases, all

of those aspects – expression, richness, proportions – will be rather difficult to define with reference to the music itself.

I do not mean by this that one has to be able to make such subtle distinctions, let alone give proper answers to such difficult questions, in order to derive joy from music. As we have chosen the task of helping you to reach a true understanding of music, however, and to grasp as much as possible of what lies within the music, I think it would be a good thing to devote a little more attention to the nature of melodies, which you consider the central musical concern. I do not intend to give you any formulas for good or bad melodies here; nor do I wish to feed you with specialist explanations. My only intention is for you to realize what elements come together to form a melody, and thus to grasp it more profoundly than if you simply sing along to something you have heard a hundred times. I might almost say: I wish to help you to hear a melody as if you were hearing it for the first time, still fresh and unexhausted.

The melody I wish to discuss today, however, is one that you probably all know. I think most of you will agree with me that it is a truly beautiful one. I would suggest that we try to think what exactly makes it beautiful, that we examine it very closely. For that I must ask you to be attentive and patient, for we shall listen to the melody and its parts several times before moving on to anything else. But first of all, let us listen to this familiar melody. It is the second subject from Schubert’s symphony in B minor; you will know it as the ‘Unfinished’ Symphony. Let us see how finished it actually is. Admittedly the melody, as part of a whole, can barely be understood properly in isolation. But perhaps we will be able to understand the whole better if we observe how it requires that whole. But you should nonetheless bear in mind that it is not complete in itself in the way a song is, for example, but takes on its full meaning only in the context in which it is located.²⁷ And now the melody, in its first orchestral appearance.

(Play second subject from the record; with the two introductory bars, the whole thing up to the general pause)

I think that if we ask ourselves what is so beautiful about this melody, we will all be inclined to say: its character, its expression. We are even able to describe this character and expression a little more closely. It is the peculiar rocking quality of the melody. It flows and moves forwards, but in a sense remains in the same place: the same way one feels when falling asleep, when one still senses time, and still has thoughts, but has really stopped and is no longer going any further, even though one is still breathing. This is what lends the melody its feeling of comfort: the comfort of the mother who rocks her child to sleep. But this is also what lends the melody its quiet sadness. In this

melody one feels that it will expire and disappear, that it cannot last; there is something frail about it: as if it could only comfort us by taking us away from our waking life into an earlier, older one that is close to death. And so the melody does indeed fade and stop entirely, quite suddenly, as if the threshold of sleep had been crossed. When the music continues, however, that sadness which had been hinted at almost imperceptibly by the melody now erupts, and it is as if the music were expressing how close sleep is to death. Listen again to the end of the melody where it seems to 'fall asleep', and then to the bars of the tragic outburst, so that you can understand what I mean:

(play the end of the violin melody again, from A minor onwards, and the first few bars after the general pause).

Perhaps you too can feel all the things I have just attempted to put into words. But it is still a little vague, and I am sure you will find it as unsatisfactory as I do. What we are listening to is the music, not whatever the composer was thinking or feeling at the time. If, then, our characterization of this music and its expression is to be more than a series of hazy poetic associations inspired by the music; if it is truly, as we had intended, to identify what exactly is so beautiful about this melody, we must be able to show all the things we have circumscribed in the melody itself, or at least to point out those elements in the melody that form the basis of our characterization.

I spoke earlier of the melody's rocking quality as its central characteristic. Rocking is above all something rhythmic: a uniform movement that keeps returning to itself, one might say. If we look for this in the music, the first thing we will observe is the accompaniment, in particular the accompanying harmonies in the violas and clarinets (play 2 introductory bars). This rhythm remains constant for the entire theme. It is an 'after-rhythm': one that does not coincide with the stressed melodic steps, but rather follows each of them. In the calm state in which this rhythm is repeated, it does not emphasize the steps of the melody; if anything, it weakens them. It suspends the accents and thus surely contributes to the rocking character.

But that is not enough to explain it. One could think of countless melodies with the same constant rhythm that have no rocking quality to them, for example the following (give an example, melody with the same accompaniment but a more lively character). So this rhythm is not very distinctive in itself, and could almost be considered external to the melody. It is a tool; in order to understand the melody itself properly, however, we must remain focused on the melody itself.

For this purpose we shall take the melody as it first appears, in the cellos, and ask ourselves: how is it formed? Our first answer is: it is based on a '*model*', a small melodic unit that could be said to supply

the material for the larger melody. Everything that appears in the larger melody is somehow present in the model, in the small melodic unit. This model comprises the first two bars of the melody (play on the piano). If you now listen once more to the whole melody, you will recognize these two bars of the model throughout it (perhaps play everything again).

In order now to ‘understand’ this melody, that is to say, in order to clarify what its characteristics are, I would suggest two things: firstly, that we take a closer look at the two model bars, and then, secondly, to see what happens to them.

Let us begin with the model. It consists, as I already mentioned, of two bars: the first (play) and the second (play). There is a certain contrast between these two bars: the first contains the ascending and descending interval of a perfect fourth, and suggests a quiet call; the second is pure song and consists purely of seconds. This opposition in the model itself then plays an important part in the larger melody. This contrast is not the model’s only aspect, however; its unity is even more important. This unity lies in a single note that we can refer to as the ‘critical’ note of the model: the note G. The model begins with it, the first bar ends with it; the second bar moves through it and returns to it. The first moves down to D, the second a little upwards to A; but both circle the G like a centre. This fact, namely that a note is ‘circumscribed’, that the melody moves around it and returns to it time and again – this fact is the reason for what I described to you earlier: that the melody continues yet actually stands still; it is as if all its movement were being absorbed by this insistent G. And let me point out, even at this early stage, that this circumscribed G forms the basis not only of the model, but also of the larger melody. It is abandoned once, but in favour of the adjacent note G sharp, and then returned to immediately (perhaps example). The melody moves back and forth around G without crudely underlining it. This is the source of the rocking character.

Now we must ask: what happens to the model? Have a listen to the two model bars together with those immediately following it (play).

You can see quite clearly that the two continuing bars are essentially identical to the two of the model. The first continuing bar follows on directly from the second bar of the model by repeating its first three notes (play); the second continuing bar corresponds to the first of the model (play).

So the continuation repeats the two bars of the model; yet at the same time it does not merely repeat them. What is the deciding difference? Have another listen (play). You will observe: the order of the two model bars is reversed in the two continuing bars: first we hear the second, then the first. Everything that follows depends on this

small change, the reversal of the order of two bars: the construction of the melody and its particular character.

What has the composer achieved by rearranging these two bars? First of all, an especially close succession of events that prevents any break between the model and its continuation. For the first bar of the continuation simply takes up the second bar of the model, repeats what was said in it and expands slightly on that. He thus avoids any trace of rattling machinery, any form of soulless symmetry. Perhaps it is difficult to prove the 'beauty' of a melody, and we indeed have no desire to supply any such quasi-mathematical form of proof. We can, however, do one thing: we can show how ugly it would be if it were different. Just imagine if the composer had – and many others would have considered it 'natural' – continued his melody without rearranging it (play). How trivial and childish this would sound in comparison to the continuation that Schubert found. Nothing would be left of that quality in the melody which speaks to us (perhaps play).

But Schubert has achieved something much greater and more profound than this. When I gave you my general characterization of the melody earlier, I compared it to the feeling one has while falling asleep, and said that it is as if our consciousness of time were suspended. Now we can understand what that means in this melody in actual musical terms. The model bars had a certain temporal order: the second follows the first. This temporal order is turned on its head in the continuation: the second precedes the first. This rearrangement makes the sense of time ambiguous; now that the earlier element appears later, and vice versa, time seems to stand still even as it continues. You can see how precisely our characterization is confirmed in concrete musical terms.

This suspension effect is reinforced by a further aspect. The model consisted of two bars, and the entire larger melody is assembled from two-bar units (play).²⁸ We saw that the second bar²⁹ of the continuation (play) corresponds to the first bar of the model. This means, however, that in this continuing bar one cannot tell precisely whether it is the second bar of that group³⁰ or already the first bar of a new two-bar³¹ group. I will show you what that means with an example.³² It could also carry on directly (play without bar 5). Then the G–D interval would no longer be the end of the two-bar group, but rather the beginning of a new one.³³ It is only upon hearing the 5th bar that one knows the previous one was intended as the second in a group, not the first: musical events very often take effect retrospectively. This ambiguity of accent lends music its floating quality and avoids the rigidity of symmetry. It also forms the link between the two parts of the melody: the cello part and the repetition in the

violins. For the end of the cello melody coincides with the beginning of the violin melody, so that in this 'link' one bar is indeed both the first and the last of a group. Please listen: when we get to the link I shall say 'now'. (Play)³⁴

The floating effect³⁵ is created not only by rearranging the two bars, however, but also by the nature of their modification. I said before that the first bar of the continuation (play) corresponds to the second bar of the model (play). The similarity is clear enough; but it is only half of the picture. Strictly speaking, only the first 3 notes of each bar are identical. The melody of these three notes – in music we call these smallest of melodic components 'motifs' – is repeated in the third bar starting on the D (play), so that the second bar in fact appears twice, in a compressed state, in the third. But that is not all. In the third bar, the motif from the second leads first to A, and is then played once more starting on the D. The D, however, is the lowest note reached by the call of the first bar. The A and the D are separated by the interval of a perfect fifth. This, however, is very similar to the fourth in the first bar. In an even more modified form, then, the third bar contains not only the second, which is obvious enough, but also the first bar. Listen for yourselves (play, perhaps repeat the characteristic interval). Several things are achieved here: a very high density of relationships that prevents any breaks in the melody, the greatest variety within the smallest framework, and an element of uncertainty that shapes the melody's expressive character.

At this point I would expect an objection to be raised. You will pause in shock – shocked by everything I have drawn out of these 4 or 5 bars, and will ask: yes, but was the composer really aware of all these things? The only truthful answer I can give is: I do not know. There is no reason to assume that he analysed his own themes, though I can assure you that artists are generally much less naïve in such matters than one would assume. But we do not need to concern ourselves with that here. We are interested in Schubert not as a private person, but for his music: what makes such a melody so good. And, in order to find the answer, we must account for all those relationships. Naturally the secret meaning of the objection 'was the composer aware of all that', which keeps returning as a stereotype, is this: Schubert was not aware of it, so I do not have to be aware of it either. He composed intuitively, so let me listen intuitively instead of talking to me about reversed bars and varied motifs. But I do not find that convincing. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that Schubert did actually compose all of that 'intuitively' – which I am not at all sure of. Then the assumption that we could immediately perceive this wealth of relationships, all these implications of unity and diversity in such a

melody, in any other than a highly superficial way, would presuppose a musical ability in all of us that I, for my part, would be too modest to claim for myself. But we do not want to perceive it vaguely, but rather concretely and in all its wealth. And that is where analysis helps us. It is not an end in itself, but a means to the end of listening more deeply and comprehensively rather than contenting ourselves with the fleeting charm of the melody. I do not underestimate this charm, but it still constitutes a stage before actual musical experience.

Let me say a few more words about the further course of the melody. Think back to the model: we saw that it consisted of the call with perfect fourths, then the songful melody with seconds. If we now follow the fate of the melody, we find that the calling motif, especially in its powerful, ascending form, moves further and further into the background. In bar 5 you still have the ascending fourth D–G; in bar 8, all that is left of it is the major third E–G sharp, and in the following there is no longer any leap, for the call has dissolved entirely into the songful seconds (play). Now, the seconds are naturally much weaker than the ascending fourth. The sleepiness, the frailty of the melody comes from the fact that the interval is relaxed until it is only a second. Here we find the final expressive characteristic of our description confirmed through something purely musical. Perhaps that strikes you as a little tenuous. Fortunately, however, Schubert himself comes to our assistance here. Our melody reappears much later on in the movement; but now, with the help of the seconds, it is drawn out by a further four bars with a great decrescendo, which makes the feeling of falling asleep that I mentioned to you completely palpable. Listen to the theme in that second appearance, and I will not need to tell you any more about it. I will merely point out when those bars of complete languishing come. (Record, play the recapitulation of the second subject.)

This is followed once again by the outburst that lends the sleepiness its tragic quality. If you think about that, and about the internal development of the theme from call to silence, you will perhaps feel: this theme is certainly a relatively closed melody, as in a song. But it has a tendency that extends beyond it. In a mere song, it would be unjustified and arbitrary for the melody to become frail and be followed by an outburst. It is only so convincing in this melody because it forms part of a whole. It is charged with the tendency of the whole. I would like to make that as clear to you as possible, even this early on. The melody's expiry could easily seem like a break, and in most performances that is indeed how it is presented. If you look closely at the written music, however, you will find that the outburst in the following two bars, which one normally hears simply as a wild chord, in fact

contains a melody: all the high woodwind play the descending fifth G–C (play). This is decisive, and I would go so far as to say that a performance which does not bring that out is not a good one. For this G–C forms the link to the earlier part: it is derived from the calling fourth, which is also where it returns. You observe that when I talk about the theme having a tragic aspect, this is once again confirmed by the music: the wild outburst stems from the theme itself.

I will not say any more about this. Instead, we will now play you the entire movement. As you listen to it, please try as best you can to understand it as a unity, and to hear the melody we have discussed within this unity. For it is only one melody among many, and only valid in connection with the others, such as (play). If possible, also try to assess whether you understand this melody better now than before. And then send us questions if there is anything that is still not clear to you. At the start of the next session we will try to answer the most important of these questions, and I will then tell you more about what a musical whole actually is, and what it means for a melody to be a ‘theme’.

But now listen to the first movement of the Symphony in B minor by Schubert.

c) Second Programme (undated)

We concluded our last programme by listening to a recording of the first movement of Schubert’s B minor symphony, and I had asked you to pay particular attention to the relationship between the main melodies. We had also told you which melodies they are. Now recall that they genuinely were melodies, i.e. that every one of them, as closely as they might be connected, has its own very specific character, and that this character is even very similar to those in Schubert’s songs, which you all know. But the distinctive nature of these melodies, their relative independence, means that they are relatively far apart. When our melody begins, for example, it is as if one had arrived in an entirely new musical region very different to the previous one. We could compare it to a long walk, when one emerges from a dark, wooded valley into a clearing, from where one can see a very different, lighter and more welcoming valley ahead. This change in the whole musical perspective is very typical of Schubert. It is clear enough, however, that such a character makes it rather difficult to hear such a movement as a whole. We are under constant temptation to hold on to the individual melodies and their beauty – savouring the new discoveries, one might say, and losing sight of the path in its unity.

However: I already told you last time that in symphonic music it is not only such details that are important, but rather the whole, and that

the details, even our example melody, necessitate that whole. I promised you that we would begin today by clarifying the nature of such a whole. I would recommend, however, that we make things simpler by taking a different piece. In the Schubert piece the whole is a result of the parts, and it requires a long process in order to form a whole from them. But there is also music in which the whole is the basic conception, and in which the parts follow from the whole. Looking at such music will make it much easier to clarify the concept of the whole. In this kind of music, we will expect the details will be much less distinctive, much less separate from one another, but at the same time placed so close to each other, joined together so tightly, that it is much easier to grasp their unity. In such music, it is even quite likely that one will grasp the whole before the individual melodies.

The kind of music we will now examine is historically older than Schubert. The phenomenon we observed in his music, the melodic characterization of the individual themes, their distance from one another, is precisely what made his style so new and revolutionary. It is difficult for us to imagine it today, as we suppose that music begins with melody, not with the whole, and initially it is easier for us to hear melodies than entire forms. In reality that is by no means so natural, and what we refer to today as melody was actually a relatively late development in music. It only seems natural to us because the musical convention of the 19th century pushed it into the foreground. You can already see from this small historical fact that the question of melody is not as simple as you may initially have supposed. We began with Schubert because we are used to listening to most music in the way the surface of that piece by Sch[ubert] appears, namely as a sequence of more or less connected melodies. Last time I showed you the elements from which a melody is constructed; now we shall turn our attention to the elements from which a totality is constructed. We shall examine a piece in which we cannot cling to beautiful melodies to the same extent, for it has no beautiful melodies in the way that Sch[ubert] has. It is a piece in which every detail is subordinated to the whole from the outset. This subordination of details means that the individual melodic phrases and individual harmonies are much simpler than Sch[ubert]'s. On the other hand, the construction of the whole is much tighter. So in a certain sense the piece is more difficult than the Sch[ubert] in spite of its simplicity. Here you cannot cling to details the way you can in Sch[ubert], and understanding a larger musical context always demands a degree of active participation on the listener's part. At the same time, everything takes place in such short-lived and simple situations that you will not find it difficult to follow.

We have selected the first movement of Haydn's C major symphony. Let me say a few words here about H[aydn] in general. He is usually presented to the public as a jovial, ponytailed old man, and you have probably even heard him spoken of as 'Papa Haydn'. At the most, one speaks of him as the forerunner of the classics, Mozart and Beethoven, whom he supplied with the technique, as it were, without imbuing it with its true substance. Now discard both of these notions. The notion that a composer whose fundamental achievement lies precisely in having constructed the tightest, most close-knit forms was no more than a sort of 'quaint'³⁶ curiosity from the 18th century is laughable. When one does find jovial passages in his music, there is normally a certain element of mockery. What one finds much more often, however, is the expression of extremely lively activity or of the most serene reflection. As for the matter of being a forerunner, I think that if we are concerning ourselves with music as a living phenomenon, rather than viewing it through the eyes of a music historian, we should not care a bit who might have been the forerunner of whom, but rather stay focused on what the music means in itself. And I think that is the only way that we will later be able genuinely to grasp properly what it might constitute in the context of other music. So do not let yourselves be distracted by Papa, the forerunner or any other clichés, and simply stick to what you hear and what we find out when we concentrate upon the whole.

We shall play you the first main section of the C major symphony by Schubert, the part referred to as the exposition (example). This is to give you a first idea. Before we play you the exposition again, however, I would like to make a few suggestions about how best to listen to this part and what you should pay particular attention to. You will not find any strongly contrasting melodies in this movement of the kind heard in the Schubert symphony; in a sense, everything is much closer together. The scale is much smaller, the individual components are much more closely interwoven, and the means of structuring and articulation are much more sophisticated. One could say that, while Sch[ubert] reveals a new perspective through a new melody, here a single new chord, one of a kind previously unheard in the piece, can be sufficient to indicate that something different is coming. The means of differentiation are much more sparing, and it is precisely because the differences are much less pronounced that a greater unity is achieved. Indeed, the unity is so obvious that the difficulty lies more in listening with sufficient precision to differentiate at all within the whole. And that is what I would now like to help you to do.

The only real caesura is the general pause roughly two-thirds into the piece. A general pause is a point at which the entire orchestra falls

silent. But even this general pause does not constitute a very significant break; for the music before it ends with the equivalent of a colon. There is a lively development that moves towards a fixed goal, and the last chords are such that they lead straight to it. In fact, the general pause only heightens the expectation of what follows, and immediately pushes forward into what is to come. It is the exact opposite of the general pause in the Schubert symphony. In the Sch[ubert] it constitutes a complete expiry of the melody, which suddenly takes on an entirely new quality through the wild outburst. In the H[aydn], the general pause directs the music all the more energetically towards the coming events, and to what the listener has really been expecting. There certainly cannot be any element of surprise; it is simply a greater concentration of the forces that were already in action (perhaps play Sch[ubert] and H[aydn] after each other).

We shall now see if we can discover a few other articulations within this dense unity. First of all we have a fairly long part without any real breaks. But then comes a passage in which, though the opening material returns unchanged, something new does appear. The entire first part is essentially monophonic. It is dominated by octaves and, above all, the main theme that opens the movement is not harmonized. Now, in this new section, it appears with full harmony. One refers to such a moment, when one has the feeling that the orchestra is only now stepping into action as a whole, so to speak, as an entry. And the tool of the entry, which historically stems from the older concerto form, plays a major part in the whole classical symphonic repertoire, especially Haydn and Beethoven. The entries are those passages which you find in almost all classical symphonies, where you have the feeling that it is only now truly beginning. We shall play you the opening of the symphony once more, and I will say 'now' when this entry comes. (Example). The entry as a new element is characterized by a further small detail: like the Sch[ubert] example we discussed, it presents a two-bar model (play at the piano) and then repeats it in the minor key, whereas previously there was not even any clear model. This new harmonic turn gives the listener a feeling that is difficult to describe in words, but which I am sure you can all relate to from your own experience. I would like to call it the feeling of harmonic depth. Or, to use an analogy from painting: the feeling of harmonic perspective. At such moments it is as if the music is no longer a mere surface, but rather a body, or as if it were reaching into some kind of spatial depth. Now try to understand what I mean (example). Let us see if we can find another caesura. This time we shall use a different way of identifying it: the dynamics. If a piece of music is very forceful for a while, then suddenly drops to piano and stays there, we have reason to assume that this

change of dynamics has a purpose in the structure. Even though the piece continues without any interruption, without restraining its motion, this change of dynamics nonetheless produces a caesura, but one that is subtle and lies beneath the surface. If we now listen to the end of our exposition, we can indeed find precisely such a progression, where a very vigorous passage leads suddenly into a very quiet moment. Please listen to it, and I shall once again say 'now' at the decisive point. (Example). This subtle caesura, which does not make its presence known at the surface level, is also achieved through a further element. I told you earlier how, in Haydn's music, a new chord can be sufficient to mark the beginning of a new section. Here we now find just such a chord once again, this time a dissonance that had not appeared in the piece until now. This chord is known as the diminished seventh chord. [Point out the greater sophistication in H(aydn)] This subtle nuance, within the context of an otherwise fairly simple musical language, is fully sufficient here to make the listener feel the start of a new section without any actual interruption. This section is also calmer than everything before it, moving in crotchets rather than quavers, and through this calm it has the air of an epilogue – as if the action were finished and one were now looking back on it. It is a clear ending effect that Haydn achieves here, and one indeed calls a group like this, which begins with a dissonance, the closing theme.

I have now shown you two caesuras to illustrate how they are achieved with the aid of harmonic effects. I have not, however, spoken about the actual 2nd subject, that is to say the part after the general pause. You will now be expecting a similarly unusual harmonic twist in order to convey the newness of this group; and you will not be disappointed. For here too one finds a minor chord in the repetition of the main motif (example). So you have a shift to the minor at each of the movement's three caesuras. A minor at the first entry, the relative minor of the basic key C–D. At the second E minor, the relative minor of G major, which is the key of the second subject, and finally, at the start of the closing theme, the strong dissonance of the diminished seventh chord, which makes the minor key effect even more intense. You can see how consistently H[aydn] used this harmonic device. The trick here is to articulate the unity of the movement, to structure it richly, while [it] barely has any caesuras on the surface, i.e. the music simply continues undaunted – unlike the Sch[ubert] movement, in which the composer has no inhibitions about bringing the musical flow to a complete halt occasionally.

One should not presume, however, that the unity of this movement comes simply from its motion. H[aydn] was no bumble-bee³⁷ composer; a unity that is produced simply by continuing some motion or

other without interruption is too primitive and too boring. Symphonic unity has much deeper reasons. Allow me to speak about those now.

I would like to remind you once more of Sch[ubert]. The model of our Sch[ubert] melody consisted, as you may remember, of two elements: the call with the perfect fourths and the songful part with the seconds. These two elements are by no means unique to Sch[ubert] or the example I gave you, however; I do not think it would be an exaggeration to say that they are in fact fundamental to all classical music. You will observe this especially with Beethoven. Classical music is based on the principle of tonality, i.e. on a particular allocation of notes following the basic triad. Most compositions of the classical period are composed around the basic triad, and that, I might add, is why it is so foolish to chase original ideas and reminiscences, as the material is identical in most cases.

The task that normally faced the 'classical' composers in the formulation of their themes is that of presenting the triad once or forming melodies from it, but then connecting the notes of the triad, which always have something rigid and fanfare-like, and creating relationships between them. You can find both of these aspects very clearly in the *Sch[ubert]* theme. With its calling fourth, it comes from the triad: the theme is in G major, and the two notes of the fourth – G and D – are both contained in the G major triad. The motif with the seconds in bar 2, however, established the connection between the outer notes of the triad.

Generally speaking, almost all themes found in classical symphonies consist of either triadic intervals or seconds, and usually of a combination of both. If I were now to tell you that the seconds stem from the attempt to counteract the stiffness of the triad, and to bridge the chasm, so to speak, between the notes of the triad, I can demonstrate this in the theme of our H[aydn] symphony. The theme consists initially merely of the melodically unfolded triad in different rhythmic forms, following the principle of rhythmic rejuvenation, i.e. the note values become ever shorter: first a dotted minim, then a minim, then crotchets, then quavers (example). Then the triad ascends once more in crotchets (example). The final bar brings the whole melody to its climax, which is marked by a *sforzando*, a strong accent (example). After this climax, the ascending triad is inverted and descends. But it feels as if this climax had taken away its forward thrust; it now wants to moderate itself into a melody, and for this purpose the notes of the triad are connected by seconds. So instead of (example) we have (example).

In this manner, H[aydn] developed the seconds directly from the triadic theme, and for the rest of the main theme he now continues with the seconds he reached in this way (example), which he now

alternates with the triadic theme, especially the conspicuous fourth (example) from the triadic theme. And now we are in a position to give an exact answer to the question as to why the themes in this symphony are so much closer together. The answer is simply that, at the climax, H[aydn] reached the seconds and combined them with the triadic theme in a variety of ways. In the 2nd subject, which one has also since Haydn’s and Mozart’s day become accustomed to call the song theme, only the seconds are left. One could see it as the natural continuation of the melodic songfulness reached in the 1st subject, and it essentially consists only of seconds with very small triadic intervals (example). You only need to compare the passage in which the seconds make their first appearance in the main theme with the second subject, derived purely from seconds, to understand what I mean when I say that the themes are so close to each other here (example).

At the same time, however, this theme also has a dance-like waltz accompaniment that distinguishes it from the driving 1st subject in spite of their melodic proximity (example). You can see how H[aydn] achieves unity and contrast simultaneously within a very narrow framework.

Now, however, I still wish to show you something that is of fundamental importance for an understanding of all classical music. I told you earlier that in the triadic main theme, which rejuvenates itself, the motif with the fourths is quite especially important – the motif that is hammered out like the strokes of a drum, and is really the most distinctive and striking element of the entire main theme – through the fact that it is retained stubbornly for two bars (example). Now pay attention to the moment I referred to as the entry, and listen carefully (example). You can hear the triadic main theme in the upper voice; below it, however, you can also hear the accompaniment, consisting of the same fourths that had developed from the main theme preceding them. Two elements originally heard in succession now appear simultaneously. In other words: something that was once thematic now becomes an accompaniment, while a different part of the earlier theme remains a melody. This is one of the most important expressive means in classical music: even accompanying figures are derived from originally thematic material, and the composer works so economically that everything which appears in his piece – regardless of whether it is a principal or a secondary voice – is derived from certain basic elements. You have often heard tell of thematic and melodic transformation. Here you can see the very essence of what that means, namely that in classical music no event remains without consequences, and on the other hand that nothing which appears to be new really is entirely new, but is in fact always developed as a result of what was already there.

Allow me to give a very brief summary: the unity of H[aydn]'s symphonic composition results from the fact that it is based on a pure triadic theme and a melody in seconds derived from it. The themes are not in stark contrast; rather, he constantly mediates between them. This constant mediation produces the image of a whole that does not simply *exist*, but rather *becomes*. The entire movement is a process of a highly dynamic nature. The articulation of this unity is achieved by very subtle means that are partly harmonic, partly dynamic, and partly rhythmic. It is characterized by the utmost economy, i.e. every note of the music is derived from very few basic elements of material. On the one hand, that involves a strict unity, as everything has the same origin, but on the other hand also an equal level of diversity, as one and the same source constantly produces new elements. One could describe H[aydn]'s symphonic type as that of unity within diversity, as a dynamic unity that constitutes itself through a living process of mediation between its diverse components.

The only part we have examined closely is the exposition. It is preceded by a brief, slow introduction that builds up tension by means of the same diminished seventh chord that marks the entry of the closing theme. Once this closing theme has concluded the exposition, it is followed by a short middle section – known as the development – whose significance we shall only be discussing later on. Then the exposition is repeated with a few modulations following certain rules, and finally extended with a short addition known as the coda. And now listen once more to the whole movement: (example).

d) Third Programme (undated)

In the last session we used a substantial part of a H[aydn] symphony to give you an idea of what we refer to as musical unity, i.e. that a symphonic movement is not a sequence of loosely connected, more or less pretty melodies, but rather a totality, and that the individual themes and motifs draw their sense purely from this totality. This occurs by means of the musical context. We define the musical context as all the relationships of equality, similarity and difference that exist between the individual parts of a piece of music in order to form an articulated whole from these parts. We can thus summarize the aim of this course as follows: its central concern is for you to learn how to grasp the musical context of a piece. In other words: for you no longer to listen to extended works of music as a potpourri, that is to say a random sequence of separate melodies, but rather to understand that not only the sequence, but even the melodies themselves are determined to their very roots by the whole on which they are based.

The way in which one organizes this musical context in music is known as musical form. The word 'form' refers primarily to the relationship between similar and different elements within a musical piece in time, for example when a 2nd thematic group follows the first, as we encountered in the H[aydn] symphony; the further division of this thematic group into subgroups, its further development in a middle section and finally its return. To reach a true understanding of musical form, however, it is not enough to account for these relationships in a schematic way; one must rather grasp the specific musical context of the work one is dealing with.

Now, that may seem self-evident. Going by the typical form of music appreciation, however, it is far less self-evident than you might think. I am sure you have all heard of musical forms. The two pieces we have discussed so far, for example – the Sch[ubert] movement and the H[aydn] movement – were written in sonata form. One also speaks of song form, rondo form, variation form, fugue form, etc. Now, these forms are generally presented to you as something ready-made. Their scheme, their recipe, is given: 1st subject, second subject, closing theme, development, recapitulation. I know from my own experience how little such schematic explanations help to reach a true understanding of music. One asks oneself why music should be structured according to that particular scheme rather than another, and one can easily see a form of standardization in such models that is an obstacle to any truly free productivity. Now this impression stems precisely from the fact that, when people normally talk about musical forms, they speak of the actual schemes only in an abstract fashion, rather than – as I described above – developing those formal models with reference to the specific musical contexts of specific musical works.

That is what we shall now attempt. But we do not wish to dwell on the pieces discussed last time. We shall rather look at something much simpler, something that most of you will probably have encountered directly in your everyday musical experiences: a series of pop songs. These songs, whose construction follows very familiar patterns, do not present you with any riddles and will therefore, unlike the serious pieces we have examined so far, not require any explanations. Nonetheless, these pop songs also have a certain form. In fact, a form you are all accustomed to. If we now succeed in showing you the sense of this form with these very simple pop songs, that is to say, showing you what purpose is served by this form, and if we can fall back on your own experience with this form, that will greatly facilitate a different task: that of understanding the sense of musical form when dealing with less standardized products. And I hope that by doing this we will also achieve something else: that you come to understand, in

a precise musical sense, the difference between light and serious music, and why we consider ourselves entitled to consider serious music something better than light music. First, however, we shall examine a pop song.

We shall play you one of those 'pop songs' that, despite already being 20 years old, keeps experiencing revivals: the foxtrot song Avalon by Al Jolson and Vincent Rose. We shall play it to you in the sheet version,³⁸ that is to say in the form you can play at home yourselves, not in any arrangement. (Play Avalon). If you were now to be asked about the form of this song and countless others like it, you would find it extremely easy to answer. You would say that it consists of two clearly separated parts, the verse and the chorus. If one were now to ask you what the essence of this form is, you would probably answer that the chorus is the most important thing. That is what gives each song its name, and in orchestral arrangements it is mostly the chorus that is featured, with the verse only hinted at or omitted altogether. If you were asked to sing Avalon, you would probably start with the chorus rather than the verse. In short, you would say that the form consists of something important – the chorus – and something unimportant – the verse. Nonetheless, you could not exactly call the verse an introduction, for in many cases – including our example – it is exactly as long as the chorus.

If you were then asked about the relationship between these two parts, you would perhaps say that the verse ends with a colon, so to speak. Remember how we also mentioned the colon in the H[aydn]. Here, however, it has a very specific meaning. It is as if some sort of background or incident is related first, until the point where the actual song is necessarily expected – and only then does the song enter and fulfil the expectation that was created by the preceding story. In order to illustrate this colon, which is so characteristic of pop songs, and the relationship between verse and chorus, we shall play you the end of the verse and the start of the chorus once more on the piano (example).

Now we shall try to clarify the sense of this ever-returning form. For this purpose I would like to draw your attention to a small aspect that can be found in countless pop songs; it is a trademark of pop song lyrics, albeit not in the one we are discussing. For if you compare the words of the chorus with those of the verse in many pop songs, you will find that the story told in the verse somehow purports to be the actual story of the chorus, roughly along the lines of 'I was alone, my heart was full of longing, and in my longing I sang a song'. And the chorus comes, as it were presenting the actual song that was announced in advance in the verse: 'The song of my longing is sung to you'. Recall, for example, the song that was popular two years ago

entitled Penny Serenade. 'Once I strayed 'neath the window of a lovely, lovely lady. And she smiled while I softly played my Penny Serenade. Si si si, you can hear it for a penny. Si si si just a Penny Serenade.' In all such lyrics, one could say that a private person is speaking at the start. But then, when the chorus comes, the music is no longer the property of a private person, but rather the property of all. It is no coincidence that this part is called the *chorus*. The word 'chorus' indicates that, here, everyone in society joins in with the song, whereas initially the story was told by a single person. It is a round song, or – as these songs are all dance numbers – a round dance. Perhaps one can best express the underlying experience as follows: first we hear the words of a private person whose privacy is of a coincidental and often isolated nature. In most verses, the narrator laments the fact that love has somehow passed him by, that he is lonely, etc. In the chorus, however, it is as if he is taken up into the community and comforted, and the coincidental aspect becomes something objective, something confirmed. Expressing this relationship between the coincidental, isolated figure and the confirmation of the chorus is the true sense behind the form of all these pop songs. This sense not only lies in the lyrics, but is also realized in the music. The verses are generally much less strict than the choruses. The lines are loosely connected, sometimes almost like recitative (example: Music, Maestro, Please). Even when they have a more concrete musical shape, for example in our song Avalon, their narrative character makes them far less vivid and memorable than the chorus, and their only real purpose is to bring on the chorus and, through the contrast, to lend it the character of social confirmation. Now listen to the verse and chorus of Avalon (example). I think you can see the sense of the verse–chorus form immediately. I daresay it will surprise many of you if I say that this form, in a more developed state, is one of the most important in our art music. I stated before that the form of pop songs is that of a round dance, in which a loose solo and a strict, recurring chorus alternate. The Italian name for the round dance is *rondo*. And indeed, the rondo form in art music is nothing but a through-composed alternation between an unchanging, chorus-like refrain and more variable verses, except that the rondo, as we know it from classical music, begins with the chorus rather than the verse. You will generally hear a rondo described as a piece of music in which a certain theme keeps reappearing, interrupted by other themes. That is certainly true; but it is far too little to convey the sense of this form as we did with our pop song. What is important is not the fact that the theme keeps appearing, but rather the fact that this theme has the character of being the unchanging main point, and that every moment

in which it returns is felt as a manner of reunification, a sort of homecoming – though it is also possible for the chorus theme to appear as a solo, as is often the case in concertos. But it must always have that binding refrain character in contrast with the mere verse character of the themes heard between its appearances, and the attraction of rondo form lies in the fact that its mandatory refrain theme asserts itself time and again, constantly removing anything coincidental in its path – even in the most remote corners – and dominating the whole musical scene with the compelling force of a round dance.

We shall now play you a rondo from a work of art music.³⁹

e) Fourth Broadcast, May 19, 1940

You are now going to listen to a number of works of the two maturest and most important Viennese pupils of Arnold Schönberg, who now teaches at Los Angeles: songs of Anton Webern and four pieces for clarinet and piano by Alban Berg who passed away five years ago. Most of these works are more than thirty years old, only Webern's songs op. 12 are somewhat younger. They were written during the first world war and the particular mood of the first of these songs, a prayer, finishing with the words: »Gib auch den Verstorbenen die ewige Ruh«, (»Give eternal rest also to those who passed away«) comes very close to the feeling of those years. Yet though most of these works are relatively aged, I imagine that the majority of you will find them still as strange as they might have sounded thirty years ago. They speak a musical language which never became the established language of musical production. The fearlessness which they exhibit by sticking to this language appears to me an unmistakable sign of the power behind them. Let me try to bring closer to you these strange works by some hints.

What you will find conspicuous in all these pieces and what is significant for the style of the whole musical vanguard in Austria between 1908 and 1918 is *their brevity*. There is probably none among all the pieces of Berg and Webern, which you will hear now, that last longer than a minute. First you will find that this factor helps to make understanding easier. For most listeners find it less trying to listen to a musical miniature than to a long symphony, and we often heard at this station how many of our listeners do not know what to do with such long works as the symphonies by Bruckner and Mahler. Indeed, all the pieces of today's program are easy to follow insofar as they did not demand that you remember what went on earlier. Before you could remember, the piece is over. So rather try to follow each moment than to remember the context.

Yet the brevity is not much of a help. Not only is the musical vocabulary uncommon but the meaning of the very brevity is different from what we are used to. It is not the brevity of miniatures, of genre pieces, of little musical pictures which content themselves with little time, because of the modesty of their contents. These songs and these clarinet pieces have nothing in common with the brevity of romanticism – not even of that profound romanticism we find in some of Chopin’s »Preludes« and some of Schumann’s »Kinderszenen«. The music that is performed now aims at combining a maximum of internal tension and excitement with a minimum of external effort and extension in time. They confine themselves to the essential. Schönberg himself characterized the music of his pupil Webern by saying that Webern compresses a whole novel into one sigh. Indeed, his music is like that. Here one simple, lonely forsaken tone sometimes means as much as a whole page in traditional music. There are no repetitions to hold on to and almost no developments. Everything stands for itself and must be taken in its uniqueness in about the same way in which we must understand very short lyrical poetry. It is a music which takes the idea of lyricism, pure expression, very seriously and skips every embellishment and everything uncharacteristic.

In order to understand this Puritanism of musical language, you have to think of the epoch from which these pieces stem. It is the epoch of expressionism which was one violent protest of individuality against mechanization and convention in all spheres of human existence. It was the period when poetry tried to replace the articulated word by the scream. The advanced composers of these years were so sensitive against anything that reminded them of phraseology or sounded outworn that they could not stand any repetition or any structure that did not follow immediately from their immediate expressive purpose: they could not stand anything in music that already had fulfilled its function. Hence, the very best music of the decade between 1908 and 1918 is so oddly abbreviated. It is more a music that raises its face to you for a second and looks at you with deep, frightened eyes than a music that wants to develop itself to any considerable extent.

You will realize this immediately when you listen to the Webern songs which might easily be the subtlest musical lyric poetry that has ever been written. They do not even tolerate any stronger accent, nothing that would go beyond the most intimate lyrical circle for a second. The songs, op. 3 are taken from a cycle of poems by Stefan George which reflect the utmost loving tenderness, without hardly mentioning it in the changes of nature. Over their discord, a remote feeling of possible consonance still spreads. The songs, op. 12 are still

scantier, even the faintly humorous last one. It is as if an entirely isolated man had broken all bridges behind himself and merely aimed at expressing himself. It appears to me, however, that all of us have become so lonely that this soliloquy concerns all of us.

The brevity of Berg's clarinet pieces is of a somewhat different nature. It is pure instrumental music and the very contrast of the two instruments alone suffices to carry with itself a certain dramatic element that is entirely lacking in Webern's lyricism. Alban Berg was above all a stage composer whose main works are the operas *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*. You can find traces of the dramatist even in these pieces. Some of them are like visions of dramatic moments that appeared later in Berg's large works. For instance the piano chords of the second slow piece with their brooding, almost threatening expression appear later almost literally in the murder scene of *Wozzeck*. Or the tremendous outburst at the end of the fourth piece where a catastrophe appears to explode their lyrical structure.

Why then are these pieces nevertheless so short? The answer is simple. They are an attempt to reduce our traditional instrumental form, the sonata, to its most essential elements of expression and to drop everything which functions in a sonata as ornament or mere transition or gets side-tracked. These four clarinet pieces together make the quintessence of a whole sonata. Thus the second piece is an Adagio in nuce, the third one is a microscopic Scherzo which still maintains the ordinary Scherzo scheme consisting of a Scherzo, trio and recapitulation, although all three of these parts are no longer than a few bars each. The recapitulation is like a specter of the Scherzo and goes out like a light. The last piece, slow again, is a rudimentary rondo. The chords of its beginning, which reappear several times, function as a rondo theme. All these types, however, are entirely subservient to the lyrical expression and have no bearing independent of this expression.

Besides the Webern songs, Miss Dick is going to sing you some songs written in traditional musical language. They are compositions of Debussy's earlier period when his impressionist technique did not yet forbid the flow of long, unified melodies. These songs are written to poems by Baudelaire and Verlaine. This music belongs to the very few cases where great poetry and great music not only met but are ruled by one spirit and bear witness to the same basic experiences. Such a concordance of word and tone was possible only in the France of impressionism where the limits of the different arts became fluid and where the nuance means more than the stubborn material. Verlaine once postulated that poetry ought to be music before anything else. In these Debussy songs, music has become poetry as well.

f) Fifth Broadcast, June 11, 1940

The Piano Sonata op. 1 by Alban Berg was written when he was still a pupil of Schönberg. It is one single sonata movement, a melancholic piece of a certain somber mellowness. The technical means are still the traditional ones, particularly of post-Wagnerian chromaticism. The new elements, such as the chords of the fourth, are cautiously and hesitantly introduced.

Yet the piece also manifests features of the mature Berg. Its underlying principle may be characterized by Richard Wagner’s statement that music is the art of transition. Everything indeed is transition in this sonata. The themes do not stand for themselves. They are built out of smallest units and are dissolved once again into smallest units. Contrasts are avoided. Berg aims at developing a great number of musical patterns from each other without any break, in perfect continuity. The oddly shifting expression of the piece, its touch of yielding resignation, is achieved by this technique.

Nothing is static here, everything is development. Hence, the development section of the traditional sonata form becomes less important. In this sonata, it is not – as usual – rich and complicated but rather tends toward simplification, leading to a big climax. Here you can see how our traditional musical forms change by the inherent tendencies of modern composing.

Now you are going to listen to Alban Berg’s Piano Sonata op. 1, played by Trude Rittmann.⁴⁰

[Berg, Piano Sonata op.1]

Now you’re going to listen to two movements of the sonata for oboe and piano by Stefan Wolpe. It is much to his credit that it is impossible to classify him. The moving force of his music appears to me to be the wish of reconstructing the *espressivo*. Wolpe’s music has nothing in common with romantic expression and not even with musical expressionism. Here no chord and no tone is supposed to reveal an abyss of the soul. The musical language as a whole is spoken and pronounced so passionately that it has the effect of the extreme, just as does Oriental, particularly Arabic music which has nothing to do with our tradition of expression. [Indeed, Wolpe, who lived several years in Palestine, has been stimulated by Oriental music, but has transferred these impulses to a highly differentiated occidental musical material. The fact that his choice fell upon the somewhat shrill sound of the oboe can be accounted for by his expressive ideal. It is particularly obvious in the first of the two movements, a very short, almost speaking piece that bears the title »Erbitterte Empörung«, (»Embittered Indignation«). The second movement is an adagio with two developments, the

second of which enhances the first one.] Wolpe puts the musical language at the service of declamatory extremes, because only the extreme still has a chance to be felt at all against the background of our hackneyed musical language.

Now Mr. Josef Marx,⁴¹ oboe, and Miss Trude Rittmann, piano.

[Musical examples.]

The songs of Gustav Mahler which you are going to hear now are so simple on their surface that they do not seem to need any explanation except for their very simplicity. They sound like folk tunes. But they are none – and no imitations of folk tunes either. They rather employ the simple musical language in order to express something of the deep mourning, that immediacy of community, testified to by the folk tune, is lost for us. They are self-reflected folk tunes: hence the sudden transitions, the piercing chromaticism, the abrupt change of major and minor. Hence also the strangely dreaming character which you will find in such a song as »Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen«. They are – as it were – fragments of a musical folk language which we do not fully understand any longer, come to haunt us in our dreams. It is not accidental that most of the poems which Mahler has translated into this musical language are devoted to mourning those who are oppressed.

You are now going to listen to three songs by Gustav Mahler, sung by Leore Meyer, and at the piano Eduard Steuermann.

g) Draft

When you take a magazine and your eyes are caught by some story you may approach it in different ways. You may read it from the beginning to the end understanding the plot. Or you may begin it, guessing, after some paragraphs, how the rest will be, and put it aside. Or you may simply look at the characters, identify honest, brave Bill, glamorous Diana and shrewd, selfish Mr. Sloan, and then be happy when you find them again in the illustrations, admiring Diana's hair, and Bill's broad shouldered figure underneath his well-fitting tuxedo.

Something similar takes place when you are listening to music. You may follow attentively the whole context of the piece from beginning to end. Or you may guess, after a couple of bars, how the whole thing is going to be. Such a guess holds true for most popular music, the listeners of which may even enjoy anticipating what's going to be next. Or you may just realize the characters, that is to say your main themes and may be happy when you recognize them as soon as they reappear.

It is easier to listen in a vague and absent-minded way than to read in the same manner. Thus we may expect a comparatively larger number of people listening to music by simply staring at its main char-

acters or themes than the number of those magazine readers who content themselves with the identification of the persons and the admiration of their pictures. As far as my experience goes most people when listening to music are absorbed only by the tunes, or maybe by the rhythm, but are very little concerned about what happens to these tunes. Speaking with some exaggeration, one may say that most listeners to music do not behave so very differently from the child who looks only at the pictures. Or putting it in another way: their musical experience has not changed very much since their own childhood. They respond to simple melodic formulas and are gratified by their recurrence without bothering much about their fate. Children are simply happy when Uncle Ed and Cousin Beverly come again. They care very little for their characters or the way of their lives.

You may say this is all good and right as long as they get some pleasure out of it. To this I simply reply that by listening this way at least we do not get the utmost out of our music. We also may enjoy the strange and characteristic appearance of a Chinese newspaper, and by looking at it more frequently we may even recognize certain symbols, but it makes all the difference on earth whether we know the language or not. Something similar though less obvious is true for music. Let us assume that the magazine story is a good one with an unexpected and witty point to it. The child who simply stares at Diana and Bill certainly misses something. Grown-up persons listening to serious music should be capable of faring better than the child.

Moreover, our magazine stories are largely custom-built the same way current song hits are. They therefore make for a more automatic response than does serious music. The bulk of serious repertoire, however, stems from a time when mass production was not yet supreme in the musical field. Hence, if we would listen to a piece of serious music in the same happy-go-lucky way we react to Tin Pan Alley products we would transform our symphony into something far different from what it actually is. It would become a kind of medley about its own tunes. Of course, there are definite structures or patterns in most of the so-called classical music. But what matters in serious music are the deviations rather than the patterns themselves. Mozart was perhaps the greatest master of such deviations which we are most likely to miss if we devote our attention merely to the tunes. It is just these deviations to which we should try to shift our attention, in order to comprehend what I may call the musical plot. I should like to give you some hints how this may be achieved.

To many of you probably the idea will occur, fostered by numerous commentators and musical books, that the music has a plot in the sense that it describes some definite mood, action or external reality. This is

the hackneyed idea of Beethoven struggling with his fate, of the way from night to morning, of the death and transfiguration of some hero. Let me emphasize at once that these are not the plots I am speaking about. Only a limited part of serious music, particularly the so-called program music, has any descriptive purpose. We would be utterly at a loss if we would look for any descriptiveness in some of the most important compositions that have ever been produced, such as Bach's »Art of the Fugue« or Beethoven's last quartets. Moreover, the whole idea of musical descriptiveness is of a somewhat doubtful nature. The great Austrian composer Gustav Mahler added to his early symphonies some explanatory notes which he later dropped. They amounted to something like descriptive analyses. I remember that on the occasion of a European performance of his Third Symphony the program book contained erroneously the explanatory notes of the Second Symphony without it apparently making much difference to the listeners. If you try the little experiment of listening to, let us say, some symphonic poem by Richard Strauss without knowing its supposed contents you will notice that it is practically impossible to figure out what it is all about unless you hit upon the bleating of the sheep in his Don Quixote.

I therefore suggest to forget for the time being about external plots and to come back to the idea of the plot which I originally suggested, namely what happens to a theme and how the development determines the course of the whole. There is good reason to compare, though cautiously, musical themes or their smaller components, the motifs, to human characters and literature. One even speaks, with regard to themes, of »musical characters«. Of course, our musical characters are not so well established as fictional persons. They undergo all sorts of changes without any danger for their lives. It is astonishing what cruelties such a theme can stand as soon as it falls prey to true musical workmanship. We therefore must be capable of discovering it even if its surface has completely changed. Thus to understand the musical plot means to go beyond the obvious and to grasp relationships which may be utterly subtle and sometimes completely hidden to the inexperienced listener.

Our example is the first movement of Schubert's famous C major Symphony, the last and most significant one which he finished. The theme, at the fate of which we may have a look, is the theme of its *introduction* [Example]. Since this melody contains many variations and repetitions of its basic element we should devote our attention to this *basic element*, namely the first two bars [Example].

Incidentally our procedure to start from this melody is fairly unorthodox because it is not what they used to call the main theme of the *movement* but only the main theme of its *introduction*. It will be

seen, however, that this melody, or rather its basic element, is actually the material the whole movement is built out of. We'll find this out when we have a look at the actual main theme of the Allegro part which follows our introduction [Example]. The rhythm of this main theme – it is the rhythm which in popular American music is not under the name of umpateedle – is derived from the rhythm of the second bar of our basic motifs [Example]. The entry of the main theme has been reached by a gradual transformation of the slow introduction into the Allegro [Example]. What's new in the Allegro theme, the so-called main theme, are the intervals of the fourth [Example]. This interval definitely marks the beginning of a fresh section whereas the persistent umpateedle rhythm links it very closely to the preceding introduction out of which it grows organically. This new interval, however, is immediately followed by another motif consisting of seconds. This motif melodically refers directly to our basic motif [Example]. This reminiscence is integrated so completely within the new main theme that it remains almost unnoticeable and works as a link between introduction and Allegro section merely behind the scene. The ensuing continuation of the main theme rests exclusively on this motif.

You may ask me at this point: for heaven's sake should we actually bother about all these relations and be consciously aware of them when listening to music? Wouldn't this sort of analytical effort spoil the pleasure we get out of the music? Wouldn't our situation be similar to that of the fabulous myriapod, with its thousand feet, which could no longer make any step as soon as it had been taught by a scientist that it had those thousand feet?

To this objection the answer is simple. Of course, when listening to music we should not theorize about it and think of umpateedle, introductions and their relations to main themes. What we should do, however, in order to understand music, is to follow spontaneously with our ears, not with our brains, all the interrelationships it contains. The better we are equipped to do so, the more completely we are capable of following up the inherent logic of the piece. The explanations I offer you here are merely auxiliary to this end. If we once realize consciously relationships of the kind I tried to point out, we'll get used to devoting our attention to the factors of musical interconnection. We'll grasp more and more relations immediately without verbally accounting for them and without even thinking of them. In order to achieve this, however, we must once have the experience that such relations really exist at all and this can be shown only by putting them into words. Do not believe, by the way, that composers know nothing about these things, that they create them merely by intuition and imagination. This is a myth or rather, sales talk in order to sell

»our world's great music«. The musician as well as any other artist must not be theoretician but he must be fully aware within his own material of what he is doing. The masterworks of Schubert are certainly no exception to this rule.

After this digression let us come back to the fate of our basic motifs. As we just found out, it remains involved in the Allegro theme, though it does not come into the open. Almost without any transition this main theme is followed by the second theme. The latter appears with a suddenness very characteristic for Schubert, like a *fata morgana* which conveys the feeling of a far distant region, of farness itself, both by its expression and its purely musical aloofness from the preceding part [Example]. The stronger the contrast, however, the more necessary it becomes to provide for an underlying unity. This is done again by our basic motif. In spite of the contrasting rhythm its melodic components stem from our introduction. The beginning bar is exactly the same as the third bar of the introduction [Example], whereas the continuation with the triplets is melodically nothing but our basic motif itself [Example].

You may think that the similarities are a little far-fetched. Schubert, however, was kind enough to take care of this objection, that is to say, he has come into the open with the hidden relationship about which we talked right now. This works as follows: our second theme is accompanied by a figure [Example] which is maintained throughout the very long section of the second theme, even while the melodic contents of this theme varies considerably and only its main rhythm is upheld. To this figure and the remnants of our second theme the trombones suddenly play literally our introductory theme [Example]. This is, by the way, one of the first occasions where, in symphonic music, use is made of the trombones for melodic, thematic purposes, whereas before Schubert the trombones functioned mainly as colors or in order to increase the sound volume. At any rate, here the solemn and even threatening tone of the trombones is highly [. . . illegible word] and lays particular emphasis upon this moment of the symphony by attracting all the attention to it as if the trombones would say: we are the real second theme that goes with the original accompaniment and we are nothing but the introductory theme. Let it be understood that the identity of the theme of the trombones and of the introduction is so plain that every attentive listener without any analytical knowledge should realize it at once [Example]. Schubert underscores the identity because the basic melody is attributed both times to the brass family. The trombones become more and more urgent, the basic motif is compressed until a climax is reached where it appears no longer in the deep regions but in the violins in the high wood winds, now literally quoting a passage from the introduction [Example]. Thus within the first big

part of the movement the circle has been closed: the introductory theme which worked quite unobtrusively during the first and second theme of the Allegro holds its ground and comes to the fore once again.

Our basic theme, however, has undergone one big change. It is this change that I actually should like to call its *fate*. When it is brought into the introduction by the horns it appears without any accompaniment, like a motto, like an inscription on a portal through which one enters the symphony proper. This motto, however, contains in a sententious way, as it were, what is later to be the musical contents of the movement itself. It makes its way into the actual movement quite unobtrusively, so to speak, incognito. Step-by-step its identity with all the other musical characters is revealed and finally it triumphs and becomes reaffirmed by the symphonic process itself. Our theme is at the same time both introduction and result. One may say that the first movement is a kind of a *proof* of its own introduction. To understand the movement as a whole rather than to stick to its tunes amounts to following up the stages of this process. This, of course, can only be done when you listen attentively to the movement as a whole.

Let us just look at one more phase of this process. We have discussed how the second theme is revealed and its relation to our basic motif. The same revelation is achieved by Schubert also with regard to the main Allegro theme and thus the predominance of our basic element is shown to be universal. This is done in the development. Here the quotation of the basic motif of the trombones follows a section based upon the main theme, instead of upon the second theme, which is now as intimately related to our basic element as the second theme was before. After our basic motifs have thus spread over all the themes there follows a brief section which leads back to the beginning of the Allegro.

This section uses exclusively the introductory material, the »basic element«, but it is now veiled in a kind of twilight, ambiguous in its mood, even sinister. This is achieved by the deep strings which, after a sharply dissonant period, play our basic motif pianissimo in octaves, suggesting the idea of a musical abyss [Example]. It is as if the motto – as soon as it enters the real life of the symphony and loses its aloofness and objectivity – becomes something of a demonic power. The spell which surrounded it as a motto gives it a haunting halo within the abode of the symphony. Thus the different impact of a theme within the structure of the form becomes an element of its mood and of its expression. Formal structure and expressive contents are not two different aspects of music but are densely intertwined and interdependent. Only if we realize the formal emphasis of the introductory

statement of our symphony can we fully understand the uncanny atmosphere of the end of its development.

The motto-like character, the stony expression of our basic element at its first appearance helps to underscore it whenever it is confirmed by the [illegible word]. It functions almost like a Wagnerian leitmotif and it is this kind of treatment by which Schubert strongly indicates the direction of later romanticism. The different surroundings, however, within which our basic element or leading motif appears, give it an entirely changed aspect. One may well compare Schubert's music to a landscape which, though remaining unchanged in itself, looks entirely different when viewed from different angles, from inside or outside, from the hilltop or from the valley.

Let me just point to one last detail by which this may be demonstrated. Remember the particular role played by the trombones in our movement which generally »quote« our basic theme. Now remember that at the very beginning this theme is not played by the trombones but by the horns. This has a salutary meaning. The horns are conspicuous enough to play a theme as a motto, but they are not so solemn and emphatic as the trombones. The reappearance of the theme in the trombones therefore makes a stronger effect than the humbler statement at the beginning and also adds to the more expressive mood of our theme as soon as it is no longer outside but is rediscovered in the dense woods of the symphonic process. When the theme appears for the last time, at the end of the whole movement, it is accordingly played *unisono* by the full orchestra, however it is no longer something particular and menacing but it has become a totality which takes possession of the entire field, loses its threatening aspect and becomes positive and affirmative. It is not only a leitmotif, it is also a choral and this double meaning is unfolded and vindicated by our movement.

6 ‘On Popular Music’: Material and Text

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Editor's Note

The text 'On Popular Music' appears in this volume in the version prepared by Adorno for publication in the journal *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, 9 (1941), pp. 17–48. However, the editor has reached the difficult decision to include not only this text, but also material from a much longer draft that formed the basis of the essay's final version: 'Listening Habits: An Analysis of Likes and Dislikes in Light Popular Music'. There were two reasons for this decision: firstly, Adorno had evidently submitted 'Listening Habits' to the *American Journal of Sociology* for publication, but the text was sent back to him. It is therefore clear that, at least at one point, Adorno considered the text final and complete. The second and more important reason for publishing it here, however, is that this longer text contains many important passages missing from 'On Popular Music'. But as the latter text is superior to the earlier draft in every way, only those parts of 'Listening Habits' have been taken up which were revised, including a long introductory section that is absent from 'On Popular Music' and begins directly below under the draft title 'Listening Habits: An Analysis of Likes and Dislikes in Light Popular Music'. In the following, the material removed from 'On Popular Music' is presented in footnotes indicated by asterisks. This additional material should in no sense be considered a correction of the later study, but was included here solely as an addendum.

Listening Habits: An Analysis of Likes and Dislikes in Light Popular Music*Introduction*

(1) To express a like or dislike is presumed to be an inalienable prerogative of individuals in a free, liberal society. The exercise of will which it implies is part of democracy as it applies to that kind of society where »each man counts as one.« An investigation into a sphere of human activity where likes and dislikes are not only expressible and expressed, but even hailed as the ruling forces of the enterprise towards which they are directed, is bound up with the implications of these terms for the status of individuality in our society.

If, however, it should be found that spontaneity and creative activity are in our society illusionary and not actualized on a mass scale but largely replaced by pseudo-individuality which merely reflects the

objective social forces working upon the masses, our entire conception of the »modern temper« would have to be drastically revised.

(2) We take as a particular field for the investigation here the field of radio music as we have previously discussed it. Music has long been regarded as the stronghold for the free expression of opinion and taste. The advocates of common sense strongly defend the reality and the justification of individual taste in the field of music. Even if this is true of live music, it still would be imperative to investigate if, and to what extent, response to music still remains spontaneous in that particular realm where a centralized agency conveys musical sound waves to an unseen audience – namely, radio. In order to cope with the question of spontaneity in radio, however, it does not suffice only to analyze how radio as a centralized agency works, in what way it affects all music that goes through its channels and how it molds the musical outlook of the listener. It is equally important also to study the basic structure of the musical material which is the bulk of radio production and to employ the findings of such an analysis as a guide to a more comprehensive understanding of the sociological implications of radio as a whole. We are concerned not solely with the »how« of radio – its »Voice« – but also with the »what« – its musical message.

(3) The question of popular likes and dislikes may also be approached in terms of what we have called »administrative research«.¹ The market analyst wants to know if consumers prefer one type of fabric to another – if they »like« a soft fabric and dislike a rough one. The »benevolent« administrative researcher aims at finding out whether certain products are liked or disliked, in order to discover what means to employ in achieving effects deemed desirable. Thus, for example, a musical educator in radio is interested in likes and dislikes in the fields of serious and light popular music so that he may be able to induce as wide an audience as possible to listen to material which he regards as good and to listen in a way which he considers adequate.

From the point of view of social critique, the question of likes and dislikes obtains a more comprehensive investigatory setting. The social critic analyzes the reasons for the likes and dislikes which he finds as overt »data« in his investigation. He does not limit the analysis of these reasons to the materials that induce the likes and dislikes, nor does he limit it to the expressed reactions of subjects. He analyzes the social nexus in which they take place, that is, the situations within which a subject's likes or dislikes of something occurs. Individual differences, and even class differences of the broadest kind, are thought by social criticism to be subsumed under the fundamental structures of contemporary society. The same agencies are at work on the green grocer as on the captain of industry. Thus, for instance, when

studying likes and dislikes for certain types of sport, social criticism is not solely or mainly content with discovering which strata of the population are interested in boxing, which in baseball, and which are interested in football, but strives to unearth in what manner the interest in sports is connected with what may be called release through »tolerated excesses«, that is to say, with a spontaneity canalized by game rules and administrative agencies. Social criticism seeks to determine how, on the one hand, this frame of mind of today's masses is grounded in their material conditions and how, on the other hand, it makes itself felt in their behavior toward sports and the various sports.

But the social analyst does not stop here. Suppose he came to the conclusion that likes and dislikes are conditioned to a much greater extent by the fundamental categories of contemporary society than one would superficially expect. The question would then arise of how far one is justified in talking about likes and dislikes at all, and how far the terms likes and dislikes, which held good in a period of relative individual freedom of taste, still survive under conditions antagonistic to the reality the terms seek to express.

This step in the analysis of likes and dislikes, transcending the limits of these notions and critically dissolving them, can be taken only after basic consideration of contemporary society. The fact that heretofore social research into likes and dislikes has been grounded in market analysis is by no means fortuitous. That approach presupposes the actuality of a free market. The industrialist envisages himself in a system of free competition where every type of commodity is offered to the public, and the public in the last analysis decides what is to be produced, what can be sold, and in what quantities. The market analysis of likes and dislikes seeks to ascertain the trends of demand to which production may accommodate its offer.

(4) This absolute freedom of choice actually never existed even in a society with extensive competition. The distribution of goods has been primarily governed by the social power of production. The fact that in America the theory of customer-hegemony over production has played such a large role is due to many factors, the most important of which is that the demand for certain goods had to be produced artificially in a country with frontier conditions and that market analysis thus became the method of discovering the response to the demand stimulated from above. Though market analysis still serves this purpose today, its presuppositions have been rendered obsolete.

Categories such as free competition, market, independent demand, individual tastes, cannot today be taken for granted. To be sure, competition still survives but prevailingly only as an ideal nourished by the traditions of the past. Is it actually a competition which brings

fundamentally different products to the customer in which process only the »fit« products survive? One is struck by the tremendous similarity of a great many products which at first glance give the impression of unqualifiedly competing with one another. No matter to what extent in given enterprises and industries the economist may deny the reality of centralized control in the present epoch, within the customer's world something very close to such control appears. The mode of technical mass production with its necessary complement, standardization, achieves a virtual shrinking of competition (competition as free choice) among individual products, even though organizationally and financially big business in certain spheres still behaves as a system of competing enterprises. At the same time, the »market«, where the customer may choose freely among different products offered to him, more and more recedes into the background. The sphere of circulation – that is, the sphere of commerce – shrinks, as compared with the sphere of production. The merchant from whom the customer buys his gasoline, his radio equipment, or his drugs, ceases at an ever increasing rate to be a free entrepreneur offering the customer whatever product may be obtained and becomes a virtual employee of industry, even though his independence may remain titular. All this contributes to the fact that the basis of likes and dislikes, namely free choice, has disappeared: the available products are standardized to such a degree that likes and dislikes are largely superficial and, in a great many cases, the consumer is not even offered a choice among similar commodities, but no choice at all.

(5) The hypothesis is thus justified that the tendency toward industrial concentration and standardization noticeable in the sphere of production and in the character of the products, makes itself felt within the customer's attitudes. If there are no longer fundamental differences between products which one may like and dislike, it is only to be expected that likes and dislikes themselves will disappear in real behavior and that likes are largely replaced by »adjustment« to the inescapable.

Yet, no social scientist can ignore the fact that in a situation where his general considerations lead him to expect the vanishing of likes and dislikes, he is confronted with an almost stubborn adherence of the consumer-subjects to their likes and dislikes and even a great consistency in the matter of such preferences.^a It is an essential task of social

^a In an experiment on the preference for musical material or treatment in two popular songs by twelve subjects, the Office of Radio Research discovered that five subjects out of twelve showed perfect consistency in choice of favorites in terms of treatment. This consistency did not appear to have any correlation with ranking of subjects in terms of expertness in listening.

critique not only to explain the dissolution of the actuality of likes and dislikes, but also to explain their survival as categories, the consistency of their application, and the processes by which they survive.

The administrative researcher would content himself with finding out the likes and dislikes which he treats as his »data« and he would try to trace them back to their elementary factors such as the quality of the object in question, advertising, institutional influences, the psychology of the subjects, and so on. As long as he is faced with clear-cut likes and dislikes he will reject any skepticism concerning them as mere fancifulness against which he could pose the overwhelming insistence of all the thousands of subjects who, when confronted with a multiple-choice questionnaire, do not hesitate to note that they like one thing and dislike another.

The social critique is not disdainful of these facts. Rather it addresses them with considerations about the shrinking of the market and free choice and with the necessary inference from these considerations, namely, that by and large the structure of production and the character of products no longer permit of likes and dislikes as activities of free will. The objective structure of society induces in the social critic doubts regarding the ultimate reality of certain subjective phenomena. It is the task of the social critique to develop at this point a consistent theory to account for the abolition of likes and dislikes effectuated by changes in the sphere of production; and for the survival of likes and dislikes as evinced by empirical results. Social criticism can regard the problem as solved only if it can find an explanation which not only accounts for these contradictory phenomena but actually demonstrates them as a functional unity in behavior. That is, we must arrive at propositions which are capable of explaining the survival of likes and dislikes by consideration of those very material processes which necessitate their dying away.

(6) This study is an attempt to outline a critical theory of likes and dislikes through music. The study is confined to the sphere of light popular music or song-hits. This material exemplifies all the problems sketched above: far reaching standardization, abolition of the market^b

^b There is no paradox here. The word market is here used metaphorically: American radio listeners do not have to pay for what they hear. It has often been pointed out, however, that the commercial character of the radio system requires them to pay indirectly, so that, in a sense, the radio situation is still a marketing one. This market clearly shows the tendency toward shrinking which has been indicated above, at least in regard to the number of different products offered to the listener. The most superficial experiment shows that little choice remains. One need only twirl his dial at a given time to discover that virtually the same type of program is broadcast over all the stations, except for some few which oppose this inherent

in the sense of free choice, »adjustment« to standardized behavior patterns and simultaneously survival of the categories of like and dislike. Light popular music is a commodity produced under a far reaching division of labor and distributed on a mass-scale. It is hardly going too far to assert that the methods by which light popular music is spread coincide with the advertising methods used for any other standardized consumer good. On the other hand, the fact that light popular music is not a consumer good in the sense of fulfilling demands of immediate material necessity – as in the case of food and clothing – gives it the aura of a luxury good, thus enhancing the survival capacity of the very notions of likes and dislikes challenged by the structure of the material itself. Thus light popular music offers an extreme and hence paradigmatic case for a social critique of likes and dislikes.

From the viewpoint of radio research, light popular music deserves particular attention because the overwhelming majority of all music that fills the air falls into this category. We must devote special attention to this material which is regarded as »unserious« and therefore harmless and, to a certain extent escapes attention because its whole setting is one of »distraction«.^c

But the like-dislike problem is by no means limited to light popular music. The problem applies as well to other fields of radio research; for instance, to studies on radio's influence upon politics where situations arise in which people profess to »like« a particular political feature (say, the present administration's agricultural policy) without any actual knowledge, merely on the basis of their general agreement with the New Deal so that in such cases the question of the significance of their likes or dislikes also applies. Here a rational element such as general agreement with a policy from which the particular agreement

Footnote b (*cont.*)

general tendency. As far as the material of light popular music is concerned, its similarity is the first thing that strikes an outsider. How this similarity is related to its differentiation will be dealt with extensively in this study.

^c In regard to this character of light popular music and the reasons for its having heretofore escaped a deeper-going analysis, see Adorno, Theodor W., »Zur Gesellschaftlichen Lage der Musik«, *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 1932, p. 370 ff. It should be noted, however, that the term »light popular music« ought not to be stressed. Its limits against the »higher« sphere of music are fluid. Broadly speaking, light popular music tries to adapt as much from above as its total setting allows. On the other hand, there is every reason to believe that the listening attitudes toward this type of music and toward serious music are, with most people, far less different than the official division of musical life would lead one to believe. By and large, one may safely assume that today most people who listen to serious music, except for a very small elite group, bring the same listening attitude both to serious music and light popular music.

is deduced still plays an important role. The more profound irrational implications of the functional change in likes and dislikes become much more apparent in music, where such rational elements do not play any considerable part in average receptivity. If we assume, however, that the rational elements in modern mass behavior patterns largely serve as mere »rationalizations«, light popular music, where such rationalizations do not occur, is a particularly rich and representative field for investigation into popular likes and dislikes.

(7) The present study is concerned with light popular music exclusively from the viewpoint sketched immediately above. The general outline of the study conforms to the fundamental premise of the social critique of radio music, insofar as theories and hypotheses concerning the listener are deduced from an analysis of the musical material itself. According to this scheme the study falls into three main sections. The first section analyzes the sphere of production. It is concerned with questions such as, does the material of light popular music itself allow for spontaneous likes and dislikes? What effects upon listeners are foreshadowed and prescribed by the structure of this material? How does this material fit within the basic structure of our society as a whole? In what way is it manipulated in contemporary society?

It is necessary to analyze the basic structure of light popular music as against serious music – a difference which is generally taken for granted and which has never been defined in its specific details. Then the social implications of the inherent structure of light popular music have to be studied.

The second main part of the analysis is concerned with the manipulation of this material and with the way this manipulation prejudices likes and dislikes. This is the problem of plugging: the function of plugging as far as the social effect of light popular music is concerned, the necessary conditions of plugging, the spheres of activity for plugging, its dynamics, and the relation of these dynamics to likes and dislikes.

The third main section of the study draws the inferences concerning the musical listener, his habits and likes and dislikes, from the preceding analyses of the spheres of production and of distribution (plugging). 1.) It first formulates the major hypotheses about likes and dislikes within the total setting of modern light popular music. This is done from the dual viewpoint that likes are largely aroused by the manipulation of the material and that, in the last analysis, likes and dislikes are abolished and replaced by adjustment such as that represented by recognition or »That's it!« experiences in the field of song-hits. 2.) Then it sets forth some of the basic psychological categories of today's mass listening to hit music, such as musical apperception in

the stage of distraction and attitudes toward this music. Here we reach the decisive point of the insistence of the individuals upon their likes and dislikes, their »spitefulness«, and the particular attitude of artificially inducing their own likes, particularly in the form of jitterbug enthusiasm.

On Popular Music (With the assistance of George Simpson)

I The Musical Material

The two spheres of music^{d*}

Popular music, which produces the stimuli we are here investigating, is usually characterized by its difference from serious music. This difference is generally taken for granted and is looked upon as a difference of levels considered so well defined that most people regard the values within them as totally independent of one another. We deem it necessary, however, first of all to translate these so-called levels into more precise terms, musical as well as social, which not only delimit them unequivocally but throw light upon the whole setting of the two musical spheres as well.

One possible method of achieving this clarification would be an historical analysis of the division as it occurred in music production and of the roots of the two main spheres. Since, however, the present study is concerned with the actual function of popular music in its present status, it is more advisable to follow the line of characterization of the phenomenon itself as it is given today than to trace it back to its origins. This is the more justified as the division into the two spheres of music took place in Europe long before American popular music arose. American music from its inception accepted the division as something pre-given and therefore the historical background of the division applies to it only indirectly. Hence we see first of all an insight into the fundamental characteristics of popular music in the broadest sense.

^{d*} The aim of all sociological research into radio is to gain insights and to develop instruments interpretative of social individuality as it is manifested in listening habits. But listening habits are not self-subsistent; they constitute reactions, usually institutionalized, to material offered. The hypothesis that these reactions are not free flowing manifestations of psychological spontaneity is based upon their being determined by the stimuli themselves. In order to show the justification for these assumptions, we must first make a survey of these stimuli – that is, of the nature of the material and its dissemination by centralized agencies.*

A clear judgment concerning the relation of serious music to popular music can be arrived at only by strict attention to the fundamental characteristics of popular music: standardization.^e The whole structure of popular music is standardized, even where the attempt is made to circumvent standardization. Standardization extends from the most general features to the most specific ones. Best known is the rule that the chorus consists of thirty-two bars and that the range is limited to one octave and one note. The general types of hits are also standardized: not only the dance types, the rigidity of whose pattern is understood, but also the »characters« such as mother songs, home songs, nonsense or »novelty« songs, pseudo-nursery rhymes, laments for a lost girl. Most important of all, the harmonic cornerstones of each hit – the beginning and the end of each part – must beat out the standard scheme. This scheme emphasizes the most primitive harmonic facts no matter what has harmonically intervened. Complications have no consequences. This inexorable device guarantees that regardless of what aberrations occur, the hit will lead back to the same familiar experience, and nothing fundamentally novel will be introduced.

The details themselves are standardized no less than the form, and a whole terminology exists for them such as »break«, »blue chords«, »dirty notes«. Their standardization, however, is somewhat different from that of the framework. It is not overt like the latter but hidden

^e The basic importance of standardization has not altogether escaped the attention of current literature on popular music. »The chief difference between a popular song and the standard, or serious, song like ›Mandalay‹, ›Sylvia‹, or ›Trees‹, is that the melody and the lyric of a popular number are constructed within the definite pattern or structural form, whereas the poem, or lyric, of a standard number has no structural confinements, and the music is free to interpret the meaning and feeling of the words without following a set pattern or form. Putting it another way, the popular song is ›custom built‹, while the standard song allows the composer freer play of imagination and interpretation.« (Abner Silver and Robert Bruce, *How to Write and Sell a Song Hit* [New York: Prentice Hall, 1939], p. 2.) The authors fail, however, to realize the externally super-imposed, commercial character of those patterns which aims at canalized reactions or, in the language of the regular announcement of one particular radio program, at »easy listening«. They confuse the mechanical patterns with highly organized, strict art forms: »Certainly there are few more stringent verse forms in poetry than the sonnet, and yet the greatest poets of all time have woven undying beauty within its small and limited frame. A composer has just as much opportunity for exhibiting his talent and genius in popular songs as in more serious music« (pp. 2–3). Thus the standard pattern of popular music appears to them virtually on the same level as the law of the fugue. It is this contamination which makes the insight into the basic standardization of popular music sterile. It ought to be added that what Silver and Bruce call a »standard song« is just the opposite of what we mean by a standardized popular song.

behind a veneer of individual »effects« whose prescriptions are handled as the expert's secret, however open this secret may be to musicians generally. This contrasting character of the standardization of the whole and part provides a rough, preliminary setting for the effect upon the listener.

The primary effect of this relation between the framework and the detail is that the listener becomes prone to evince stronger reactions to the part than to the whole. His grasp of the whole does not lie in the living experience of this one concrete piece of music he has followed. The whole is pre-given and pre-accepted, even before the actual experience of the music starts; therefore, it is not likely to influence, to any great extent, the reaction to the details, except to give them varying degrees of emphasis. Details which occupy musically strategic positions in the framework – the beginning of the chorus or its reentrance after the bridge – have a better chance for recognition and favorable reception than details not so situated, for instance, middle bars of the bridge. But this situational nexus never interferes with the scheme itself. To this limited situational extent the detail depends upon the whole. But no stress is ever placed upon the whole as a musical event, nor does the structure of the whole ever depend upon the details.

(2) Serious music, for comparative purposes, may be thus characterized:

Every detail derives its musical sense from the concrete totality of the piece which, in turn, consists of the living relationship of the details and never of a mere enforcement of a musical scheme. For example, in the introduction of the first movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony the second theme (in C major) gets its true meaning only from the context. Only through the whole does it acquire particular lyrical and expressive quality – that is, a whole built up of its very contrast with the *cantus firmus*-like character of the first theme. Taken in isolation the second theme would be disrobed to insignificance. Another example may be found in the beginning of the recapitulation over the pedal point of the first movement of Beethoven's »Appassionata.« By following the preceding outburst it achieves the utmost dramatic momentum. By omitting the exposition and development and starting with this repetition, all is lost.

Nothing corresponding to this can happen in popular music. It would not affect the musical sense if any detail were taken out of the context; the listener can supply the »framework« automatically, since it is a mere musical automatism itself. The beginning of the chorus is replaceable by the beginning of innumerable other choruses. The inter-relationship among the elements or the relationship of the elements to

the whole would be unaffected. In Beethoven, position is important only in a living relation between a concrete totality and its concrete parts. In popular music, position is absolute. Every detail is substitutable; it serves its function only as a cog in the machine.

(3) The mere establishment of this difference is not yet sufficient. It is possible to object that the far-reaching standard schemes and types of popular music are bound up with dance, and therefore are also applicable to dance-derivatives in serious music, for example, the minuetto and scherzo of the classical Viennese School. It may be maintained either that this part of serious music is also to be comprehended in terms of detail rather than of whole, or that if the whole still is perceivable in the dance types in serious music despite recurrence of the types, there is no reason why it should not be perceivable in modern popular music.

The following consideration provides an answer to both objections by showing the radical differences even where serious music employs dance-types. According to current formalistic views the scherzo of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony can be regarded as a highly stylized minuetto. What Beethoven takes from the traditional minuetto scheme in this scherzo is the idea of outspoken contrast between a minor minuetto, a major trio, and repetition of the minor minuetto; and also certain other characteristics such as the emphatic three-fourths rhythm often accentuated on the first fourth and, by and large, dance-like symmetry in the sequence of bars and periods. But the specific form-idea of this movement as a concrete totality transvaluates the devices borrowed from the minuetto scheme. The whole movement is conceived as an introduction to the finale in order to create tremendous tension, not only by its threatening, foreboding expression but even more by the very way in which its formal development is handled.

The classical minuetto scheme required first the appearance of the main theme, then the introduction of the second part which may lead to more distant tonal regions – formalistically similar, to be sure, to the »bridge« of today's popular music – and finally the recurrence of the original part. All this occurs in Beethoven. He takes up the idea of thematic dualism within the scherzo part. But he forces what was, in the conventional minuetto, a mute and meaningless game-rule to speak with meaning. He achieves complete consistency between the formal structure and its specific content, that is to say, the elaboration of its themes. The whole scherzo part of this scherzo (that is to say, what occurs before the entrance of the deep strings in C major that marks the beginning of the trio) consists of the dualism of two themes, the creeping figure in the strings and the »objective«, stone-like answer of the wind instruments. This dualism is not developed in a schematic

way so that first the phrase of the strings is elaborated, then the answer of the winds, and then the string theme is mechanically repeated. After the first occurrence of the second theme in the horns, the two essential elements are alternately interconnected in the manner of a dialogue, and the end of the scherzo part is actually marked, not by the first, but by the second theme which has overwhelmed the first musical phrase.

Furthermore, the repetition of the scherzo after the trio is scored so differently that it sounds like a mere shadow of the scherzo and assumes that haunting character which vanishes only with the affirmative entry of the Finale theme. The whole device has been made dynamic. Not only the themes, but the musical form itself have been subjected to tension: the same tension which is already manifest within the two-fold structure of the first theme that consists, as it were, of question and reply, and then even more manifest within the context between the two main themes. The whole scheme has become subject to the inherent demands of this particular movement.

To sum up the difference: in Beethoven and in good serious music in general – we are not concerned here with bad serious music which may be as rigid and mechanical as popular music – the detail virtually contains the whole and leads to the exposition of the whole, while, at the same time, it is produced out of the conception of the whole. In popular music the relationship is fortuitous. The detail has no bearing on the whole, which appears as an extraneous framework. Thus, the whole is never altered by the individual event and therefore remains, as it were, aloof, imperturbable, and unnoticed throughout the piece. At the same time, the detail is mutilated by a device which it can never influence and alter, so that the detail remains inconsequential. A musical detail which is not permitted to develop becomes a caricature of its own potentialities.

Standardization

The previous discussion shows that the difference between popular and serious music can be grasped in more precise terms than those referring to musical levels such as »lowbrow and highbrow«, »simple and complex«, »naive and sophisticated«. For example, the difference between the spheres cannot be adequately expressed in terms of complexity and simplicity. All works of the earlier Viennese classicism are, without exception, rhythmically simpler than stock arrangements of jazz. Melodically, the wide intervals of a good many hits such as »Deep Purple« or »Sunrise Serenade« are more difficult to follow *per se* than most melodies of, for example, Haydn, which consist mainly of circumscriptions of tonic triads, and second steps. Harmonically, the

supply of chords of the so-called classics is invariably more limited than that of any current Tin Pan Alley composer who draws from Debussy, Ravel, and even later sources. Standardization and non-standardization are the key contrasting terms for the difference.

Structural standardization aims at standard reactions. Listening to popular music is manipulated not only by its promoters, but as it were, by the inherent nature of this music itself, into a system of response-mechanisms wholly antagonistic to the ideal of individuality in a free, liberal society. This has nothing to do with simplicity and complexity. In serious music, each musical element, even the simplest one, is »itself«, and the more highly organized the work is, the less possibility there is of substitution among the details. In hit music, however, the structure underlying the piece is abstract, existing independently of the specific course of the music. This is basic to the illusion that certain complex harmonies are more easily understandable in popular music than the same harmonies in serious music. For the complicated in popular music never functions as »itself« but only as the disguise or embellishment behind which the scheme can always be perceived. In jazz the amateur listener is capable of replacing complicated rhythmical or harmonic formulas by the schematic ones which they represent and which they still suggest, however adventurous they appear. The ear deals with the difficulties of hit music by achieving slight substitutions derived from the knowledge of the patterns. The listener, when faced with the complicated, actually hears only the simple which it represents and perceives the complicated only as a parodistic distortion of the simple.

No such mechanical substitution by stereotyped patterns is possible in serious music. Here even the simplest event necessitates an effort to grasp it immediately instead of summarizing it vaguely according to institutionalized prescriptions capable of producing only institutionalized effects. Otherwise the music is not »understood«. Popular music, however, is composed in such a way that the process of translation of the unique into the norm is already planned and, to a certain extent, achieved within the composition itself.

The composition hears for the listener. This is how popular music divests the listener of his spontaneity and promotes conditioned reflexes. Not only does it not require his effort to follow its concrete stream; it actually gives him models under which anything concrete still remaining may be subsumed. The schematic build-up dictates the way in which he must listen while, at the same time, it makes any effort in listening unnecessary. Popular music is »pre-digested« in a way strongly resembling the fad of »digests« of printed material. It is this structure of contemporary popular music which, in the last analysis, accounts for those changes of listening habits which we shall later discuss.

So far standardization of popular music has been considered in structural terms – that is, as an inherent quality without explicit reference to the process of production or to the underlying causes for standardization. Though all industrial mass production necessarily eventuates in standardization, the production of popular music can be called »industrial« only in its promotion and distribution, whereas the act of producing a song-hit still remains in a handicraft stage. The production of popular music is highly centralized in its economic organization, but still »individualistic« in its social mode of production. The division of labor among the composer, harmonizer, and arranger is not industrial but rather pretends industrialization, in order to look more up-to-date, whereas it has actually adapted industrial methods for the technique of its promotion. It would not increase the costs of production if the various composers of hit tunes did not follow certain standard patterns. Therefore, we must look for other reasons for structural standardization – very different reasons from those which account for the standardization of motor cars and breakfast foods.

Imitation offers a lead for coming to grips with the basic reasons for it. The musical standards of popular music were originally developed by a competitive process. As one particular song scored a great success, hundreds of others sprang up imitating the successful one. The most successful hits, types, and »ratios« between elements were imitated, and the process culminated in the crystallization of standards. Under centralized conditions such as exist today the standards have become »frozen«.^f That is, they have been taken over by cartelized agencies, the final results of a competitive process, and rigidly enforced upon material to be promoted. Non-compliance with the rules of the game became the basis for exclusion. The original patterns that are now standardized evolved in a more or less competitive way. Large-scale economic concentration institutionalized the standardization and made it imperative. As a result, innovations by rugged individualists have been outlawed. The standard patterns have become invested with the immunity of bigness – »the king can do no wrong«. This also accounts for revivals in popular music. They do not have the outworn character of standardized products manufactured after a given pattern. The breath of free competition is still alive within them. On the other hand, the famous old hits which are revived set the patterns which have become standardized. They are the golden age of the game-rules.

^f See Max Horkheimer, »Die Juden und Europa«, *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 8 (1939), p. 115.

This »freezing« of standards is socially enforced upon the agencies themselves. Popular music must simultaneously meet two demands. One is for stimuli that provoke the listener's attention. The other is for the material to fall within the category of what the musically untrained listener would call »natural« music: that is, the sum total of all the conventions and material formulas in music to which he is accustomed and which he regards as the inherent, simple language of music itself, no matter how late the development might be which produced this natural language. This natural language for the American listener stems from his earliest musical experiences, the nursery rhymes, the hymns he sings in Sunday school, the little tunes he whistles on his way home from school. All these are vastly more important in the formation of musical language than his ability to distinguish the beginning of Brahms' Third Symphony from that of his Second. Official musical culture is, to a large extent, a mere superstructure of this underlying musical language, namely the major and minor tonality and all the tonal relationships it implies. But these tonal relationships of the primitive musical language set barriers to whatever does not conform to them. Extravagances are tolerated only insofar as they can be recast into the so-called natural language.^{8*}

In terms of consumer-demand, the standardization of popular music is only the expression of this dual desideratum imposed upon it by the musical frame of mind of the public – that it be »stimulatory« by deviating in some way from the established »natural«, and that it maintain the supremacy of the natural against such deviations. The attitude of the audience toward the natural language is reinforced by standardized production, which institutionalizes desiderata which originally might have come from the public.

Pseudo-individualization

The paradox in the dual desideratum – stimulatory and natural – accounts for the dual character of standardization itself. Stylization of

^{8*} The musical differences between the New World and the Old World are, wittingly or unwittingly, overrated. What actually matters is the basis of musical experience. The American listener's feeling for current occidental tonality, which is taken as the natural musical language, is quite the same as the average European's. The American listener is not a *tabula rasa* or virgin soil untouched by any musical sound before the good offices of Tin Pan Alley were concentrated upon him. The greater the development of centralized control of cultural agencies in America, the more the conformist view stresses the pioneer mentality of the American public. This attitude does not so much provide arguments against social analysis as it is a potential subject for social analysis itself.*

the ever identical framework is only one aspect of standardization. Concentration and control in our culture hide themselves in their very manifestation. Unhidden they would provoke resistance. Therefore the illusion and, to a certain extent, even the reality of individual achievement must be maintained. The maintenance of it is grounded in material reality itself, for while administrative control over life processes is concentrated, ownership is still diffuse.

In the sphere of luxury production, to which popular music belongs and in which no necessities of life are immediately involved, while, at the same time, the residues of individualism are most alive there in the form of ideological categories such as taste and free choice, it is imperative to hide standardization. The »backwardness« of musical mass production, the fact that it is still on a handicraft level and not literally an industrial one, conforms perfectly to that necessity which is essential from the viewpoint of cultural big business. If the individual handicraft elements of popular music were abolished altogether, a synthetic means of hiding standardization would have to be evolved. Its elements are even now in existence.

The necessary correlate of musical standardization is *pseudo-individualization*. By pseudo-individualization we mean endowing cultural mass production with the halo of free choice or open market on the basis of standardization itself. Standardization of song hits keeps the customers in line by doing their listening for them, as it were. Pseudo-individualization, for its part, keeps them in line by making them forget that what they listen to is already listened to for them, or »pre-digested«.^{h*}

The most drastic example of standardization of presumably individualized features is to be found in so-called improvisations. Even though jazz musicians still improvise in practice, their improvisations have become so »normalized« as to enable a whole terminology to be developed to express the standard devices of the individualization: a terminology which in turn is ballyhooed by jazz publicity agents to foster the myth of pioneer artisanship and at the same time flatter the fans by apparently allowing them to peep behind the curtain and get the inside story. This pseudo-individualization is prescribed by the standardization of the framework. The latter is so rigid that the freedom it allows for any sort of improvisation is severely delimited.

^{h*} Just as, in the present situation, free competition and the open market are becoming economically obsolete but under present auspices are artificially maintained, so the individualizing features of light popular music serve as a mere façade. This holds good not only in the sense that they always keep themselves strictly within the limits of the given scheme of the whole, but in the much more profound sense that the individualizations themselves are stereotyped as much as the schemes within which they fall.*

Improvisations – passages where spontaneous action of individuals is permitted («Swing it boys!») – are confined within the walls of the harmonic and metric scheme. In a great many cases, such as the »break« of pre-swing jazz, the musical function of the improvised details is determined completely by the scheme: the break can be nothing other than a disguised cadence. Hence, very few possibilities for actual improvisation remain, due to the necessity of merely melodically circumscribing the same underlying harmonic functions. Since these possibilities were very quickly exhausted, stereotyping of improvisatory details speedily occurred. Thus, standardization of the norm enhances in a purely technical way standardization of its own deviation – pseudo-individualization.

This subservience of improvisation to standardization explains two main socio-psychological qualities of popular music. One is the fact that the detail remains openly connected with the underlying scheme so that the listener always feels on safe ground. The choice in individual alterations is so small that the perpetual recurrence of the same variations is a reassuring signpost of the identical behind them. The other is the function of »substitution« – the improvisatory features forbid their being grasped as musical events in themselves. They can be received only as embellishments. It is a well-known fact that in daring jazz arrangements worried notes, dirty tones, in other words, false notes, play a conspicuous role. They are apperceived as exciting stimuli only because they are corrected by the ear to the right note. This, however, is only an extreme instance of what happens less conspicuously in all individualization in popular music. Any harmonic boldness, any chord which does not fall strictly within the simplest harmonic scheme demands being apperceived as »false«, that is, as a stimulus which carries with it that unambiguous prescription to substitute for it the right detail, or rather the naked scheme. Understanding popular music means obeying such commands for listening. Popular music commands its own listening-habits.^{i*}

^{i*} There is another type of individualization claimed in terms of the kind of light popular music and differences in name bands. The types of light popular music are carefully differentiated in production. The listener is presumed to be able to choose between them. The most widely recognized differentiations are those between swing and sweet and such name bands as Benny Goodman and Guy Lombardo. The listener is quickly able to distinguish the types of music and even the performing band, this in spite of the fundamental identity of the material and the great similarity of the presentations apart from their emphasized distinguishing trade-marks. This labeling technique, as regards the type of music and band, is pseudo-individualization, but of a sociological kind outside the realm of strict musical technology. It provides trade-marks of identification for differentiating between the actually undifferentiated.

Popular music becomes a multiple-choice questionnaire. There are two main types and their derivatives from which to choose. The listener is encouraged by the inexorable presence of these types psychologically to cross-out what he dislikes and check what he likes. The limitation inherent in this choice and the clear-cut alternative it entails provoke like-dislike patterns of behavior. This mechanical dichotomy breaks down indifference; it is imperative to favor sweet or swing if one wishes to continue to listen to popular music.^{i*}

Footnote i (*cont.*)

The challenge to the validity of the free-will conception of likes and dislikes is met by the argument of the steadfast consistency of listener's tastes. There is no reason to deny that many listeners without hesitation know exactly what kind of music they like. And this in the categorical terms – sweet or swing. There can be no doubt that something similar to liking and disliking actually occurs in terms of these types. This argument, however, does not stand critical scrutiny. If we have ventured to say that the general scheme of light popular music already provides the listener with prescriptions as to how to react or, as we put it, if the composition already listens for the listener, we may metaphorically say that likes and dislikes are postulated by the composition which poses to the listener the clear-cut alternative – »Is it sweet or is it swing?« Production and arrangement by rugged syncopation or sentimental vibration give the listeners acoustic signals which allow quick, easy, automatic orientation and which by differentiation in production demand differentiation in consumption.*

^{i*} Thus does pseudo-individualization invade the realm of likes and dislikes. While actual freedom of choice has been abolished, standardized production promulgates the illusion of its reality by permitting choice from among standardized, labeled products. The types offered for such choice are, to be sure, not arbitrary inventions of the central agencies – publishing and radio. They need not have been created by standardization, but were frozen with concentration in the communications industry which inherited the results of the competitive process and re-enforced them through inherent exigency.

Buried beneath these types are the relics of actual preferences, erstwhile spontaneous. The penchant of the older generation is for sentimental music, whose heir is today's sweet music, whereas the younger generation's preoccupation is with syncopated American dance music. These »competitive« preferences are enhanced by the constant repetition of the two types thus re-enforcing the original preferences of the listeners so that the original spontaneity of choice is itself transformed into automatic acceptance. The listener is not permitted to renege on his ancestral choice. He must select either this or that – with the underlying irony that today the actual differences between the divergent types are much less explicit than one is led to believe. One might call this process cumulative pseudo-individualization of choice.

The consistency of listener reactions is the consequence of this manipulation of like and dislike into dichotomous channels. The listener to light popular music who likes one thing and dislikes another is virtually no more consistent than the driver who stops his car in response to a red light and goes on when the green light appears. It is doubtful that the driver's behavior would be described in terms of likes and dislikes even if one conceives psychologically that he likes the green light and hates the red. Some sort of like and dislike in the latter sense may still be alive even within the listener's subjective choice: he is not a mere subject of musical administration;

II Presentation of the Material

Minimum requirements

The structure of the musical material requires a technique of its own by which it is enforced. This process may be roughly defined as »plugging«. The term »plugging« originally had the narrow meaning of ceaseless repetition of one particular hit in order to make it »successful«. We here use it in the broad sense, to signify a continuation of the inherent processes of composition and arrangement of the musical material. Plugging aims to break down the resistance to the musically ever-equal or identical by, as it were, closing the avenues of escape from the ever-equal. It leads the listener to become enraptured with the inescapable. And thus it leads to the institutionalization and standardization of listening habits themselves. Listeners become so accustomed to the recurrence of the same things that they react automatically. The standardization of the material requires a plugging mechanism from outside, since everything equals everything else to such an extent that the emphasis on presentation which is provided by plugging must substitute for the lack of genuine individuality in the material. The listener of normal musical intelligence who hears the Kundry motif of *Parsifal* for the first time is likely to recognize it when it is played again because it is unmistakable and not exchangeable for anything else. If the same listener were confronted with an average song-hit, he would not be able to distinguish it from any other unless it were repeated so often that he would be forced to remember it. Repetition gives a psychological importance which it could otherwise

Footnote j (*cont.*)

his decision still contains elements of his individual experience and perhaps even of individual spontaneity. It would be dangerous, however, to say the least, to overrate the subjective factor when the social setting is so adapted and so geared as in the case of the production of types of light popular music.[†] († The idea of metaphorical signal lights used here, is already familiar in American musical discussions. The metaphor is used, however, not in the discussion of light popular music, but of serious music. The red and green lights of light popular music are overlooked and the reactions are taken as products of taste; to Beethoven, however, whom no one would suspect of being an administrative musical agency, the street light scheme, borrowed from the actual experience of light popular music, is frankly applied.) Sigmund Spaeth, in his book, *Great Symphonies* [New York: Garden City Publishing Corp., 1930], which is an inexhaustible source of information for the sociologist of music, says the following about the beginning of the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony: »The bass fiddles stop the noise with an indignant speech exactly like a traffic policeman [»Who do you think you are?« etc.] and a review of evidence is in order« [p. 127].)*

never have. Thus plugging is the inevitable complement of standardization.^{k*}

Provided the material fulfills certain minimum requirements, any given song can be plugged and made a success, if there is adequate tie-up between publishing houses, name bands, radio and moving pictures.^{l*} Most important is the following requirement: To be plugged,

^{k*} What is repeated again and again accumulates the prestige of social establishment. The listener is led to believe that it is repeated either because it is particularly good or because so many people like it. He is induced to join the fictitious ranks of fans of this particular song which is played again and again »by special request« and finally feels that he is backed by the power of that unknown army which is supposed to appreciate the song before it is presented over the air. The mistaken idea of democracy, which makes it imperative for most people to conform to philistine cultural standards, finds musical refuge in the readiness of the audience to be taken in by the cult of an already achieved success promoted by plugging.

It is a necessary economic condition for plugging that the material be consumed on a mass basis. This condition is fulfilled incomparably more completely in the field of light popular music than in that of serious music. The publisher of the full score of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony cannot reckon with a mass sale and is therefore not interested in impressing the music upon the minds of his prospective customers. Irving Berlin, a publisher and composer, has that interest. Plugging has no chance for success unless it reaches such vast numbers of people that even the fraction able to remember the plugged tune is considerable.[†] ([†] As the actual working of the plugging mechanism on the American scene of popular music is described in full detail in a study by Duncan MacDougald, the present study confines itself to a theoretical discussion of some of the more general aspects of the enforcement of the material.)²

It is a characteristic prerequisite of plugging that the author of the song have access to central agencies in control of the plugging mechanisms. That is to say, he must be either a man with an established reputation, an insider, or else be affiliated economically with publishers, agencies, etc. This condition, at least as far as the »well-known« composer is concerned, is again a case of »frozen competition«. The established composers of light popular music are, in general, composers who were successful in pre-radio days, composers whose successes were originally attained under comparatively free competition and then became institutionalized by the application of plugging methods.

Of course, there is a continual demand for fresh talent. But this fresh talent today bursts upon a world which cannot be taken unawares. It is a world of standardized frameworks and effects. The idol of the air waves must bow to idolatry standards. Musically and intrinsically, therefore, the term »fresh talent« is an anachronism. A situation has arisen in light popular music analogous to the movies where it has become a truism that it is increasingly difficult to find talent in moving pictures comparable to Garbo and Valentino. The ensuing effect begins to show itself in the quality of the plugged material. The least that can be said is that in a great many cases the plugged songs are neither musically »better« nor even more »catchy« than the non-plugged ones. The catchiness that is generally credited to them is to be regarded more as an effect of their plugging than a real condition.*

^{l*} These minimum requirements cannot be defined enumeratively, but descriptively. They largely coincide with our determination of the material in *Part I*, with

a song-hit must have at least one feature by which it can be distinguished from any other, and yet possess the complete conventionality and triviality of all others. The actual criterion by which the song is judged worthy of plugging is paradoxical. The publisher wants a piece of music that is fundamentally the same as all the other current hits and simultaneously fundamentally different from them. Only if it is the same does it have a chance of being sold automatically, without requiring any effort on the part of the customer, and of presenting itself as a musical institution. And only if it is different can it be distinguished from other songs – a requirement for being remembered and hence for being successful.

Of course, this double desideratum cannot be fulfilled. In the case of actual published and plugged songs, one will generally find some sort of compromise, something which is by and large the same and bears just one isolated trade-mark which makes it appear to be original. The distinguishing feature must not necessarily be melodic,^m but may consist of metrical irregularities, particular chords or particular sound colors.

Footnote 1 (*cont.*)

particular emphasis on their combination of »naturalness« with catchiness. For example, the melody must show a certain regularity and be developed to one climax – often in the repetition of the first part near the end. It must make musical »common sense« to enable the average listener to recognize and repeat it. The harmonization must be logical enough not to produce highly obvious gaps in harmonic progression, and yet not achieve too precise a balance of the harmonic steps. There is a certain vagueness of harmonic logic which allows for those harmonic »stimuli« which are the standard bearers of pseudo-individualization. The orchestration must have richness and roundness (or a compensation for them), and must manifest familiarity with sound effects which everyone knows and expects. Any omission of these is regarded as a confession that the composer is an outsider.

All of these minimum requirements need not be fulfilled in every song-hit. The hit must, however, fulfill enough of these so that a lapse from some other one of them will fit into a standard pattern. The lapse acts only as a particular »stimulus« within the pattern, or as a distinguishing factor somewhat similar to the purposely incorrect orthography used in advertising.

The discussions concerning the publication and plugging of a piece of light popular music boil down to questions of these minimum requirements. The song must belong to a certain medium sphere: it must avoid being old-fashioned and must not be what a jitterbug would call naive. Above all, it must avoid being highbrow.*

^m Technical analysis must add certain reservations to any acceptance of listener reactions at their face value in the case of the concept of melody. Listeners to popular music speak mainly about melody and rhythm, sometimes about instrumentation, rarely or never about harmony and form. Within the standard scheme of popular music, however, melody itself is by no means autonomous in the sense of an independent line developing in the horizontal dimension of music. Melody is, rather, a function of harmony. The so-called melodies in popular music are generally arabesques, dependent upon the sequence of harmonies. What appears to the

Glamor

A further requirement of plugging is a certain richness and roundness of sound. This requirement evolves that feature in the whole plugging mechanism which is most overtly bound up with advertising as a business as well as with the commercialization of entertainment. It is also particularly representative of the interrelationship of standardization and pseudo-individualization.

It is musical glamor: those innumerable passages in song arrangements which appear to communicate the »now we present« attitude. The musical flourishes which accompany MGM's roaring lion whenever he opens his majestic mouth are analogous to the non-leonine sounds of musical glamor heard over the air.

Glamor-mindedness may optimistically be regarded as a mental construct of the success story in which the hard working American settler triumphs over impassive nature, which is finally forced to yield up its riches.¹¹ However, in a world that is no longer a frontier world, the problem of glamor cannot be regarded as so easily soluble. Glamor is made into the eternal conqueror's song of the common man; he who is never permitted to conquer in life conquers in glamor. The triumph is actually the self-styled triumph of the businessman who announces that he will offer the same product at a lower price.

The conditions for this function of glamor are entirely different from those of frontier life. They apply to the mechanization of labor and to the workaday life of the masses. Boredom has become so great that only the brightest colors have any chance of being lifted out of the general drabness. Yet, it is just those violent colors which bear witness to the omnipotence of mechanical, industrial production itself. Nothing could be more stereotyped than the pinkish red neon lights which abound in front of shops, movie picture theaters and restaurants. By glamorizing, they attract attention. But the means by which

Footnote m (*cont.*)

listener to be primarily melodic is actually fundamentally harmonic, its melodic structure a mere derivative.

It would be valuable to study exactly what laymen call a melody. It would probably turn out to be a succession of tones related to one another by simple and easily understandable harmonic functions, within the framework of the eight bar period. There is a large gap between the layman's idea of a melody and its strictly musical connotation.

¹¹ The prevalence of glamor-mindedness may be an explanation of why Mozart plays such a relatively unimportant part in serious music over the air, as compared with such composers as Wagner and even Tchaikovsky. The last WQXR survey has shown this tendency very clearly. For the plain man, Mozart is probably boring because of the absence of any glamor in his music.

they are used to overcome humdrum reality are more humdrum than the reality itself. That which aims to achieve glamor becomes a more uniform activity than what it seeks to glamorize. If it were really attractive in itself, it would have no more means of support than a really original popular composition. It would violate the law of the sameness of the putatively unsame. The term glamorous is applied to those faces, colors, sounds which, by the light they irradiate, differ from the rest. But all glamor girls look alike and the glamor effects of popular music are equivalent to each other.

As far as the pioneer character of glamor is concerned, there is an overlapping and a change of function rather than an innocent survival of the past. To be sure, the world of glamor is a show, akin to shooting galleries, the glaring lights of the circus and deafening brass bands. As such, the function of glamor may have originally been associated with a sort of advertising which strove artificially to produce demands in the social setting not yet entirely permeated by the market. The post-competitive capitalism of the present day uses for its own purposes devices of a still immature economy. Thus, glamor has a haunting quality of historic revival in radio, comparable to the revival of the midway circus barker in today's radio barker who implores his unseen audience not to fail to sample wares and does so in tones which arouse hopes beyond the capacity of the commodity to fulfill. All glamor is bound up with some sort of trickery. Listeners are nowhere more tricked by popular music than in its glamorous passages. Flourishes and jubilations express triumphant thanksgiving for the music itself – a self-eulogy of its own achievement in exhorting the listener to exultation and of its identification with the aim of the agency in promoting a great event. However, as this event does not take place apart from its own celebration, the triumphant thanksgiving offered up by the music is a self-betrayal. It is likely to make itself felt as such unconsciously in the listeners, just as the child resents the adult's praising the gifts he made to the child in the same words which the child feels it is his own privilege to use.

Baby talk

It is not accidental that glamor leads to child-behavior. Glamor, which plays on the listener's desire for strength, is concomitant with a musical language which betokens dependence. The children's jokes, the purposely wrong orthography, the use of children's expressions in advertising, take the form of a musical children's language in popular music. There are many examples of lyrics characterized by an ambiguous irony in that, while affecting a children's language, they at the

same time display contempt of the adult for the child or even give a derogatory or sadistic meaning to children's expressions (»Goody, Goody«, »A Tisket a Tasket«, »London Bridge is Falling Down«, »Cry, Baby, Cry«). Genuine and pseudo-nursery rhymes are combined with purposeful alterations of the lyrics of original nursery rhymes in order to make them commercial hits.

The music, as well as the lyrics, tends to affect such a children's language. Some of its principal characteristics are: unabating repetition of some particular musical formula comparable to the attitude of the child incessantly uttering the same demand (»I Want to Be Happy«);^o the limitation of many melodies to very few tones, comparable to the way in which a small child speaks before he has the full alphabet at his disposal; purposely wrong harmonization resembling the way in which small children express themselves in incorrect grammar; also certain over-sweet sound colors, functioning like musical cookies and candies.^{p*} Treating adults as children is involved in that representation of fun which is aimed at relieving the strain of their adult responsibilities. Moreover, the children's language serves to make the musical product »popular« with the subjects by attempting to bridge, in the subject's consciousness, the distance between themselves and the plugging agencies, by approaching them with the trusting attitude of the child asking an adult for the correct time even though he knows neither the strange man nor the meaning of time.

^o The most famous literary example of this attitude is »Want to see the wheels go round« in John Habberton, *Helen's Babies: with some account of their ways, innocent, crafty, angelic, impish, witching and repulsive; also, a partial record of their actions during ten days of their existence* (New York: Moffat, 1915) p. 9 ff. One could easily imagine a »novelty« song being based upon that phrase.

^{p*} A striking illustration of this musical children's language is to be found in the diagrams contained in all American sheet music versions of current hits. They are graphic representations of the position of the fingers on the finger boards of plucked instruments intended for players who cannot read music. Rational music notation is replaced so to speak, by pictorialized fables. These signs are confined to the basic chords of the given key and by this limitation make any harmonic progression degenerate to the most primitive level.

It is hard to determine whether this children's language is based upon conscious calculation or the composer's musical infantilism. It seems likely, however, that this artificial children's language stems from a desire to plug the same attitude which it appears to presume existent. The musical children's language follows the precepts of advertising by its adaptation to the listener's line of least resistance in order to extend it. Moreover, this socially caused dependence of contemporary adults is treated in light popular music as if it were a congenital dependence blessed with the charm of unspoiled naïvete and innocence.*

Plugging the whole field

The plugging of songs is only a part of a mechanism and obtains its proper meaning within the system as a whole. Basic to the system is the plugging of styles and personalities. The plugging of certain styles is exemplified in the word »swing«. This term has neither a definite and unambiguous meaning nor does it mark a sharp difference from the period of pre-swing hot jazz up to the middle thirties. The lack of justification in the material for the use of the term arouses the suspicion that its usage is entirely due to plugging – in order to rejuvenate an old commodity by giving it a new title. Similarly plugged is the whole swing terminology indulged in by jazz journalism and used by jitterbugs, a terminology which, according to Hobson, makes jazz musicians wince.^q The less inherent in the material are the characteristics plugged by a pseudo-expert terminology, the more are such auxiliary forces as announcers and commentaries needed.

There is good reason to believe that this journalism partly belongs immediately to the plugging mechanism, insofar as it depends upon publishers, agencies, and name bands. At this point, however, a sociological qualification is pertinent. Under contemporary economic conditions, it is often futile to look for »corruption«, because people are compelled to behave voluntarily in ways one expected them to behave only when they were paid for it. The journalists who take part in the promotion of a Hollywood »oomph-girl« need not be bribed at all by the motion picture industry. The publicity given to the girl by the industry itself is in complete accord with the ideology pervading the journalism which takes it up. And this ideology has become the audience's. The match appears to have been made in heaven. The journalists speak with unbought voices. Once a certain level of economic backing for plugging has been reached, the plugging process transcends its own causes and becomes an autonomous social force.^{r*}

Above all other elements of the plugging mechanism stands the plugging of personalities, particularly of band leaders.^{s*} Most of the features actually attributable to jazz arrangers are officially credited to

^q Wilder Hobson, *American Jazz Music* (New York: J. M. Dent, 1939), p. 153.

^{r*} This scheme of social promotion is particularly important as a model for understanding the »institutionalization« of the features of commercial entertainment.*

^{s*} The band leader whose name is most closely associated with swing is Benny Goodman. He is a very skilled jazz technician, particularly with his small jazz ensemble groups, but his tremendous popularity cannot be accounted for by his musical merits alone. He was not known to the broader public before his build-up. It may be difficult to determine why he was chosen for plugging, but the necessity for choosing someone is not.*

the conductor; arrangers, who are probably the most competent musicians in the United States, often remain in obscurity, like scenario writers in the movies. The conductor is the man who immediately faces the audience; he is close kin to the actor who impresses the public either by his joviality and genial manner or by dictatorial gestures. It is the face-to-face relation with the conductor which makes it possible to transfer to him any achievement.^{t*}

Further, the leader and his band are still largely regarded by the audience as bearers of improvisatory spontaneity. The more actual improvisation disappears in the process of standardization and the more it is superseded by elaborate schemes, the more must the idea of improvisation be maintained before the audience. The arranger remains obscure partly because of the necessity for avoiding the slightest hint that popular music may not be improvised, but must, in most cases be fixed and systematized.^{u*}

^{t*} , whether or not he is responsible for it. His visible personality is the most reliable trade-mark. His radio invisibility is not in contradiction with this plugging of conductors *in propria persona*; his visible authority is transferred to his radio invisibility and becomes a supra-personal entity.*

^{u*} The plugging of band-leaders serves to maintain the idea that everything depends upon the free decision of momentary, individual, non-standardized inspiration by the powerful personality. As neither inspiration nor personality are terms congruous with the technical requirements of light popular music today, they need plugging just as much as plugging needs them.

In short, without plugging, there is no light popular music as we know it.

The plugging mechanism finally results in giving a distorted picture of the history of light popular music to the public. Plugging plays upon the necessarily short historical memory of listeners to light popular music. The fate of Irving Berlin's »Alexander's Ragtime Band« is characteristic. The song, although of exceptionally poor musical quality, ranks among those used again and again as material for swing rendition, probably because its lack of plasticity makes it particularly suitable for extensive variation. (Similar cases are the »Tiger Rag« and the »St. Louis Blues.«) Written shortly before the World War, »Alexander's Ragtime Band« (1911) is not a classical rag but already a product of the decline of ragtime.[†] († Cf. Winthrop Sargeant, *Jazz, Hot and Hybrid* [New York: Arrow Editions, 1938].) The plugged revival of the hit by the motion picture, however, has tended to spread the conviction that Berlin is the inventor of ragtime and »Alexander« its typical representative.

Of course, the ideas of an average man concerning the history of light popular music are of no particular interest as ideas. The whole tendency to make him think about historical relations is due to plugging – that is, a history of this sphere of music is concocted in order to obscure the extent to which it is manipulated commercially to make it appear quaint and to prove its legitimacy by tracing it to traditions, either real or fictitious. This mechanism is particularly clear in the case of Irving Berlin. Here a composer who belongs to our epoch and controls one of the key publishing firms, is invested with the aura of an historical figure. His compositions are environmentalized and treated as if the daring spirit of a musical pioneer lay behind them. The lack of historical knowledge by the public which permits such transfigu-

III *Theory about the Listener*^v *

Recognition and acceptance

Mass listening habits today gravitate about recognition. Popular music and its plugging are focused on this habituation. The basic principle behind it is that one need only repeat something until it is recognized in order to make it accepted. This applies to the standardization of the material as well as to its plugging. What is necessary in order to understand the reasons for the popularity of the current type of hit music is

Footnote u (*cont.*)

rations can be accounted for by the fact that through standardization the history of light popular music has become a sequence of minimal changes which actually do not constitute what is dignified by the name of musical history. In this field, the concepts of the modern and old-fashioned not only do not signify difference in structures, but can only signify very superficial modifications. Because of this very superficiality, the fashions or »fads« can be manipulated so easily that at any given time the modern can be made old and the old-fashioned modern. Revivals and historical falsifications are possible only because the very principle of this type of music forbids anything basically new. Plugging – the literal repetition and inexorable representation of endless sameness – is the clearest expression that this principle has found.*

^v* III *The Structure of Listener Behavior Patterns*

The theoretical analysis carried through thus far concerning the material and its manipulation, leads to hypotheses about listeners and to sociological problems relevant to them. These problems are centered in the question of the validity of the listener's assertions about his likes and dislikes. How far are they still engendered by free choice? To what extent must they be accounted for by categories other than free choice? To what extent have they disappeared altogether: and if they have disappeared, why do so many listeners not only insist upon them but also show definite consistency in their likes and dislikes?

Both the standardization of the material and the plugging mechanisms of distribution achieve with objective necessity reactions to light popular music in contemporary listeners of such a kind that they cannot follow musical events in their uniqueness, but are led to subsume them under stereotyped patterns and clichés. The deduction of listening habits from the sphere of production and distribution is based on the fundamental principle that today »psychological« reactions are not only conditioned by the centralized agencies ruling today's economy, but that human individuals become microcosms of this commodity society: walking radio sets. The conditioning objective factors become subjectively systematized and thus delimit the scope of possible reactions. Individuality is expropriated. As an explanation of this process it does not suffice solely to point out that today's listening masses are subject to an incessant stream of light popular music. It is the totality of forces playing upon – and enhanced by – the communications industries in contemporary society, including radio, moving pictures, newspapers, musical publishing houses, and commercialized entertainment in general, which accounts for this psychological expropriation. Nevertheless, light popular music may be used as an indicator of the totality of the forces which are rendering nugatory the ideal of individuality in a liberal civilization.*

a theoretical analysis of the processes involved in the transformation of repetition into recognition and of recognition into acceptance.

The concept of recognition, however, may appear to be too unspecific to explain modern mass listening. It can be argued that wherever musical understanding is concerned, the factor of recognition, being one of the basic functions of human knowing, must play an important role. Certainly one understands a Beethoven sonata only by recognizing some of its features as being abstractly identical with others which one knows from former experience, and by linking them up with the present experience. The idea that a Beethoven sonata could be understood in a void without relating it to elements of musical language which one knows and recognizes – would be absurd. What matters, however, is what is recognized. What does a real listener recognize in a Beethoven sonata? He certainly recognizes the »system« upon which it is based: the major-minor tonality, the interrelationship of keys which determines modulation, the different chords and their relative expressive value, certain melodic formulas, and certain structural patterns. (It would be absurd to deny that such patterns exist in serious music. But their function is of a different order. Granted all this recognition, it is still not sufficient for a comprehension of the musical sense.) All the recognizable elements are organized in good serious music by a concrete and unique musical totality from which they derive their particular meaning, in the same sense as a word in a poem derives its meaning from the totality of the poem and not from the everyday use of the word, although the recognition of this everydayness of the word may be the necessary presupposition of any understanding of the poem.

The musical sense of any piece of music may indeed be defined as that dimension of the piece which cannot be grasped by recognition alone, by its identification with something one knows. It can be built up only by spontaneously linking the known elements – a reaction as spontaneous by the listener as it was spontaneous by the composer – in order to experience the inherent novelty of the composition. The musical sense is the New – something which cannot be traced back to and subsumed under the configuration of the known, but which springs out of it, if the listener comes to its aid.

It is precisely this relationship between the recognized and the new which is destroyed in popular music. Recognition becomes an end instead of a means. The recognition of the mechanically familiar in a hit tune leaves nothing which can be grasped as new by a linking of the various elements. As a matter of fact, the link between the elements is pre-given in popular music as much as, or even to a greater extent than, the elements are themselves. Hence, recognition and understanding must here coincide, whereas in serious music understanding

is the act by which universal recognition leads to the emergence of something fundamentally new.^{w*}

An appropriate beginning for investigating recognition in respect of any particular song-hit may be made by drafting the scheme which divides the experience of recognition into its different components. Psychologically, all the factors we enumerate are interwoven to such a degree that it would be impossible to separate them from one another in reality, and any temporal order given them would be highly problematical. Our scheme is directed more toward the different objective elements involved in the experience of recognition, than toward the

^{w*} One who hears the opening bars of the »Appassionata« and whistles the tune and exclaims happily, »This is the »Appassionata«, gives no guarantee of his understanding. More often his attitude is an index of a lack of understanding. However, the man who recognizes the tune of »Deep Purple« has »understood«, that is, he has virtually carried out the orders of the composition. There is no musical sense for him other than compliance with its demand for recognition. There is no denying that in serious music, particularly the patterned music of the pre-classical era, something similar exists. During the eighteenth century, however, it was due to a lower development of musical productive powers. Today, however, the exclusion of the NEW is a social force bound up with standardization and accumulating sanction from the controlling agencies. This surrenders the developments in musical productive powers since Haydn. But the standardized and cartelized auspices of the mechanically manipulated patterns of today's mass production and their mechanical recognition are far from the traditional and even ceremonial auspices of pre-Haydn patterns.

The psychology of recognition sets the entire stage for the investigation of contemporary habits of listening to light popular music. When listening adequately to Beethoven, that is to say, in compliance with the inherent postulates of the work itself, enjoyment of the Beethoven sonata can mean only that the NEW has been realized in musical sense and as musical sense by its replacement of the very recognized vocabulary in which it is expressed. This is the transcendence of the immanent by itself. Beethoven demands cognition, not recognition. The fact that listeners insist that their pleasure is inextricably involved in recognition alone is an index of their lack of understanding. They may have pleasure, indeed; but this pleasure does not derive from Beethoven, but from their recognition of Beethoven. This pleasure of recognition *per se* is precisely what happens with listeners to light popular music. It is the time-bound shift of enjoyment from the new of the recognized to the nakedly recognizable that actually conditions the structural changes in likes and dislikes. The element of enjoyment of light popular music has been drawn, step by step, away from the emergent moment of the new to the shell-shock of recognition. This step by step process begins with early musical mass-successes in the era of the *Deutsche Singspiel* and the light Italian opera of the eighteenth century, and ends with modern jazz and the establishment of recognition as an institution. To put it differently, the listening habits of mechanical acceptance, of recognizing music in property terms, which arose originally as a result either of the imitation of ruling class behavior by the middle classes or of free competition in the market, today have become institutionalized. The result of this institutionalization is that recognition replaces pleasure and that in professing to like something particularly, listeners mean only that they recognize it and regard

way in which the actual experience feels to a particular individual or individuals.^{x*}

The components we consider to be involved are the following:

- a.) Vague remembrance.
- b.) Actual identification.
- c.) Subsumption by label.
- d.) Self-reflection on the act of recognition.
- e.) Psychological transfer of recognition-authority to the object.

a.) The more or less vague experience of being reminded of something (»I must have heard this somewhere«). The standardization of the material sets the stage for vague remembrance in practically every song, since each tune is reminiscent of the general pattern and of every other. An aboriginal prerequisite for this feeling is the existence of a vast supply of tunes, an incessant stream of popular music which makes it impossible to remember each and every particular song.

b.) The moment of actual identification – the actual »That's it!« experience. This is attained when vague remembrance is search-lighted by sudden awareness. It is comparable to the experience one has sitting in a room that has been darkened when suddenly the electric light flares up again. By the suddenness of its being lit, the familiar furniture obtains, for a split second, the appearance of being novel. The spontaneous realization that this very piece is »the same as« what one heard at some other time, tends to sublimate, for a moment, the ever-impending peril that something is as it always was.

It is characteristic of this factor of the recognition experience that it is marked by a sudden break. There is no gradation between the vague recollection and full awareness but, rather, a sort of psychological »jump«. This component may be regarded as appearing somewhat later in time than vague remembrance. This is supported by consideration of the material. It is probably very difficult to recognize most

Footnote w (*cont.*)

it, so to speak, as their own – as a sort of property.[†] ([†]As an empirical clue to this, we found the clustering of positive spots on the polygraph results in our likes and dislikes experiment, at the reentrance of the chorus after the bridge, which has the strongest recognition value within the prescribed scheme of the hit form because here one most easily identifies the tune as the same one which opened the chorus.)

^{x*} There is an inherent disability for experimentation foisted upon the social scientist and psychologist by the way in which the process of recognition takes place. As a result, hypotheses for a socio-psychological analysis of this fundamental process in listening must be arrived at obliquely through theoretical constructs. Such constructs may aid in finally overcoming this disability.[‡] ([‡]Not the least of the difficulties is the incredibly short space of time during which the complicated process of recognition takes place.)^{*}

song-hits by the first two or three notes of their choruses; at least the first motif must have been played, and the actual act of recognition should be correlated in time with the apperception – or realization – of the first complete motifical *Gestalt* of the chorus.

c.) The element of subsumption: the interpretation of the »That’s it!« experience by an experience such as »That’s the hit ›Night and Day««. It is this element of recognition (probably often bound up with the remembrance of the title trade-mark of the song or the first words of its lyrics^y) which relates recognition most intimately to the factor of social backing.

The most immediate implication of this component may be the following: the moment the listener recognizes the hit as *the* so and so – that is, as something established and known not merely to him alone – he feels safety in numbers and follows the crowd of all those who have heard the song before and who are supposed to have made its reputation. This is concomitant with or follows hard upon the heels of element b). The connecting reaction consists partly in the revelation to the listener that his apparently isolated, individual experience of a particular song is a collective experience. The moment of identification of some socially established highlight often has a dual meaning: one not only identifies *it* innocently as being this or that, subsuming it under this or that category, but by the very act of identifying it, one also tends unwittingly to identify *oneself* with the objective social agencies or with the power of those individuals who made this particular event fit into this pre-existing category and thus »established« it.^{z*} The very fact that an individual is capable of identifying an object as this or that allows him to take vicarious part in the institution

^y The interplay of lyrics and music in popular music is similar to the interplay of picture and word in advertising. The picture provides the sensual stimulus, the words add slogans or jokes that tend to fix the commodity in the minds of the public and to »subsume« it under definite, settled categories. The replacement of the purely instrumental ragtime by jazz which had strong local tendencies from the beginning, and the general decline of purely instrumental hits, are closely related to the increased importance of the advertising structure of popular music. The example of »Deep Purple« may prove helpful. This was originally a little-known piano piece. Its sudden success was at least partly due to the addition of trade-marking lyrics.

A model for this functional change exists in the field of raised entertainment in the nineteenth century. The first prelude of Bach’s »Well Tempered Clavichord« became a »sacral« hit when Gounod conceived the fiendish idea of extracting a melody from the sequel of harmonies and combining it with the words of the »Ave Maria«. This procedure, meretricious from its very inception, has since been generally accepted in the field of musical commercialism.

^{z*} It is this ambiguity of identification which cannot be overstressed for the whole purpose of our theory.*

which made the event what it is and to identify himself with this very institution.^{aa*}

d.) The element of self-reflection on the act of identification. (»Oh, I know it; this belongs to me.«) This trend can be properly understood by considering the disproportion between the huge number of lesser-known songs and the few established ones. The individual who feels drowned by the stream of music feels a sort of triumph in the split second during which he is capable of identifying something. Masses of people are proud of their ability to recognize any music, as illustrated by the widespread habit of humming or whistling the tune of a familiar piece of music which has just been mentioned, in order to indicate one's knowledge of it, and the evident complacency which accompanies such an exhibition.

By the identification and subsumption of the present listening experience under the category »this is the hit so and so«, this hit becomes an object to the listener, something fixed and permanent. This transformation of experience into an object – the fact that by recognizing a piece of music one has command over it and can reproduce it from one's own memory – makes it more proprietable than ever. It has two conspicuous characteristics of property: permanence and being subject to the owner's arbitrary will. The permanence consists in the fact that if one remembers a song and can recall it all the time, it cannot be expropriated. The other element, that of control over music, consists in the ability to evoke it presumably at will at any given moment, to cut it short, and treat it whimsically. The musical properties are, as it were, at the mercy of their owner. In order to clarify this element, it may be appropriate to point to one of its extreme though by no means rare manifestations. Many people, when they whistle or hum tunes they know, add tiny up-beat notes which sound as though they whipped or teased the melody. Their pleasure in possessing the melody takes the form of being free to misuse it. Their behavior toward the melody is like that of children who pull a dog's tail. They even enjoy, to a certain extent, making the melody wince or moan.^{bb*}

^{aa*} Every act of identification of an object with some pre-given, uncritically appropriated category means subsumption in definite respects to the social power operating behind it.*

^{bb*} This is one of the few forms of power-display still permitted the common man. It is not unlikely that the adoption of this attitude by musical agencies which tend to exploit it is partly responsible for certain techniques of jazz known as »worried« notes. As institutionalized today, »worrying« the notes by the layman is probably more effect than cause. The note, worried by the crooner or the layman, is the hallmark of the enslavement of music by its owners – that is to say, by those who made it an object whose possession is enjoyed as an object rather than as an immediate experience.*

e.) The element of »psychological transfer«: »Damn it, »Night and Day« is a good one!« This is the tendency to transfer the gratification of ownership to the object itself and to attribute to it – in terms of likes, preference, or objective quality the enjoyment of ownership which one has attained. The process of transfer is enhanced by plugging. While actually evoking the psychic processes of recognition, identification, and ownership, plugging simultaneously promotes the object itself and invests it, in the listener's consciousness, with all those qualities which in reality are due only to the mechanism of identification. The listeners are executing the order to transfer to the music itself their self-congratulations on their ownership.^{cc*}

It may be added that the recognized social value inherent in the song-hit is involved in the transfer of the gratification of ownership to the object which thus becomes »liked«. The labeling process here comes to collectivize the ownership process. The listener feels flattered because he too owns what everyone owns. By owning an appreciated and marketed hit, one gets the illusion of value. This illusion of value in the listener is the basis for the evaluation of the musical material. At the moment of the recognition of the established hit, a pseudo-public utility comes under the hegemony of the private listener. The musical owner who feels »I like this particular hit (because I know it)« achieves a delusion of grandeur comparable to a child's daydream about owning the railroad. Like the riddles in an advertising contest, song-hits pose only questions of recognition which anyone can answer. Yet listeners enjoy giving the answers because they thus become identified with the powers that be.

It is obvious that these components do not appear in consciousness as they do in analysis. As the divergence between the illusion of private ownership and the reality of public ownership is a very wide one, and as everyone knows that what is written »Especially for You« is subject to the clause that »any copying of the words or music of this song or

^{cc*} It is more comforting to believe that pleasure arises from the object rather than from intimate aggrandizement, the recognition of which would disclose the self-delusion: »You've been kidding yourself all the time«. The manifestations of so-called humor, fun and irony that occur whenever people react positively to light popular music, may be interpreted, in the light of this theoretical construct, as an index that the enjoyment of the object is not an immediate enjoyment, but, as it were, a double rebound. That is, it is caused first by recognition in terms of subjective ownership and then by projecting the pleasure of subjective ownership back onto the product. Humor and irony here seem to portend that it is not actually the material itself which is enjoyed, but rather the disposition over this material. One gives credit to the material itself only by virtue of the fact that it is not the material which deserves credit. This will be dealt with more extensively later in connection with ambivalence toward light popular music.*

any portion thereof makes the infringer liable to prosecution under the United States copyright law«, one may not regard these processes as too *unconscious* either. It is probably correct to assume that most listeners, in order to comply with what they regard as social desiderata and to prove their »citizenship«, half-humorously »join« the conspiracy^{dd} as caricatures of their own potentialities and suppress bringing to awareness the operative mechanisms by insisting to themselves and to others that the whole thing is only good clean fun anyhow.^{ee*}

The final component in the recognition process – psychological transfer – leads analysis back to plugging. Recognition is socially effective only when backed by the authority of a powerful agency. That is, the recognition – constructs do not apply to any tune but only to »successful« tunes – success being judged by the backing of central agencies. In short, recognition, as a social determinant of listening habits, works only on plugged material. A listener will not abide the playing of a song repeatedly on the piano. Played over the air it is tolerated with joy all through its heyday.

^{dd} Cf. Hadley Cantril and Gordon Allport, *The Psychology of Radio* (New York: Harper and Row, 1935), p. 69.

^{ee*} It may further be objected that this approach goes too far in generalization by neglecting psychological differences among individuals which may account for preferences in cases where the material itself does not offer sufficient differentiation for such preferences. But this objection presumes the all-encompassing validity of traditional methods of psychological research as well as the actuality of individual liberty in contemporary society. It is quite unlikely that the psychic life of individuals, their chronological autobiographies, their demographics, and even their socio-economic status can be autonomous in the formation of behavior-patterns as against the fundamental structures of today's society which work equally upon the Park Avenue banker and the Lone Ranger. Rather, they can be coped with only as structures of contemporary society. It is the standardization of these characteristics which is of decisive importance in the investigation of behavior-patterns. Levelling of individuality is the concealed major premise for the aesthetics of »pleasure« in the whole sphere of light popular music. Only if the experiences of individuals are standardized formally in themselves and malleable by identical contents does light popular music have fertile soil on which to work. The idea that in order to discover the conditions for likes and dislikes one must resort to the case history of the individual is highly problematical in a situation where the concept of individuality is becoming increasingly dubious. The case histories of standardized individuals are in essentials identical. Everyone hates to admit to himself and to others that he is treated like a mere object of social mechanisms and that he reacts accordingly. The unconscious or half-conscious resistance to the working mechanisms may even be transformed into resistance to the admission that they are at work on him. This, however, need not be erected into a containing wall estopping sociological analysis. Pseudo-individualization is not only a feature of light popular music. To take the reality of free individuality for granted may have become common sense, but actually this common sense has become a bias excluding insight into present reality.*

The psychological mechanism here involved may be thought of as functioning in this way: If some song-hit is played again and again on the air, the listener begins to think that it is already a success. This is furthered by the way in which plugged songs are announced in broadcasts, often in the characteristic form of »You will now hear the latest smash hit.« Repetition itself is accepted as a sign of its popularity.^{ff, gg*}

^{ff} The same propaganda trick can be found more explicitly in the field of radio advertising of commodities. »Beautyskin Soap« is called »famous« since the listener has heard the name of the soap over the air innumerable times before and therefore would agree to its »fame«. Its fame is only the sum-total of these very announcements which refer to it.

^{gg*} What has happened to the concept of »success« throughout these processes? If the definition of success is restricted to such administrative terms as sales figures of sheet music and phonograph records, and the frequency of broadcast as indicated in the *Variety* figures, the term success may still hold good and there may accordingly be some such phenomenon as »the hit success of the season«. However, the social critique forbids tarrying with such criteria and leads to an examination of the significance of success itself. The concept of »success« has thus far escaped critical analysis. We here offer some few considerations towards this.

In challenging the numerical concept of success, initial reference must be made to the basis for life-expectancy of a hit. The longevity of hits seems to decrease very rapidly, and two months seems to be the longest life-span for the popularity of even the big successes. Constant repetition makes songs threadbare and erodes the topsoil of the notion of success. Listeners no longer extend credit to success. They have no substantial faith in the standing of the big hits.

Another indication is the survival of what might be called eternal hits. The total number of their performances is far higher than hits of the latter-day, yet they do not wear out. These early hits wear the garland of unpluggedness; they appear as the hale results of a process of elimination in a free market. Though the freeness of that market is only comparative, it nevertheless appears aloof from the crassness of present dictation. The resistance of listeners to disclosing the present to themselves enhances the grandeur of the past. Thus is fidelity built. Most of these eternal hits date from the early twenties; that is, from the rise of radio which contributed to their tremendous popularity but was not yet able to institutionalize the successes at that time. This temporal disability today aids radio to mask the mechanisms by which success is now promulgated. One qualification appears necessary. There is a tendency to regard as genuine successes only the hits which were popular during one's youth. Youth is susceptible to the influence of light popular music. These youthful reactions become hypostasized with age and are regarded as measures of the objectivity of success.

Against all this, it may be maintained that publishers, if it were true, could easily reduce their material to those songs they want to promote as hits, and eliminate all the rest of their production. The fact that they do not do this may be regarded as an indication that the differentiation between success and failure – which we challenge – still holds good and that the skepticism about its reality is mere mental gymnastics and has no reference to the practical behavior of listeners. This does not withstand scrutiny. If publishers feel they must produce a certain number of songs in a given period of time, even though they know that only a few of them can become

Popular music and »leisure time«

So far the analysis has dealt with reasons for the acceptance of any particular song-hit. In order to understand why this whole *type* of music maintains its hold on the masses, some considerations of a more general kind may be appropriate.

The frame of mind to which popular music originally appealed, on which it feeds, and which it perpetually reinforces, is simultaneously one of distraction and inattention. Listeners are distracted from the demands of reality by entertainment which does not demand attention either.

The notion of distraction can be properly understood only within its social setting and not in self-subsistent terms of individual

Footnote gg (*cont.*)

great successes, they do so not because they bow to the irrational demand of the public which makes one song a success and another a failure, but rather because it is essential to maintain a stream of music – a stream of flops – in order to maintain the illusion of success. The flops are the premium paid for the life insurance of the success.

The fact that the background made up of an incessant stream of more or less inarticulate music is the psychological condition for anything distinguishing itself from the very background which simultaneously sets its atmosphere, sufficiently explains the necessity for institutionalizing even flops. The determination of the select few to be successes is possible only within a system that makes for failures. If this system were given up, the few songs designed to become hits would wear out so rapidly that not even their ephemeral popularity could be promoted. If failures were not possible under existing conditions, the conditions would have to be altered.

It is very unlikely that the publishers are conscious of much of this. The keener the business man, the quicker he is to speak about irrational factors and the mysticism of success. Behind this sales talk, however, lie experiences of the necessary proportion between hits and flops which lead the publishers very rationally to uphold a volume of production much larger than any possibility of universal success they could visualize. The maintenance of failures is necessary to make certain songs appear to be successes precisely because the social presuppositions of success have disappeared and thus must be built up artificially.

It is conceded that the theoretical considerations here point beyond the present actuality to its potentialities. There are still elements of competition in the field of light popular music and they in some part account for the difference between success and failure. It would be futile, however, to assume that when monopolization has realized itself fully the difference between success and failure would disappear and only clear-cut success would remain. One of the antagonisms inherent in the present system is the fact that while success is totally manipulated and therefore eliminated, failure still remains as a necessary complement to keep alive the illusion of success. In every field, one of the stock objections to the assertion that monopolization is increasing is that competition goes on in the most reckless manner, particularly among the most powerful agencies. This survival, however, does not involve a limitation on the process of monopolization but rather is an attempt to cloak monopoly by pseudo-competition. There may be deep economic reasons for this.*

psychology. Distraction is bound to the present mode of production, to the rationalized and mechanized process of labor to which, directly or indirectly, masses are subject. This mode of production, which engenders fears and anxiety about unemployment, loss of income, war, has its »non-productive« correlate in entertainment; that is, relaxation which does not involve the effort of concentration at all. People want to have fun. A fully concentrated and conscious experience of art is possible only to those whose lives do not put such a strain on them that in their spare time they want relief from both boredom and effort simultaneously. The whole sphere of cheap commercial entertainment reflects this dual desire. It induces relaxation because it is patterned and pre-digested. Its being patterned and pre-digested serves within the psychological household of the masses to spare them the effort of that participation (even in listening or observation) without which there can be no receptivity to art. On the other hand, the stimuli they provide permit an escape from the boredom of mechanized labor.

The promoters of commercialized entertainment exonerate themselves by referring to the fact that they are giving the masses what they want. This is an ideology appropriate to commercial purposes: the less the mass discriminates, the greater the possibility of selling cultural commodities indiscriminately. Yet this ideology of vested interests cannot be dismissed so easily. It is not possible completely to deny that mass-consciousness can be molded by the operative agencies only because the masses »want this stuff«.

But why do they want this stuff? In our present society the masses themselves are kneaded by the same mode of production as the artifact material foisted upon them. The customers of musical entertainment are themselves objects or, indeed, products of the same mechanisms which determine the production of popular music. Their spare time serves only to reproduce their working capacity. It is a means instead of an end. The power of the process of production extends over the time intervals which on the surface appear to be »free«. They want standardized goods and pseudo-individualization, because their leisure is an escape from working and at the same time is molded after those psychological attitudes to which their workaday world exclusively habituates them. Popular music is for the masses a perpetual busman's holiday. Thus, there is justification for speaking of a pre-established harmony today between production and consumption of popular music.^{hh*} The people clamor for what they are going to get anyhow.

^{hh*} It is this very harmony – a social fact of the utmost importance – which plugs the illusion of the democratic character of today's mass entertainment. But the

To escape boredom and avoid effort are incompatible – hence the reproduction of the very attitude from which escape is sought. To be sure, the way in which they must work on the assembly line, in the factory, or at office machines denies people any novelty. They seek novelty, but the strain and boredom associated with actual work leads to avoidance of effort and that leisure-time which offers the only chance for really new experience. As a substitute, they crave a stimulant. Popular music comes to offer it. Its stimulations are met with the inability to vest effort in the ever-identical. This means boredom again. It is a circle which makes escape impossible. The impossibility of escape causes the wide-spread attitude of inattention toward popular music. The moment of recognition is that of effortless sensation. The sudden attention attached to this moment burns itself out *instanter* and relegates the listener to a realm of inattention and distraction. On the one hand, the domain of production and plugging presupposes distraction and, on the other, produces it.^{ii*}

In this situation the industry faces an insoluble problem. It must arouse attention by means of the ever-new products, but this attention spells their doom. If no attention is given to the song, it cannot be sold; if attention is paid to it, there is always the possibility that people will no longer accept it, because they know it too well. This partly accounts for the constantly renewed effort to sweep the market with new products, to hound them to their graves; then to repeat the infanticidal maneuver again and again.^{jj}

Footnote hh (*cont.*)

psychological attitude of the masses gilded by this illusion is a function of the same mode of production which makes the material of mass entertainment what it is.*

ii* If music publishing and radio had to reckon with conscious and spontaneous behavior toward the material to any degree, they could adhere neither to the patterns (whose boredom would make itself felt immediately) nor to the repeated stimuli (which would only antagonize listeners by the spuriousness of their claim to attention) nor to the system of plugging (which enforces the patterns and the stimuli). Indeed, the exhaustion of the patience even of the most inattentive listeners becomes obvious to the industry because, soon after the peak of plugging has been reached, a counter-reaction sets in which puts the hit on the junk-heap as a hit.*

jj The relation of this process to the change of fashions, and in particular the characteristics of the spuriousness of promoted musical fads as against fashions, cannot be discussed here. The main difference probably lies in the fact that clothing fashion, although it has strong luxury trends, has a material basis in the actual wearing out of clothes and the necessity of replacing them, which does not exist in the field of music. If it is true that many characteristics of musical fads are identical with fashions, they are, in a certain sense, only »aping« those fashions in order

On the other hand, distraction is not only a presupposition but also a product of popular music.^{kk*} The tunes themselves lull the listener to inattention. They tell him not to worry for he will not miss anything.^{ll, mm*}

Footnote jj (*cont.*)

to gain prestige and the appearance of necessity of change. Yet fashions themselves today are likely to be subject to at least part of the mechanisms sketched in the text.

^{kk*} No one who listens regularly could stand up under its current if he were not inattentive to it. Attention would be the recognition of a sequence of identical patterns. One song would be enough.*

^{ll} The attitude of distraction is not a completely universal one. Particularly youngsters who invest popular music with their own feelings are not yet completely blunted to all its effects. The whole problem of age levels with regard to popular music, however, is beyond the scope of the present study. Demographic problems, too, must remain out of consideration.

^{mm*} Even if something turns up in a hit which seems unusual, half an ear will do, because it is recast and immediately revealed as a mere embossing of the known. [. . .] Jazz experts identify themselves with all the tricks and devices of the music. Jitterbugs, though not concerned with any technical detail, at least pretend to be fascinated or stimulated by the music. Yet even these types oscillate between boredom and sensation. A visitor to a Harlem jazz palace is struck by the changes from frenzy to apathy in the behavior of expert negro listeners. This behavior has more to do with the modern factory than with the extreme moods of primitives. The aping by jitterbugs of negro strawmen is an apology for relieving boredom by pseudo-primitivism. The jitterbug's primitivity resides in his modernity.

In order to reach more specific hypotheses about listeners, going beyond general distraction and »effortless sensation« in leisure time, to the frame of mind produced by the workaday routine, it may be appropriate here to present a draft of a more universal typology of today's musical listeners which, though by no means limited to light popular music, offers a framework for understanding more concretely the behavior towards this sort of music.

1.) The fully conscious or musical-expert type. He follows immediately the trend of music offered to him, at the same time identifying its elements in technical terms. He is fully conscious of the construction, interconnection, interwovenness of parts, harmonic relations, etc. Generally speaking, this type can be considered as limited to professional musicians, and even among these it may not occur frequently.

2.) The »good musical listener« type. He is the type who »lives« the music, realizes spontaneously all its relations, is able to make reasonable judgments about the performance and the work, but is not essentially conscious of musical terminology and does not reflect in abstract terms upon the music he »lives«. When he listens to a Beethoven sonata, for instance, he is not so much concerned with the scheme of the work – first theme, bridge, second theme, and so on – as he is concerned with the immediate development of the music which he follows aurally without reflecting upon it. This immediacy, however, is not an emotional one. Although not reflecting upon music, he »understands« it in the same sense that one understands a language even if one knows nothing about its grammar and syntax. The behavior of this type may best be defined as a spontaneous understanding of the innate musical logic.

Footnote mm (*cont.*)

3.) The »erudite« or »informed« type. In actual musical understanding he ranks below Type 2. His inability to follow immediately the concrete logic of one particular work is combined with a consciousness of music as a cultural good and as something one should know for »social« reasons. In motivation of attitude one may among this type find all shades – from a serious feeling of cultural obligation to mere snobbery. He tries to make up for his lack of actual understanding by knowing and learning as much as possible about music. When he listens to music he does so in terms of a running commentary. He waits for particular moments of the form to occur and identifies them. His pleasure consists to a great extent in identification and in proving to himself that he knows all about it. Therefore he is often Wagnerian, keen on the recognition of the leading motifs. He likes to talk in technical terms but only those which are based upon his reading rather than upon actual understanding. He knows the names of all conductors and can talk about them for hours. When he listens to a violinist he is always concerned with his »tone«. He is the man who »appreciates« music. His ambition and his long training sometimes make it difficult to distinguish him from Type 2 and he actually may, by his endeavors, sometimes achieve a greater amount of understanding. There are transitions among all the types. Generally this type is lost when faced with essentially new music. Then he always professes that he »does not understand it«, wishing therewith to confirm his understanding of genuine music. He adapts himself to accepted standards.

4.) The »emotional type«. He differs from Type 3 by behaving spontaneously toward music; from Type 2 insofar as his spontaneity is not essentially bound to the concrete logic of the piece of music to which he listens. He adheres to the expressive elements of music and moreover, he listens even to music which is fundamentally non-expressive (for instance, a great many of Bach's instrumental pieces) in expressive terms. To him all music is romantic, a sphere of dreams where he can forget about his workaday worries and be in a world of his own. This type is found particularly among people of Slavic origin; also among young girls and among many frustrated people – hard-boiled businessmen who need musical release as a sort of complement to their everyday lives. The range of this type is very wide. It ranges from people who confine themselves to music which is actually adequate to their type of listening (for instance, Tchaikovsky); to those who listen to all types of music in this way; to people for whom the specific nature of music does not matter and who use the mere abstract sound quality of music as a sort of drug (this comes close to another type which we shall describe later); and finally to the sort of person who actually does not fall strictly into this category but who is closely related, who listens to all music in descriptive terms and tries to discover in it some story or picture.

Distinctions should be made within Type 4, which covers a vast number of listener variations. One way of differentiating it would be to build up a scale concerned with the content of the reactions, starting from vague dreams, leading to more concrete imagination, especially of an erotic nature, then leading to clear-cut pictures and finally to stories. (The story-listener is actually no longer an emotional listener because the content of his listening is reified away from his original feelings.) Roughly, the reaction of Type 4 to music is introverted. When listening to music he is not concerned with music as an objective entity, but translates it into terms of his own psychical life. This type hates any »intellectual« consideration of music. While professing that such consideration would spoil the mystery or the true message of the music conveyed to him, he actually uses this as a pretext for protecting his private emotional sphere against any intrusion from the evil outside

Footnote mm (*cont.*)

world. The resistance always offered by this type makes it particularly difficult to determine the actual content of his emotions. It is not too far-fetched a guess, however, that he is strongly motivated by sexual drives. Quantitatively, this type probably plays a great role among so-called »music lovers«. This type, because of its immediate behavior toward music, its being moved, swept by tears, enthusiasms, appears on the surface and according to popular standards more »musical« than any other type. A closer analysis, however, will show that this being affected by music by no means coincides with the actual sense of the music itself.

5.) The »sensuous« type. This type apparently has much in common with Type 4. He is excited by music and behaves irrationally towards it. But his excitement is less narcissistic than that of Type 4. He is less passive, and what matters for him are not so much his own emotions, his pity for himself and his loneliness, as the fact that he wants to get sensual pleasure from the music itself. He behaves toward music as a man behaves toward a woman, or perhaps toward the sight of her legs in silk stockings. He thinks of music in terms of the sensual stimuli it offers to him. To him the most essential element of music is its sound, which he frequently abstracts from the structure and sense of the music. (Hints of this type can even be found among serious composers. Examples are the Russian Scriabin and the German Schreker.) Psychologically, this type often displays a sort of aggressiveness and even brutality. It is this listener whose listening can most often be termed »atomistic«, because he responds only to isolated stimuli and not to the whole. His irrationality often takes the line of an out-spoken anti-intellectualism. He can be found copiously among listeners to serious music as well as among listeners to light popular music. Sometimes he comes close to the swing expert who recognizes every instrument which plays a solo chorus. His concept of sounds is mainly defined by richness and roundness (»glamour«). He may easily respond to special musical formulas from the language of impressionism and its deterioration (chords of the ninth, whole-tone chords). To speak in musical terms, he apperceives all music within the tension of the dominant to the tonic. To a great extent he is the complement of Type 4. It remains to be seen how far he must be treated as a separate type, or whether the differentiations within Type 4 will include him. In a way he reacts toward music as toward an object which he uses as a mere means for his purpose and not as something »speaking« to him.

6.) The type for whom all music is »entertainment«. This type is akin to Type 4 insofar as his attitude toward music is fundamentally an egoistic one. He is different in that he invests no effort in music. It is merely pleasant to him; he likes it as a pastime, but without such strong preferences as Type 5's interest in sound. His only critical concern is that music not be too heavy or too difficult for him. He is differentiated, however, mainly according to social categories. He may prefer raised entertainment or light popular music, also swing (but without any explicit tendency), or even folk-tunes, cowboy songs – rather unspecific in his taste, but also unspecific about his own emotions. He regards music merely as a means of occupying his spare time, without ever allowing it to reach the foreground of his consciousness. He likes it essentially as a background phenomenon. One finds this type particularly among habitual radio listeners.

As to the psychological significance of his experience, so far very little has been found out. One of his characteristics appears to be that he is able to devour as entertainment even music which is not entertaining at all. His fear of silence, or being alone with himself, appears to be one of his principal motives. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish him from Type 7.

Footnote mm (*cont.*)

7.) The time-killer. What he wants to get from music is in principle identical with the interests of Type 6. But it has obtained the character of compulsion. He simply cannot be without music – the man or woman who keeps the radio turned on all day, whistles constantly, hums, sings. He plays with the radio dial and is akin to the radio-amateur. This type is found especially often among the lower classes, particularly among the unemployed, among youngsters between 16 and 20, but sometimes also among housewives and isolated elderly persons: generally speaking, among people who are in some way thrown out of the regular process of economic production.

8.) The jitterbug. This type must be treated with reservation because it has been promoted artificially to such an extent that it will be hard to discover how far it is genuine and how much it is pose. However manipulated this reaction may be, there is today a strong response to the manipulation. The jitterbug is similar to Type 7 insofar as he reacts in a more or less compulsory way. But this reaction is much more specific. It is bound to the syncopated element in light popular music and has a certain mimic character. It is often related to some real knowledge of swing. But, in its responses, it remains fundamentally passive and regards swing mainly as a means for dancing and not as a thing in itself.

This type appears to be characterized frequently by a special sort of self-ironic humor, by the desire to parody himself and display a frenzy and ecstasy which he belittles at the same time. He is rather specific in his preferences for jazz and often does not take interest in any other type of music. The expertness of the jitterbug is often separated entirely from the desire to perform himself. He is comparable to the man who enthusiastically witnesses a football game and discusses every play, but never plays himself.

9.) The musical sportsman, or the man with a knack. He is close to the jitterbug, but differs in his activity. He is able to do the thing himself. This is the type of jazz amateur who plays so great a role among high school and college boys. He again has a sort of aggressiveness, directed mainly against the official pseudo-musical culture of his parents. He often does remarkably well and in some respects comes close to Types 1 and 2. But there is one fundamental difference. He confines himself strictly to given patterns and tricks which he knows. In spite of his apparent spontaneity he remains within the game rules and never does anything fundamentally new. His effort is a caricature; he repeats prescribed patterns and is content only if remunerated by a value-scale. His effort must be subsumed. He thinks of music in terms of a test, doing the same thing in a way which can be measured as well or better than other chaps. His ability is essentially that of adapting himself to given standards and »improvising« things which have already been done. He is characterized by a sort of stubborn contempt for everything which does not fall within his field. For him swing is a philosophy and he knows everything about swing in the same way a philatelist knows all about stamps. He is always ready to judge music according to standards of skill and perfection. For what purpose this skill and perfection are used matters little to him. He insists defiantly upon the intrinsic difficulties of his stuff as against classical music. It should be noted, however, that people are often found who, while falling into this category, at the same time profess a keenness for »classical« music. As they sometimes »know« a great deal about serious music – especially in regard to scoring – and as they are, in the matter of following musical events, certainly people who would be called »musical«, there is a great temptation to subsume them under Types 1 or 2. It appears essential, however, for a typology of music listening that at this point no confusion take

The social cement

It is safe to assume that music listened to with a general inattention which is only interrupted by sudden flashes of recognition is not followed as a sequence of experiences that have a clear-cut meaning of their own, grasped in each instant and related to all the precedent and subsequent moments. One may go so far as to suggest that most listeners of popular music do not understand music as a language in itself. If they did it would be vastly difficult to explain how they can tolerate the incessant supply of largely undifferentiated material. What, then, does music mean to them? The answer is that the language that is music is transformed by objective processes into a language

place. Even when listening to serious music and appreciating it, this type fundamentally remains interested in the mechanism, the apparatus, the instrument, the precision, and so on, but much less so in the ends for which the mechanism is used. Criteria for this behavior could easily be elaborated if this type were confronted with actual musical situations. Only then, however, and not by mere interviewing, could it be distinguished from the other type. One may assume that today it often goes hand in hand with Type 3.

10.) The musically indifferent type. This type ranges from people who fulfill certain minimal musical requirements (recognition of tunes, ability to repeat a tune sung to them) but who just do not have any interest in music, to people who are fundamentally a-musical in the sense of musical color-blindness and unable to fulfill these minimal requirements. Transitions are fluent from the entertainment to the indifferent type. The compulsory, or time-killer type, however, is not likely to be musically indifferent.

11.) The anti-musical type. This is the type about which there is much talk in this country, but which is actually rather rare. He is supposed to be hostile to music and to all art as something useless and »non-realistic« – an attitude which may vary from the self-disciplined and anti-pleasure pioneer to the tough guy who does not care about anything except making money and spending it for his most immediate needs and desires. It must be established whether this type actually plays an important role, or whether it has been absorbed to a great extent by Types 8 and 9 which may preserve some of his innate qualities in a somewhat altered form.† († It is necessary to devise a scheme which will demonstrate all the possible transitions among these types. Such transitions exist not only among those which follow each other on this list, but can be elaborated to a much greater extent. Type 3, for instance, may come very near to the amusical or indifferent Type 10 when, in spite of all his ambitions and endeavors, this type fails to experience anything of the music itself and just talks musical nonsense in carefully chosen words. Or, again, the limits, between the »living« of music of Type 2 and the »emotional« reaction of Type 4 may approach each other in cases where the emotional element is actually decisive for the music itself. It is also possible that out of the emotional type, by special training, Type 2 can be developed. This draft can be used in a sensible way only if one takes into consideration, on the one hand, all possible transitions from one type to another, and, on the other hand, constructs extreme situations and patterns by which each type can be distinguished from those which are close to it. The whole typological schedule functions only as a dynamic one.)*

which they think is their own – into a language which serves as a receptacle for their institutionalized wants. The less music is a language *sui generis* to them, the more does it become established as such a receptacle.^{nn*} The autonomy of music is replaced by a mere socio-psychological function. Music today is largely a social cement. And the meaning listeners attribute to a material, the inherent logic of which is inaccessible to them, is above all a means by which they achieve some psychological adjustment to the mechanisms of present-day life. This »adjustment« materializes in two different ways, corresponding to two major socio-psychological types of mass behavior toward music in general and popular music in particular, the »rhythmically obedient« type and the »emotional« type.

Individuals of the rhythmically obedient type are mainly found among the youths – the so-called radio generation. They are most susceptible to a process of masochistic adjustment to authoritarian collectivism. The type is not restricted to any one political attitude. The adjustment to anthropophagous collectivism is found as often among left-wing political groups as among right-wing groups. Indeed, both overlap: repression and crowd-mindedness overtake the followers of both trends. The psychologies tend to meet despite the surface distinctions in political attitudes.

This comes to the fore in popular music which appears to be aloof from political partisanship. It may be noted that a moderate leftist theater production such as *Pins and Needles*³ uses ordinary jazz as its musical medium, and that a communist youth organization adapted the melody of »Alexander's Ragtime Band« to its own lyrics. Those who ask for a song of social significance ask for it through a medium which deprives it of social significance. The use of inexorable popular musical media is repressive *per se*. Such inconsistencies indicate that

^{nn*} This factitious subjectivizing of music creates the myth that music, objectively, has for its task the taking of the individual out of himself.

What the majority of listeners get out of music may be expected to be a mere agglomerate of detached stimuli called »pleasant«. It is extraordinarily doubtful, however, that such detached stimuli can be pleasant at all. Even their apparently sensual appeal is derivative, taken from a context. Moreover, in light popular music these stimuli have been standardized and outworn to an extent that makes it impossible actually to enjoy them. Hence, the assumption that the role played by music not actually understood is defined by sensual pleasantness does not suffice to explain why so many people stick to a language which they do not understand properly.

This debased musical language is not completely severed from the autonomous one. To say that most people do not understand music does not presume that they understand *nothing* of it. They certainly understand certain elementary structures, such as the major-minor tonality, the difference between intervals, the basic rhythmical patterns. They understand, further, and in a less consistent way, some of the more differentiated musical exploits to which they are persistently subject. What they do *not*

political conviction and socio-psychological structure by no means coincide.^{oo*}

This obedient type is the rhythmical type, the word rhythmical being used in its everyday sense. Any musical experience of this type is based upon the underlying, unabating time unit of the music – its »beat«. To play rhythmically means, to these people, to play in such a way that even if pseudo-individualizations – counter-accent and other »differentiations« – occur, the relation to the ground meter is preserved. To be musical means to them to be capable of following given rhythmical patterns without being disturbed by »individualizing« aberrations, and to fit even the syncopations into the basic time units. This is the way in which their response to music immediately expresses their desire to obey. However, as the standardized meter of dance music and of marching suggests the coordinated battalions of a mechanical collectivity, obedience to this rhythm by overcoming the responding individuals leads them to conceive of themselves as agglutinated with the untold millions of the meek who must be similarly overcome. Thus do the obedient inherit the earth.

Yet, if one looks at the serious compositions which correspond to this category of mass listening, one finds one very characteristic feature: that of disillusion. All these composers, among them Stravinsky and Hindemith, have expressed an »anti-romantic« feeling. They aimed at musical adaptation to reality – a reality understood by them in terms of the »machine age«. The renunciation of dreaming by these composers is an index that listeners are ready to replace dreaming by adjustment to raw reality, that they reap new pleasure from their acceptance of the unpleasant. They are disillusioned about any possibility of realizing their own dreams in the world in which they live, and consequently adapt themselves to this world. They take what is

Footnote nn (*cont.*)

understand is that musical totality that makes musical »sense«. It is this fragmentary knowledge, this hodge-podge of acquaintance, misunderstanding and complete alienation from the material that particularly furthers the transformation of the objective musical language into a listener’s language which may not be so very far remote from the children’s language promoted by objective processes. Through the holes of a fragmented language leak the subjective drives that take possession of it. The remnants of objectivity, however, help the listener to feel secure and to avoid any effort which might be involved in acquiring a really new language. By employing musical phrases that are current, he achieves the illusion of his own life having been expressed.

This second language, although consisting of heaps of objective musical materials and relations, can be grasped only in terms of what it serves – of its function in the listener’s psychological household.*

^{oo*} Out and out communists may be irrationally conditioned by light popular music to standardization and thus exhibit an authoritarian character.*

called a realistic attitude and attempt to harvest consolation by identifying themselves with the external social forces which they think constitute the »machine-age«. Yet the very disillusion upon which their coordination is based is there to mar their pleasure. The cult of the machine which is represented by unabating jazz beats involves a self-renunciation that cannot but take root in the form of the fluctuating uneasiness somewhere in the personality of the obedient. For the machine is an end in itself only under given social conditions – where men are appendages of the machines on which they work. The adaptation to machine music necessarily implies a renunciation of one's own human feelings and at the same time a fetishism of the machine such that its instrumental character becomes obscured thereby.

As to the other, the »emotional« type, there's some justification for linking it with a type of movie spectator. The kinship is with the poor shop girl who derives gratification by identification with Ginger Rogers,⁴ who, with her beautiful legs and unsullied character, marries the boss. Wish-fulfillment is considered the guiding principle in the social psychology of moving pictures and similarly in the pleasure obtained from emotional, erotic music.^{pp*} This explanation, however, is only superficially appropriate.

Hollywood and Tin Pan Alley may be dream factories. But they do not merely supply categorical wish-fulfillment for the girl behind the counter. She does not immediately identify herself with Ginger Rogers marrying. What does occur may be expressed as follows: when the audience at a sentimental film or sentimental music becomes aware of the overwhelming possibility of happiness, they dare to confess to themselves what the whole order of contemporary life ordinarily forbids them to admit, namely, that they actually have no part in happiness. What is supposed to be wish-fulfillment is only the scant liberation that occurs with the realization that at last one need not deny oneself the happiness of knowing that one is unhappy and that one could be happy. The experience of the shop girl is related to that of the old woman who weeps at the wedding services of others, blissfully becoming aware of the wretchedness of her own life. Not even the most gullible individuals believe that eventually everyone will win the sweepstakes. The actual function of sentimental music lies rather in the temporary release given to the awareness that one has missed fulfillment.

The emotional listener listens to everything in terms of late romanticism and of the musical commodities derived from it which are

^{pp*} Such music is supposed to accompany what Wagner once described, in connection with »Tristan« – namely, that people who were incapable of fulfilling their longing for happiness could find a sort of substitute in music which represents such happiness.*

already fashioned to fit the needs of emotional listening. They consume music in order to be allowed to weep. They are taken in by the musical expression of frustration rather than by that of happiness. The influence of the standard Slavic melancholy typified by Tchaikovsky and Dvořák is by far greater than that of the most »ful-filled« moments of Mozart or of the young Beethoven. The so-called releasing element of music is simply the opportunity to feel something. But the actual content of this emotion can only be frustration. Emotional music has become the image of the mother who says, »Come and weep, my child.« It is catharsis for the masses, but catharsis which keeps them all the more firmly in line. One who weeps does not resist any more than one who marches. Music that permits its listeners the confession of their unhappiness reconciles them, by means of this »release«, to their social dependence.^{99*}

^{99*} The feeling of impotence underlies the behavior of both these types. As such a feeling, impotence belies its own objective expression of gratification. This double-dealing of the human psyche towards music is made possible only because constitutive of individuality are what may be called »layers of consciousness«. These layers manifest themselves in music as everywhere else.

We return to the question raised at the beginning of this study as to how the decay of likes and dislikes in light popular music might be reconciled with the fact that listeners cling to their preferences. This question can now be answered. Social individuality as manifested towards light popular music is composed of different layers, some of which – those closer to the surface of consciousness – are likely to produce likes and dislikes the criteria of which are disavowed within the deeper layers.

The concept of »layers of the personality« is valid in music only if it is agreed that musical behavior goes far beyond the limits of acoustic perception, that it is molded in every respect by the totality of the personality, and that it reflects the structure of the personality as a whole.[†] († This, of course, would never be conceded by any sort of interpretation which reduces all questions of music psychology to mere acoustic and physiological phenomena. In Carl E. Seashore's *The Psychology of Music*, for instance, there is no room for psychological layers of the musical individual. But this is because the notion of musical »sense« appears as little in his approach as does the idea of social elements of musical behavior. As soon as music ceases to be a mere sensual function and becomes, as Kurth⁵ has it, a function of the being of the total individual, any attempt to divorce music psychology from the total psychology of living men has to be ruled out. If there are individuals whose musical reactions consist only of those acoustic functions which Seashore regards as the whole domain of music psychology, this would merely pose a psychological problem – namely, how did such a break between musical functions and the total personality occur? This problem is obviously closely related to that of atomistic listening. What appears to psychology of the Seashore variety as »natural« and the truly scientific object of musical psychology, appears to us to be a very special psychological behavior pattern which can be properly understood only in terms of the mutilation of the whole personality.)^{*}

Ambivalence, spite, fury

The fact that the psychological »adjustment« effected by today's mass listening is illusionary and that the »escape« provided by popular music actually subjects the individuals to the very same social powers from which they want to escape makes itself felt in the very attitude of those masses. What appears to be ready acceptance and unproblematic gratification is actually of a very complex nature, covered by a veil of flimsy rationalizations. Mass listening habits today are *ambivalent*. This ambivalence, which reflects upon the whole question of the popularity of popular music, has to be scrutinized in order to throw some light upon the potentialities of the situation. It may be made clear through an analogy from the visual field. Every moviegoer and every reader of magazine fiction is familiar with the effect of what may be called the obsolete modern: photographs of famous dancers who were considered alluring 20 years ago, revivals of Valentino films which, although the most glamorous of their day, appear hopelessly old-fashioned. This effect, originally discovered by French surrealists, has since become hackneyed. There are numerous magazines today that mock fashions as outmoded, although their popularity dates back only a few years and although the very women who appear ridiculous in the past styles are at the same time regarded as the peak of smartness in present-day fashions.^{rr} The rapidity with which the modern becomes obsolete has a very significant implication. It leads to the question whether the change of effect can possibly be due entirely to the objects in themselves, or whether the change must be at least partly accounted for by the disposition of the masses. Many of these who today laugh at the Babs Hutton of 1929 not only admire the Babs Hutton of 1940 but were thrilled by her in 1929 also. They could not now scoff at the Barbara Hutton of 1929 unless their admiration for her (or her peers) at that time contained in itself elements ready to tilt over into its opposite when historically provoked. The »craze« or frenzy for a particular fashion contains within itself the latent possibility of fury.

The same thing occurs in popular music. In jazz journalism it is known as »corniness«. Any rhythmical formula which is out-dated, no matter how »hot« it is in itself, is regarded as ridiculous and therefore either flatly rejected or enjoyed with the smug feeling that the fashions now familiar to the listener are superior.^{ss*}

^{rr} Thus, for instance, the magazine *Friday* published photographs of Barbara Hutton dating from 1929, contrasting them with her present appearance in such a way that the 1929 photographs give her an archaic air.⁶

^{ss*} For in modes of dress one may point to certain disproportionalities such as the relatively long torso and short skirts of 1929, although there is every likelihood that

One could not possibly offer any musical criterion for certain musical formulas today considered taboo because they are corny – such as the sixteenth on the downbeat with a subsequent dotted eighth. They need not be less sophisticated than any of the so-called swing formulas. It is even likely that in the pioneer days of jazz the rhythmical improvisations were less schematic and more complex than they are today. Nevertheless, the effect of corniness exists and makes itself felt very definitely.

An adequate explanation that can be offered even without going into questions that require psychoanalytical interpretation is the following: Likes that have been enforced upon listeners provoke revenge the moment the pressure is relaxed. They compensate for their »guilt« in having condoned the worthless by making fun of it. But the pressure is relaxed only as often as attempts are made to foist something »new« upon the public. Thus, the psychology of the corny effect is reproduced again and again and is likely to continue indefinitely.

The ambivalence illustrated by the effect of corniness is due to the tremendous increase of the disproportion between the individual and the social power. An individual person is faced with an individual song which he is apparently free either to accept or reject. By the plugging and support given the song by powerful agencies, he is deprived of the freedom of rejection which he might still be capable of maintaining toward the individual song. To dislike the song is no longer an expression of subjective taste but rather a rebellion against the wisdom of a public utility and a disagreement with the millions of people who are assumed to support what the agencies are giving them. Resistance is regarded as the mark of bad citizenship, as inability to have fun, as highbrow insincerity, for what normal person can set himself against such normal music?^{tt*}

Such a quantitative increase of influence beyond certain limits, however, fundamentally alters the composition of individuality itself. A strong-willed political prisoner may resist all sorts of pressure until methods such as not allowing him to sleep for several weeks are introduced. At that point he will readily confess even to crimes he has not committed. Something similar takes place with the listener's resistance as a result of the tremendous quantity of force operating upon him. Thus, the disproportion between the strength of any individual and

Footnote ss (*cont.*)

ten years from now our fashions will appear as strange and laughable as those of 1929 do to us.*

^{tt*} As a matter of fact, the submission to this system and the surrender of one's own resistance are much more insincere than the rugged individualism for which the non-conformist listener is blamed by the institutions which proclaim the validity of rugged individualism in the economic sphere.*

the concentrated social structure brought to bear upon him destroys his resistance and at the same time adds a bad conscience for his will to resist at all. When popular music is repeated to such a degree that it does not any longer appear to be a device but rather an inherent element of the natural world, resistance assumes a different aspect because the unity of individuality begins to crack. This of course does not imply absolute elimination of resistance. But it is driven into deeper and deeper strata of the psychological structure.^{uu*} Psychological energy must be directly invested in order to overcome resistance. For this resistance does not wholly disappear in yielding to external forces, but remains alive within the individual and still survives even at the very moment of acceptance. Here spite becomes drastically active.

It is the most conspicuous feature of the listener's ambivalence toward popular music. They shield their preferences from any imputation that they are manipulated. Nothing is more unpleasant than the confession of dependence. The shame aroused by adjustment to injustice forbids confession by the ashamed. Hence, they turn their hatred rather on those who point to their dependence than on those who tie their bonds.

The transfer of resistance skyrockets in those spheres which seem to offer an escape from the material forces of repression in our society and which are regarded as the refuge of individuality. In the field of entertainment the freedom of taste is hailed as supreme. To confess that individuality is ineffective here as well as in practical life would lead to the suspicion that individuality may have disappeared altogether; that is, that it has been reduced by standardized behavior patterns to a totally abstract idea which no longer has any definite content. The mass of listeners have been put in complete readiness to join the vaguely realized conspiracy directed without any special⁷ malice against them, to identify themselves with the inescapable, and to retain ideologically that freedom which has ceased to exist as a reality. The hatred of the deception is transferred to the threat of realizing the deception and they passionately defend their own attitude since it allows them to be voluntarily cheated.

The material, to be accepted, necessitates this spite, too. Its commodity-character, its domineering standardization, is not so hidden as

^{uu*} From the standpoint of scientific methodology, it is this very process which makes increasingly difficult any positive identification of the resistance in terms of research methods such as questionnaires, interviews and measurement experiments. The freedom of likes and dislikes in light popular music is the freedom of the prison.*

to be imperceptible altogether. It calls for psychological action on the part of the listener. Passivity alone is not enough. The listener must force himself to accept.

Spite is most apparent in the case of extreme adherents of popular music-jitterbugs.

Superficially, the thesis about the acceptance of the inescapable seems to indicate nothing more than the relinquishing of spontaneity: the subjects are deprived of any residues of free will with relation to popular music and tend to produce passive reactions to what is given them and to become mere centers of socially conditioned reflexes. The entomological term jitterbug underscores this. It refers to an insect who has the jitters, who is attracted passively by some given stimulus, such as light. The comparison of men with insects betokens the recognition that they have been deprived of autonomous will.

But this idea requires qualifications. They are already present in the official jitterbug terminology. Terms like the »latest craze«, »swing frenzy«, »alligator«, »rug-cutter«, indicate a trend that goes beyond socially conditioned reflexes: fury. No one who has ever attended a jitterbug jamboree or discussed with jitterbugs current issues of popular music can overlook the affinity of their enthusiasm to fury, which may first be directed against the critics of their idols but which may tilt over against the idols themselves.^{vv} This fury cannot be accounted for simply by the passive acceptance of the given. It is essential to ambivalence that the subject not simply react passively. Complete passivity demands unambiguous acceptance. However, neither the material itself nor observation of the listeners supports the assumption of such unilateral acceptance. Simply relinquishing resistance is not sufficient for acceptance of the inescapable.

Enthusiasm for popular music requires willful resolution by listeners, who must transform the external order to which they are subservient into an internal order. The endowment of musical commodities with libidinal energy is manipulated by the ego. This manipulation is not entirely unconscious therefore.^{ww*} It may be

^{vv} This phenomenon is readily seen in baseball, where the least provocation – such as a hold-out for higher salary in a business built on profit – transforms Joe DiMaggio⁸ from a hero into an object of scorn. What happens there is that the fury against plugging and the »spiritualization« of a business into a sport, manifests itself against the adjustment to the whole mechanism. However, this fury soon lapses.

^{ww*} The infantile model of this »spiteful« decision of youngsters or adults to identify themselves with something they may suspect in another layer of consciousness of being bad, is that of the child who declares, »Today I want to be naughty«, or the high school girl who suddenly decides to rave about a particular teacher.*

assumed that among those jitterbugs who are not experts and yet are enthusiastic about Artie Shaw or Benny Goodman, the attitude of »switched on« enthusiasm prevails. They »join the ranks«, but this joining does not only imply their conformity to given standards; it also implies a decision to conform. The appeal of the music publishers to the public to »join the ranks« manifests that the decision is an act of will, close to the surface of consciousness.^{xx, yy*}

The whole realm of jitterbug fanaticism and mass hysteria about popular music is under the spell of a spiteful will decision.⁹ Frenzied enthusiasm implies not only ambivalence insofar as it is ready to tilt over into real fury or scornful humor toward its idols but also the effectuation of such spiteful will decision. The ego in forcing enthusiasm, must over-force it, since »natural« enthusiasm would not suffice to do the job and overcome resistance. It is this element of deliberate overdoing which characterizes frenzy and self-conscious^{zz} hysteria. The popular music fan must be thought of as going his way firmly shutting his eyes and gritting his teeth in order to avoid deviation from what he has decided to acknowledge. A clear and calm view would jeopardize the attitude that has been inflicted upon him and that he in turn tries to inflict upon himself. The original will decision upon which his enthusiasm is based is so superficial that the slightest critical consideration would destroy it unless it is strengthened by the craze which here serves a quasi-rational purpose.

Finally a trend ought to be mentioned which manifests itself in the gestures of the jitterbug: the tendency toward self-caricature which appears to be aimed at by the gaucheries of the jitterbugs so often advertised by magazines and illustrated newspapers. The jitterbug looks as if he would grimace at himself, at his own enthusiasm and at his own enjoyment which he denounces even while pretending to enjoy himself. He mocks himself as if he were secretly hoping for the day of judgment. By his mockery he seeks to gain exoneration for the fraud he has committed against himself. His sense of humor makes everything so shifty that he cannot be put – or, rather, put himself – on the spot for any of his reactions. His bad taste, his fury, his hidden resistance, his insincerity, his latent contempt for himself, everything is cloaked by »humor« and therewith neutralized. This interpretation is the more justified as it is quite unlikely that the ceaseless repetition

^{xx} On the back of the sheet version of a certain hit, there appears the appeal: »Follow Your Leader, Artie Shaw.«

^{yy*} An extreme statement of such a decision would be: »On such and such a day I decided to become a Benny Goodman fan.«*

^{zz} One hit goes: »I'm just a Jitterbug«.

of the same effects would allow for genuine merriment. No one enjoys a joke he has heard a hundred times.^{aaa}

There is an element of fictitiousness in all enthusiasm about popular music. Scarcely any jitterbug is thoroughly hysterical about swing or thoroughly fascinated by a performance. In addition to some genuine response to rhythmical stimuli, mass hysteria, fanaticism and fascination themselves are partly advertising slogans after which the victims pattern their behavior. This self-delusion is based upon imitation and even histrionics. The jitterbug is the actor of his own enthusiasm or the actor of the enthusiastic front page model presented to him. He shares with the actor the arbitrariness of his own interpretation. He can switch off his enthusiasm as easily and suddenly as he turns it on. He is only under a spell of his own making.^{bbb*}

But the closer the will decision, the histrionics, and the imminence of self-denunciation in the jitterbug are to the surface of consciousness, the greater is the possibility that these tendencies will break through in the mass, and, once and for all, dispense with controlled pleasure. They cannot be altogether the spineless lot of fascinated insects they are called and like to style themselves. They need their will, if only in order to down the all too conscious premonition that something is »phony« with their pleasure. This transformation of their will indicates that will is still alive and that under certain

^{aaa} It would be worthwhile to approach this problem experimentally by taking motion pictures of jitterbugs in action and later examining them in terms of gestural psychology. Such an experiment could also yield valuable results with regard to the question of how musical standards and »deviations« in popular music are apperceived. If one would take soundtrack simultaneously with the motion pictures one could find out i.e. how far the jitterbugs react gesturally to the syncopations they pretend to be crazy about and how far they respond simply to the ground beats. If the latter is the case it would furnish another index for the fictitiousness of this whole type of frenzy.

^{bbb*} The pattern imitated is supposed to be negro. How far the aboriginal Harlem jitterbug is the legitimate heir to primitive religious ecstasy and to what extent he is a commercial artefact is a question for the anthropologist. It may be taken for granted, however, that the adaptation to this sort of frenzy by whites is a pseudo-morphosis. There is no tradition of idolatrous mass ecstasy surviving after 2,000 years of de-paganization. The masochism that plays such an important role in the whole attitude towards swing also expresses itself in the victims of commercialized art posing as slaves of musical fetishes.

A final consequence of our analysis of ambivalence toward light popular music is that, in spite of the tremendous growth of the manipulated mechanism and its tendency to become a vicious circle from which there is no escape, the inherent difficulties involved in keeping people under the spell of light popular music are correspondingly increasing. If the jitterbug is not to be trusted, who can be trusted?*

circumstances it may be strong enough to get rid of the superimposed influences which dog its every step.

In the present situation it may be appropriate for these reasons – which are only examples of much broader issues of mass psychology – to ask to what extent the whole psychoanalytical distinction between the conscious and the unconscious is still justified. Present-day mass reactions are very thinly veiled from consciousness. It is the paradox of the situation that it is almost insuperably difficult to break through this thin veil. Yet truth is subjectively no longer so unconscious as it is expected to be. This is borne out by the fact that in the political praxis of authoritarian regimes the frank lie in which no one actually believes is more and more replacing the »ideologies« of yesterday which had the power to convince those who believed in them. Hence, we cannot content ourselves with merely stating that spontaneity has been replaced by blind acceptance of the enforced material. Even the belief that people today react like insects and are degenerating into mere centers of socially conditioned reflexes, still belongs to the facade. Too well does it serve the purpose of those who prate about the New Mythos¹⁰ and the irrational powers of community. Rather, spontaneity is consumed by the tremendous effort which each individual has to make in order to accept what is enforced upon him – an effort which has developed for the very reason that the veneer veiling the controlling mechanisms has become so thin. In order to become a jitterbug or simply to »like« popular music, it does not by any means suffice to give oneself up and to fall in line passively. To become transformed into an insect, man needs the energy which might possibly achieve his transformation into a man.

7 Musical Analyses of Hit Songs

1) *Musical Analysis of »The Bells of San Raquel«*

The following analysis is devoted to a song which may be rated as considerably above the average. We shall try to point out the technical musical reasons why it is superior. It ought to be emphasized, however, that the specific achievements of this song are not due to any attempted assimilation of the composer to the realm of serious music. Such an assimilation leads in most cases merely to a mixture of styles and to an inconsistent treatment. »Good« hits are by no means those which borrow heavily from the higher musical language. They are rather those which, within the established language of popular music, bring about a considerable differentiation and structural unity. Any evaluation which would simply measure popular music by standards of the »serious style« would not only be unrealistic but also aesthetically superficial by applying criteria utterly alien to the ones inherent to the composition itself.

It would be of little avail to evaluate a hit by confronting it with the established general rules of composition, such as harmony, form, etc. The given »style« of hits, which to a certain extent has to be taken for granted if one wants to go beyond mere musical moralizing, often allows and sometimes even requires the neglect of those established rules. There are »good« songs which are badly harmonized in the academic sense, and vice versa.

The only way to justly and soundly evaluate song hits is to analyze them as concretely as possible on the basis of their own

language and without importing criteria from outside of their own proper sphere.

The form of the present song is the somewhat rarer two-part form. This has the advantage that the whole composition can easily be derived from the basic »idea« (*Einfall*). The bridge, which in most cases is weak and consists of conventional sequences, is unnecessary here.^a The song has two parts of sixteen bars each. Both these parts are subdivided into two eight bar periods each. The formal scheme of the whole would be A, B, A', B'. A is identical with A' but for a (conventional) harmonic change at the end (*Trugschluß*). B' strongly differs from B.

The merits of the formal treatment may be summarized as follows: What is *good* here is that the first four bars of B' contain the strongest modulation. Thus the reentrance of the basic key, f major, in the last four bars of the song is comparatively strong and fresh. What is *bad* here is that the climax of the whole, namely, the highest note, e, is reached at the end of B instead of at B'. This weakens the end considerably. This could, at least musically, easily be avoided by leading the melody after the word »above«, before the reappearance of »The Bells of San Raquel«, from g to the high f.^b (The lyrics might have to be changed considerably.)

The peculiar quality of this song has essentially *melodic* reasons. The decisive one is deeply hidden and cannot be spotted on the surface of the composition. It is suggested by the following fact. The Spanish lyrics, which are the original ones and stem from the composer, Barcelata, are called *Por Ti Aprendí a Querer*. Apparently they have nothing

^a A quantitative analysis should carry through a comparative study on two- and three-part songs. It may be predicted that the quality of the two-part songs will be higher than that of the three-part songs. They are also likely to be more easily remembered because their comparative rarity tends to make them more characteristic. A good example for a two-part hit is the »Penny Serenade«. It goes without saying that our formal characterizations pertain merely to the choruses. The verse remains completely out of consideration for the present study, since it plays only a very small role in the actual performance of popular music.

^b It may be noted here that it is a kind of general experience in composition that mistakes which can be corrected very easily are never really bad ones. The most obvious example is offered by those »forbidden« octaves in harmony which can be avoided by leading one of the badly parallel parts in the opposite direction. The reason is likely to be that the formal sense in such cases implicitly, though vaguely, substitutes the »right« solution for the wrong one which is perceived as a mere slip of the tongue. Thus one might feel in our present song that the real climax is the high f, although it actually never appears. Only those mistakes are really disastrous in composition which are so deeply rooted that they cannot be changed without the whole structure of the piece being affected.

to do whatsoever with bells. The latter idea has been introduced by the translators Wise and Leeds. That they hit upon it is by no means accidental; that it was not used before shows that it is none too plain and may not have been reflected upon by the composer himself. The inherent structure of the tune is associated with bells. What happens is not that the *sound* of bells would be imitated in any way. The purely melodic principle of the hit coincides with that of bells. It is the principle of the incomplete scale. Bells usually do not ring all the tones of the scale but merely a selection of them.^c Moreover, it is characteristic for bells that they know of no cadence in the harmonic and melodic sense of the term. The ringing of bells does not consist of any harmonic progression but of an ever repeated sound formula within which a cadence has no function whatsoever. Cadences would suggest the idea of an harmonic progression bluntly contradicting the static principle of the bells.

These characteristics of bells can be found within the melodic structure of the main theme:

1.) The composer has used, for his principal idea, an incomplete scale.

2.) The tone that has been avoided is just the one which would be *melodically* characteristic for the cadence, namely, the leading tone, e.^d It does not appear at all for the first eight measures.

The first task of the composer was to transform this (probably unconscious) idea of bells into a melodic structure. This is done very simply. The melody is not limited – as the above mentioned Wagner motif – to some very few tones which would together form a kind of harmony but uses *all* tones of the scale except the highly characteristic and »critical« e.

A methodological remark may be pertinent at this point. The more the scope of a composition is limited by standard patterns, the more subtle – necessarily – are the means which the composer has to apply if he wants to achieve any true characterization which, of course, must be distinguished from pseudo-individualization by some obvious, plain effect. Hence, paradoxical as it seems, the analysis of hits, too, has to be handled in a much subtler and more differentiated way than in most cases of serious music if any concrete result is to be yielded. For in

^c Melodic use of this principle has occasionally been made in serious music, for instance, in the bell motif of *Parsifal* c-g-a-e.

^d *Harmonically* of course the decisive characteristic of the cadence is the dominant, c. This, however, could not possibly be avoided without fundamentally upsetting the whole pattern of a popular song. Hence, the composer has to resort to the much subtler, purely melodic means of avoiding merely the *leading* tone which is the foremost representative of cadence in melody.

popular music the standard pattern which is omnipresent allows the composer the realization of his essential intentions only in the form of the most discrete deviations, whereas the serious composer is not bound by any pattern outside of his own imagination and can therefore make his original intentions the main event. The peculiar task of the popular composer consists in the invention of shades which are so to speak below the threshold of explicit musical workmanship (governed almost entirely by the pattern), and these achievements can be spotted only microscopically. This again must not be misunderstood in the sense of a principle conscious to the popular composer. What happens is rather that he has simply to seek nuances within the omnipresent pattern and that this quest leads objectively to such exploits as the one we have tried to characterize. What one might call the »idiom« of popular music, as against the mere scheme, can probably be defined by this relationship. It is the sum total of almost infinitesimal shades by which the scheme is softened and which are still necessitated in a way by the scheme itself. An elaborate study of the structure of popular songs should devote full attention to the problems indicated here.

Our song is not characterized as »good« by the bell idea as such or by the transformation of this idea into the melodic material. Its quality is rather due to the way in which the main tune itself is made *plastic* by the application of this idea. The first motif, c-d-c-g-f-a owes its characteristic structure to the avoidance of the »critical« e. This works as follows: the melody begins with c, rises for the interval of a second (d), and then falls back to the c as if it were afraid of the next second – the critical e. Then a sequence is made of the descending second d-c from a different starting point. This again, however, is done in such a way that the e itself is not touched, though its next neighborhood is reached: hence g-f. The a is the preliminary goal of the two sequences. But the most characteristic interval of the whole basic motif, namely, the ascending fifth c-g, stems from nothing but the avoidance of the central e in the order of the sequences. In other words, the structure of the melodic idea is derived from its non-existent »critical« tone.

The composer's real talent comes to the fore by his actually treating the missing e as the critical tone in the continuation of the theme. For when it appears for the first time in an outspoken way it actually gains momentum and has the effect of being the »fulfillment« of something which one was first denied. This happens only in B, to the word »sigh«. (Before that the e appears only accidentally as a passing note [*Durchgangsnote*]). The effect of the belated e is enhanced by several factors. The melodic interval that leads to it, the descending fourth, appears here for the first time in the whole chorus. Moreover, this e is

the first, long, accentuated note which is reached from above and not from below. Thus it assumes the character of a melodic center of gravity. The emphasis upon it makes good its absence during the first eight bars and brings about a kind of melodic equilibrium. Later on the critical e is used as the climax of B.

The handling of the e in the development of the melody is particularly significant with regard to the quality of the song because it involves the element of *consequence* which may safely be regarded as one of the most important criteria in every kind of music. This melody is good because it does not simply put in a row several »ideas« (and such an idea may well be something negative, such as the absence of the e) but draws consequences from its thesis which determine the whole course. The tone e gains particular importance during the later part just because it did *not* appear at the beginning.

The consequences of the missing e could be followed up farther on particularly with respect to the treatment of the melodic seconds which were originally interrupted by the omission of the e. On the other hand, it has to be conceded that the song does not consistently remain on the level of its exposition. In the middle of B (after »gone«) the melodic impulse has exhausted itself. The repetition of the accentuated high d at the end of B is very weak. Nor is the harmonization entirely satisfactory. At the end of B', the tonic triad is reached too early and has therefore no effect in the cadence. These shortcomings impair considerably the effect of the song.

Mention should be made finally of a specifically Latin American character of the song which is achieved without employing any obvious Spanish *cliché*. The technical reasons for this character could be stated only through an extensive comparison with other Latin American songs.

2) *Musical Analysis of »Two in Love«*

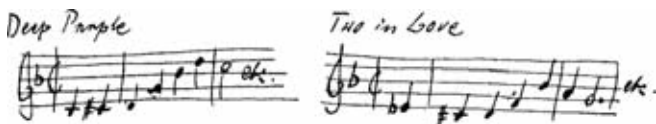
This song, »Two in Love«, may be rated as a poor average. It belongs to the very great number of songs which sail in the wake of some highly successful hit in order to participate in its popularity. The model is »Deep Purple«.¹

The method of our analysis consists of a comparison between the two songs. We shall point out their similarities as well as their differences. The insight into the similarities will lead us to a somewhat broader understanding of the problem of musical imitation. By spotting the differences, we shall be capable of defining the weaknesses of the present song against the highly concrete background of its model. Moreover, we shall try to show in technical terms why the specific

shortcomings of this song are necessitated by the very fact that it is an imitation.

First the similarities. Both songs – the sheets of which, incidentally, are in the same key, *f* major – belong to the same class of slow ballads. Both are written in the comparatively rare two-part form A, B, A', B' (the same as in »The Bells of San Raquel«). The beginning of both is marked by a certain rocking character which is later replaced by a freer kind of progression (cf. the identical bass of the first bar in the choruses of both songs). Very similar also is the general melodic structure. Both tunes are flowing in comparatively large and bent »curves«. In both chromaticism plays a certain role. Thus the whole setup of both songs is the same.

The most obvious melodic similarity occurs in bars two to four of both songs:



Yet this similarity is not the decisive one. There is behind it a structural relationship which determines every detail. It refers to the rhythmic scheme. In both songs, the first two bars consist of minims and crotchets. The third bar consists both times of crotchets only, the fourth of minims and crotchets again. Bars five and six contain in both songs crotchets only; bars seven and eight only one long note (a dotted semibreve). There are slight differences of rhythm only in bars one, two and four, where »Deep Purple« has one minim and two crotchets, »Two in Love« has a dotted minim and only one crotchet. The bars three, five, six, seven, and eight are rhythmically completely identical. It is this identity which leads immediately to the ear's vaguely realizing the relationship between the two songs, even before any melodic detail is grasped.

In general, musical borrowing is thought of only in terms of melody in the narrowest sense, that is to say, in the order of melodic intervals. This, however, is by no means a sufficient characterization of musical originality, nor even of musical property. The »dependence« of any musical selection on any other one may be based on entirely different musical elements and may be very strong even if it cannot be traced back to the melody at all. We offer the following verification: one could very easily change bar three of »Two in Love«, the one melodically most reminiscent of »Deep Purple«, into one which has melodically nothing whatsoever to do with it (e.g. by replacing the *f* by the

higher d, which would suffice to alter completely the line of the curve), and yet the basic similarity would remain unaffected. This leads to the methodological postulate that every judgment on musical dependency be based on structural analysis rather than on mere melodic reminiscences.

Finally the similarities refer also to harmonization. Both songs have the same tendency to use intermediary chromatic notes as vehicles for modulations, particularly e flat and f sharp, which are often interpreted by g minor. In both songs B starts in g minor, which is the parallel of the subdominant – in itself a rather unusual and characteristic harmonic procedure which strongly underscores the relationship of both songs.

Now the differences. Here a somewhat closer scrutiny is required. In »Deep Purple«, the melodic *élan* is due to a particular device. At the melodic corners, unusually large intervals, such as the seventh and the eighth, are used which serve as a kind of framework for the following curves which »fill out« these large intervals and terminate in them. The »curves« are the bars consisting of crotchets; the large intervals are associated with longer notes. Simultaneously, the interval of the seventh in a way prepares the continuation, B, mainly employing seconds, for the interval of the second is the inversion of the seventh.

While this general idea is copied in »Two in Love«, its particular effectiveness has been lost on the way. The upswing of the beginning, the upbeat which leads to the c with the interval of the seventh, has been eliminated. To be sure, »Two in Love« also sticks to large intervals. In order to avoid any blunt infringement on the older song, however, the eighth and the seventh are replaced by the mere sixth, which is considerably less characteristic. »Two in Love« remains faithful to its model by attempting to »fill out« the once given large interval in bar three with the crotchets. The »filling out«, however, is limited to its frame, namely, the sixth, and thus loses the very character of a wide curve which it tries to imitate: the corresponding curve of »Deep Purple« even expands the original seventh and takes place within a ninth (cf. Example I). The idea of the curve is most successfully employed in bars five and six of »Deep Purple«, covering the field of an eleventh, thus expanding even more the original »large interval«.^e In »Two in Love« the mechanical limitation of the curve to the interval of the sixth has broken the neck of the main idea. Bars five and six of this song do not contain any curve at all but merely a sequel of

^e This is due to the fact that »Deep Purple« is originally an instrumental piece, the range of which violates the rules of the game of a popular song. Its outstanding quality, however, is intrinsically bound up with this very feature.

seconds which are quite uncharacteristic and which are the worse since in B (analogously to »Deep Purple«) seconds play the main role and are therefore »spent« too early.

In »Deep Purple« the seconds of B are made somewhat more interesting by being chromatic.^f In »Two in Love« they are prevalently diatonic, interrupted by the well-known sixth of A. Thus B, which makes a good contrast in »Deep Purple«, is here no contrast at all but only a weak continuation – weak because all its elements have already been stated explicitly in A.

The model becomes *normalized* by the imitation. Everything unusual: the large melodic intervals, the broadness of the curve, and the contrasting, gliding chromaticism has been eliminated and substituted by everyday formulas. This, however, is due to the process of imitation itself. In order not to become what might be called musical theft, the imitation has to avoid those characteristics upon which the very quality is based which the later composer wants to imitate. It is this compulsion to deviate from the model which is probably the general rule that kills musical imitations and deprives them of the success they are striving for. What remains here of the imitation, mainly the abstract idea of the »curve«, becomes meaningless when the specific results of the borrowed device must be avoided in order to conceal it.

One last corroboration of our thesis may be offered. It refers to the climax of both songs. Here similarity as well as difference is striking. In both songs the critical note is identical, e.^g In both songs it occurs at the same place, namely, in the fifth bar before the end. In »Deep Purple« it is reached through a *large* seventh from below. The seventh is the characteristic interval of the whole song. Up to this bar, however, only the *small* seventh has been employed. Now, for the first and only time, the large one, one of the most »discordant« and conspicuous melodic intervals accessible in the song style is introduced. The effect is considerable: while the seventh as such is well-prepared throughout the song, its large form is very fresh and conveys the impression of a spot being hit. This is completely spoiled at the analogous place in »Two in Love«. For the climactic e (here actually the highest note of the whole song) is reached by a plain major third and remains completely trivial.

^f It has to be stated in all fairness that the idea of the continuation of a song theme by a chromatic scale in »Deep Purple« is probably secondhand. It occurred, and very effectively, because of an unusual harmonization in Cole Porter's »Night and Day«, which was probably already well-known when »Deep Purple« was written.

^g As a matter of fact, »Deep Purple« actually contains an even *higher* note, g. The particular formal position of the e, however, invests it with an emphasis which makes it what may be called the *formal* climax.

The Bells of San Rafael
 (POR TI APRENDÍ A QUERER)

ENGLISH LYRIC BY
FRED WISE and **MILTON LEEDS**
 SPANISH WORDS & MUSIC BY
LORENZO BARCELATA
 COMPOSER OF "MARIA ELENA"

Featured by
TONY PASTOR
 AND HIS ORCHESTRA

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The Bells Of San Raquel

English Lyric by
FRED WISE and
MILTON LEEDS

POR TI APRENDI A QUERER

Spanish Words and Music by
LORENZO BARCELATA
Composer of "Maria Elena"

INTRO: Slow with expression

The musical score is written in G minor (three flats) and 4/4 time. It consists of an introduction, a verse, and a chorus. The introduction is marked 'mf' and 'rall'. The verse begins with a piano 'p' dynamic. The score includes guitar chord diagrams for Fmi, C7, E7, Ab, Bbm6, G7-5, C, Fmi, Cdim, and C7. The lyrics are in both English and Spanish.

VERSE

You sailed a-way far beyond the seas, I had to stay with my memo-ries The Chapel
 Con la es-pe-ran-za de un du-ces-mor, Se a-brió a la vi-da mi co-ra-zón Y en las ce-

bells were as sad as I And their last fare-wells e-choed in the sky Days turned to
 ni-zas de mi tris-te-zas co-me en ca-in-tes, co-me en na-flor un sus-pen-

weeks, weeks turned in-to tears, But now at last, my love re-ap-pears
 can-to bro-tón mi ser, y con lo-cu-ra te-a-mè mu-jer

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CHORUS

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The Bells of San Ra - quel are ring - ing out across the blue The Bell of San Ra -
Por tu dul - ce mi - rar mu - jer i - deal ya no y fe - liz por ti que prendi a que -

quel are sing - ing out to wel - come you The An - ge - lus and
rer con to - do el fue - go de mi ter. Mi - al - ma re - na -

I could on - ly sigh While you were gone, But now we see your
ció con la i - lu - sión de un nue - vo sol

sail be - yond the veil that cloaks the dawn, The Bells of San Ra -
dú con su ca - ri - ta de a - ver - bol.

al tempo

The Bells etc 3

que! — are guid-ing you — back to the shore: — There'll be no more fare
per — tai a — poi ton — u — na — can — cion ra — ad en flo — ra

well, — and you'll be mine for e-ver-more; — A hap-py
cion — que per — lu — mo' mi ca — ra — zion' ven a mi

pair — we'll say a pray'r — while up a -bove, — The Bells of San Ra —
tra — zas que te es — pe ran to — lan ti; por ti mu-jer i -

que! — will all the world — about our love, — The Bells of San Ra — love,
dul — so — la por ti — so os fe — liz. Por tu dulce mi liz.

The Bells etc. 3

TWO IN LOVE

Words and Music by
MEREDITH WILLSON
"Writer of "You and I"

Featured by
TEDDY POWELL
and His Orchestra



MEREDITH WILLSON
HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

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TWO IN LOVE

Words and Music By
MEREDITH WILLSON

Moderately

mf *rall.*

Moderately *mf*

When a girl and a boy have per-suad-ed a lad-ed old world to smile, We

know noth-ing, ev-er can stand in their way. For the

boy and the girl will dis-cov-er that love can be worth the while, And

*F Gm7 A7 Dm Bbm F Fmaj7 Fdim

Dbs C9 Bbdim F Gm7 A7 Dm Bbm F D7 D7b9

*Symbols for Guitar

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C Gdim G7 Gm7 C7

so they are monarchs of all they survey.

Chorus, Moderately with expression
F Fm7 F7 Bb Gm7 C7

mp
TWO IN LOVE can face the world together,

F Gm7 Fdim F C9 F#6 D#7 F C#6 Cdim D7 Bbm6 D#6

Hearts that cuddle up will muddle thru.' The world may

C7 Dm6 F Dm Gm7 G7

rock and rumble, crowds may groan and grumble, Thrones may even tumble,

too, dar - ling, TWO IN LOVE can face the storm - y

weath - er, Laugh a - loud at ev - 'ry cloud a - bove, And

so, we'll show them all what love can do, For you and I are

TWO IN LOVE. LOVE.

Two In Love-3

WARNING!

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A The Radio Voice¹

In general it is easy for the trained ear to distinguish radio music from live music even in such cases where the tool is not visible. One might point out that in America the distinction is none too difficult to make anyhow as there are few opportunities to listen to live music outside of the concert hall, the night club, and other places expressly devoted to musical performance. There is no live music as background in the sense of the continental café concert. Nevertheless, one must face the issue of making that distinction everywhere. One only has to think of Muzak, the radio's competitor, whose well-groomed voice tends to enchant the superior restaurant into a private salon. No musician is likely to ponder for more than a second which is which: wireless or telephone – telephone being, as Stokowski points out, the more closely akin to live music.

Much has been thought about that difference. Reflections on the subject have taken mainly the line of weighing the respective merits of live music and radio music, mostly advancing to a negative judgment about radio, then analyzing the causes of the difference, and finally attempting to draft devices for abolishing the difference, that is to say, to develop methods in order to achieve that radio music sounds exactly like live music. Stokowski's approach may be taken as representative. Discussing the element of amplification in radio transmission, he says: »The result becomes a caricature, and discriminating music lovers will prefer not to hear in a degraded form music they know and love; and those who hear the music for the first time can have no conception of its true beauty, or of the inspired message it

conveys.«^a From such a criticism he proceeds to the postulate of faithfulness. »The important question is the degree of faithfulness with which symphonic and operatic music can be delivered in our homes, and the message conveyed in its full value.«^b In order to realize his ideal of faithfulness, he starts with an analysis of the technical elements of radio transmission which he divides into three kinds: frequency range, intensity range, and auditory perspective. After criticizing the specific shortcomings of radio with reference to these categories and offering certain remedies, such as a revision of the allotment of frequency »channels«, or wired transmission as a guarantee for three dimensional or perspective listening, he finally reaches the »vistas opened up by wired transmission«. He comes to conclusions as, say: »Through constant experience of listening by radio, and laboratory experimentation with electrically produced and reproduced sound and wired transmission of music, our horizons have become so vastly extended that formerly accepted standards and definitions of ›good‹ and ›bad‹ and ›natural‹ and ›artificial‹ tone have become less dogmatic and more fluid. Or it might be better to say that they are no longer adequate but give a limited and incomplete view of a field which is every year becoming more extended in our consciousness.«^c Or, he asks more radically even: »What then is the ›natural‹ sound of an orchestra?«^d Obviously, this trend of thought is such as to turn against one of its own presuppositions. What good is it to set the goal of faithfulness for radio transmission if the very concept of »natural« sound is questionable? There is no criterion for the »natural« sound of mechanically reproduced music but the faithfulness to the live sound. If the »natural« sound becomes problematic, the ideal of faithfulness becomes problematic too. For the contradiction, however, not the logic of Stokowski is to be blamed. It is rather a contradiction within the object itself, which may be spotted most simply by asking: of what import is it that music is distributed on a scale of mass reproduction while the idea of the »original« is still maintained?

Now the meaning of the terms original and mass reproduction, evidently, is not exhausted by their physical reference by comparative measurement of wave lengths, sound colors, and auditory perspectives. They are properly musical only insofar as they are related to men: they are social categories whatever their physical conditionedness may be.

^a Leopold Stokowski, »New Vistas in Radio«, in: *Atlantic Monthly* (January, 1935), p. 2.

^b *Ibid.*

^c *Ibid.*, p. 9.

^d *Ibid.*

Being pertinent to the musical object, which is either an original or a mass reproduction, they reveal themselves as social the very moment the musical object makes its appearance. It is the appearance of music listened to directly or by radio on which depend both its own social meaning and any possible effect upon the listener. The listener hears music, not decibels. Hence, there is a need for a closer examination of radio phenomena not in terms of the physical and technological processes underlying them but by describing them as they present themselves immediately in experience.

It would be futile to attempt any such description as an isolated one. There is hardly anyone who has listened to music by radio only. Even the staunchest adherent of the self-styled radio generation speaks in comparative terms when giving his opinion about the new medium. No characteristic of the musical phenomenon pouring out of the wireless set seems possible without reference to similarities and/or dissimilarities to the live sound. Since that phenomenon transcends its particular and immediate musical situation and bears on the whole variety and manifoldness of musical experience as well, its description can only be given somewhat rhapsodically.

As against live music, radio music in one respect appears more alive than live music itself. Speaking not about music, but about the voices of people on the radio, Robert J. Havighurst passes a remark pointing in the same direction: »In the case of people the listener feels close enough to form direct impressions of a speaker's personality; around the voice he hears the listener builds a person as real in many ways as if he had been actually met. This illusion of closeness makes the listener feel that he is actually present at the place where the broadcast originates – or purports to originate.«^e The radio listener's feeling at ease with the music offered them, the intimacy they profess to enjoy there, the personal touch which they cherish in it, are likely to reflect that »illusion of closeness«. To be sure that is partly due to extra-musical factors such as the attitude they can afford to assume at home in face of their wireless set as against the position they must take at more or less official occasions, where they are forced to keep silent on account of the person in the next seat, and take on a serious air for the sake of social prestige. Whatever the extra-musical factors account for: the illusion of closeness, which may well include them, the over-amplified noises by which the radio set appears to approach its owner-victim, undoubtedly play a major part in immediate radio phenomena. Illusion, according to current American musicology, is the life element of music: »Without the blessing of normal illusions, musical art would

^e Havighurst, op. cit.²

be hopelessly stunted. Our profoundest appreciations of nature and art are detachments from the physically exact and constitute a synthesis through the medium of normal illusions.«^f

The illusion of closeness, however, does not go unchallenged. If the radio sound appears to approach one bodily, as it were, at the same time it seems also as if what approaches one were not quite this sound itself but something like its own shadow, or its mirrored reflection. One might dissect this impression into its different constituents. There is, first of all, the question of loudness or softness. Besides the fact known to every technician^g that radio's »intensity range« is less than half as large as the scale between loudness and softness which music can cover in a concert hall, there come into play conditions of reception – quite apart from the physical necessity of »compressing« the intensity range of the broadcast itself. Even the intensity range left over after the process of compression is hardly ever fully used by the listener. What is actually listened to does not depend only on the picking up and transmission of the broadcast but also on the room where it is listened to. It is, normally, only a fraction of the size of a concert hall or radio studio. The full strength of an orchestra, even if already regulated by the sound control engineer, would blow it up. Hence, the listener is forced to »compress« the sound again. This second compression, though considered in the calculations of the sound control engineer, is not entirely in his hand. The fact that it is left for the listener to perform that compression has a greater bearing on the musical phenomenon than can be determined by mere technical-physical calculations. As the second process of compression necessarily affects the forte more than the piano, the acoustic proportions are not only reduced but also distorted.

This bears upon the illusion of closeness. One might assume that it is partly due to the over-strength of a radio playing with full power in a small room. Muting it down, the listener already counteracts it. It is paralyzed by the very softness that makes acoustic events sound more »remote« even in the apartment where they appear. It is paralyzed, too, by the disturbance of the acoustic proportions. The listener feels as if presented with something totally familiar, and familiar it may be indeed, yet in such a manner that it assumes an air of strangeness. The phenomenon is not autonomous; it is still to such a degree an image of the original that it can be apperceived only in relation to that original. However, neither is it a pure copy of the original, for it becomes oblique by the very act of reproduction. Thus, inasmuch as it concerns the

^f Seashore, *op. cit.*, p. 378.

^g Stokowski, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

object, there arises a peculiar uncertainty and uneasiness on the part of the listener. The strangeness of the phenomenon expresses itself in the somewhat vague and half-conscious awareness of being at home with it and yet quite far away. It both is and is not the same as the live sound. One actually has it not »here« though one seems to be face to face with it. This experience contradicts the illusion of closeness that is still maintained by the loudspeaker. This is not the only contradiction originating within the realm of radio phenomena. In speaking of the irrational effects of radio, it must not be overlooked that [they] cannot be traced back to the »psychology« of the listener, whose irrational behaviors largely reflect objective social processes. Nor does the authority of the monopolistically owned and administrated means of communication, which underlies those processes, directly produce these irrational effects. They are mediated by the technical structure of what the listener comes in contact with when listening to his set. This social function of radio is determined neither by the surface appearance of the particular contents which it transmits, nor by the conditioned reactions of the listeners, but by the actual technical structure of the radio phenomena which confront the listener. It is this structure, its social implications and relatedness to present social conditions, upon which a theoretical radio analysis ought to be based. This structure displays irrational trends and it is apt to bewitch mischievously the laws of logic. While radio music seems to approach one bodily to such a degree that one can hardly escape it, at the same time does it sound like an echo.

Echo possesses not only the characteristic of remoteness but also of derivation. Hence, radio music, however it may diminish or even abolish the distance between the listener and the musical work, which is delivered to his home and to which he can listen in his shirt sleeves, assumes a certain character of artificiality that contradicts its wornness no less than does its remoteness contradict its physical closeness. One has spoken of phonograph records as »canned« music. Indeed, while the preservation of music in records reminds one of canned food, the sound of radio suggests the actual taste of it: somehow it has lost its acoustic vitamins. Or perhaps one may compare the container of the sound with a box rather than a can. It is the voice of the man in the box that suddenly seizes upon the listener. The sound comes out as if it had been imprisoned. »Even with most perfect apparatuses there takes place a certain blunting and dulling of the live sound, as can be observed in every electrical reproduction of music.«^h It consists not only in the modification of the sound colors caused by the loss of more distant

^h Ernst Krenek, op. cit., p. 160.³

overtones, nor in the much discussed shrinking of the auditory perspective of music which, although conceived in terms of binaural listening, is picked up and distributed monaurally only. The sound modifications can be grasped within a precise musical terminology. The neutralization of the sound colors attributable to both those technical factors makes them sound much more alike than in live music, whereas some of them, like the flute and the percussion, do not undergo any neutralization and therefore detach themselves much more from the total sound of the orchestra than in actual orchestra performance. The sound, at the same time, becomes more uniform, less plastic and articulate, and on the other hand, more torn into extremes – a new antagonism within the basic musical phenomenon. The interplay of these interrelationships one could subsume under the head, »neutrality-modification«, a term borrowed from epistemology that accounts for »a certain having ›postponed‹ something, or, better still, a ›having let it stand‹, where we have not in mind anything that has been ›really‹ let stand. The positing characteristic has become powerless.«¹ On radio, music loses something of its ›reality‹ however hard it may be to determine the concept of reality as it applies to music. Music as an art has no empirical reality as its immediate object which is ›meant‹ by it: the reality characteristic of music refers purely to its self-existence. That self-existence is harmed by radio. At any rate, radio music is not fully ›present‹. It is rather an image of music than music itself. Here the connection between the change within the musical phenomenon and its social aspect becomes manifest. By losing its reality, it loses something of its spell, of the power ascribed to it since time immemorial as an indigenous element of actual existence. That may imply that radio aids in viewing music with fewer illusions, although it evokes, to be sure, new illusions of its own. Yet, however that may be, the new tool somehow deprives music of its obliging character. It is not quite serious. Sociological reflections on radio music which naively identify a broadcast of Beethoven with a live Beethoven performance, inferring that today »the farmer's wives in the prairie States listen to great music performed by great artists as they go about their morning housework«,⁴ miss their point from the very beginning, and substitute for an adequate analysis the erudite yet hollow conventions of accepted »great music«.

This can be made clearer by a more concrete treatment of the interrelationship of what is commonly called the original – namely, the live performance of a work – and its reproduction. One might well start with the assumption that radio brings »great« symphonic music to

¹ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, trans. W. R. Royce Gibson (New York: Macmillan, 1931), p. 307.

people who never heard it before. The current view may even concede that symphonies brought to the knowledge of the fabulous farmer in the Middle West are somewhat affected and deteriorated by the transmission. But on the whole, they would argue, those differences matter only to those few who know a lot about music in general and about symphonic music in particular. The finer shades and differences are of no import to the layman who has to gain a first acquaintance with the material. Better a symphony that is not quite so good as if heard in Carnegie Hall than no symphony at all. Whoever dares to oppose such a view is likely to be regarded as an aesthete who lacks any true sympathy with the needs and desires of the unhappy many. Yet, the social analyst must risk to be unsociable if the uncovering of social tendencies, as distinct from their mere appearance, is to be his objective.

Such an analysis, in the case of a radio symphony, must rid itself not only from the unexamined supposition that the apparently slight alterations brought about by radio have no bearing on the social significance of the symphony. It must neither be content with the conventional definition of symphony itself which asserts that it is but a sonata for orchestra. For, the insight into the changes a Beethoven work undergoes by radio depends on the specific understanding of the symphonic form, such as that form has crystallized and maintained itself in the comparatively short period of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Now, this specific understanding is not furthered by analyzing the symphony in terms such as exposition, development, repetition, or more subtle ones such as the antagonism of the two main subjects of the exposition, their »bridge«, their conclusion, the way they are worked out and make their modified recurrence. However easy it may be to identify all those typical constituents of form in every Beethoven symphony, they are essential only within the interplay of the unexchangeable content of each work, and not abstractly. It is too easy to identify them: any approach starting from the mere recognition of those invariants, tends to degrade listening to a mechanical process where each symphony could be replaced by any other which has the same scheme. If reference to those terms does not aid much in the actual following of the work, they help even less to come to an understanding of the meaning and function of the symphonic form itself. The late German musicologist, Paul Bekker, in a paper on the symphony from Beethoven to Mahler, has stated the problem very clearly. »A sonata for orchestra, that does not say anything«, for it does not explain »why Beethoven wrote that sonata especially for orchestra«.^j

^j Paul Bekker, *Die Sinfonie von Beethoven bis Mahler* (Berlin, 1918), p. 8, a paper read before the Frankfurt/M. »Vereinigung für neue Kunst« in 1918.

The notion of sonata does not convey what is essential for symphony: that the idea of the sound *volume* determined the choice of the orchestra as a medium. The reason that Bekker advances for this, is that Beethoven, while executing a symphonic device, »was at the same time composing an ideal picture of space and audience«. ^k From here he proceeds to what he regards as the essence of symphony: its power to »create a community«. ^l

No doubt, Bekker's theory is open to a great deal of criticism. He still remains within the sphere of German nineteenth century aesthetics, particularly of Wagnerian wish-fantasies, when attributing to symphony the power of creating a community within a world where the individuals are so radically alienated from one another that the attempt to bridge the gulf between them cannot possibly be restricted to the realm of art, but must touch upon the very structure of society itself. If, on the other hand, he conceives of the power of the symphony merely in terms of the ephemeral feeling of elation and togetherness of the audience during the performance, he is thinking of that power in terms of a means to produce psychological drunkenness. This drunkenness, however, – the notion was first critically developed by Nietzsche against Wagner – tends less to unite men than to make them forget that they are disunited. Such ambiguities are caused by too great an aloofness from the technical musical processes within the symphony. His vagueness in matters of composition forces him to have recourse to such problematic psychological notions as Beethoven's »picture of an audience«. Yet, apart from its obvious shortcomings, Bekker's theory expresses something deeper than the usual formalistic reference to the symphonic schedule. One must only transfer it from the sphere of sociological generalities to the inherent technicalities of the symphony, in order to arrive at a more precise social identification of the symphony. What characterizes a symphony when experienced in immediate listening as something different not only from chamber music but also from other orchestral forms, such as the suite, or the »tone-poem«, could be best grasped as a peculiar intensity that captivates the listener. As against Bekker, the medium in which the individuality of the listener is sublated and integrated is no community, either real or fictitious, but the organizing principle of the work of art itself, which is pointing, in a mediated manner only, to the possibility of a real community. In other words, the process of integrating and sublating the individual into a whole, is represented by a proper musical process. While the purely musical moments correspond to the

^k Ibid., p. 13.

^l Ibid., p. 17.

»individuals«, the totality of the work of art corresponds to the production and reproduction of social life. The »intensity« of a symphony in which that interconnection between the whole and the details consists, can be understood musically as the incomparably greater density and conciseness of thematical relationships within the symphonic field as against other forms. It is the most completely organized piece of music that can be achieved. Every detail, however emphasized as spontaneous, is absorbed in the whole by its very intensity and gets its true bearing only by its relation to the whole. Bekker rightly points at the relative unimportance of thematic inventiveness in Beethoven, and the »triviality« for which Mahler is blamed so often can certainly be accounted for by similar reasons. On the other hand, romanticism failed to produce symphonic works of the same obliging character as those of Mozart and Beethoven because the increase in importance of the expressive detail as against the whole made impossible the determination of every moment by the totality.

While listening to a typically romantic post-Beethovenian symphony, one remains fully conscious, sometimes too conscious, of the time it takes, however beautiful all the moments by which this time – one's own time – is filled. With Beethoven it is different. The density of thematical interwovenness, of »antiphonic« works, tends to what one could, exaggeratedly, call a suspension of time-consciousness. If a movement like the first of Beethoven's Fifth or Seventh Symphony, or even a very long one such as the first of the »Eroica« is rightly performed – which, by the way, happens less frequently than one should expect in a time which overflows with crack conductors – one has the feeling that these movements do not take seven or fifteen minutes or more, but virtually one moment. It is this very power of symphonic contraction of time which annihilates, for the duration of the performance, the contingencies of private existence and transfigures the individuals into what could be called, not an actual community as Bekker calls it, but the awareness of the »idea« of such a community where at the same time the drives and desires of the individuals are fulfilled and brought into a perfect equilibrium with the needs and necessities of society. The promise of the happiness of such an equilibrium, the musical formulation of which at the same time exhibits and sublates the antagonisms between the individual and society, makes the greatness of Beethoven. One has a live experience instead of a museum experience of his music, one »lives« it, as it were, only insofar as this »idea« is realized by the performance, that is to say, inasmuch as the performance accomplishes such a dense relation between the tension of the moments and the fulfillment by the whole, that time which drags away from such fulfillment is actually superseded.

If the view of the community-forming power of symphony were tenable in its abstract generality, radio would seemingly bear it out best. The number of people brought at the same time in contact with symphonic music is so tremendous that one could actually think of them in terms of a »society«, a mass of individuals held together and articulated by the power of music. From the analysis of the characteristics of the symphony, however, there follows that the specific conditions of radio tend to effect in the opposite direction. Even the literal and undifferentiated acceptance of the community theory of symphony leads into difficulties. For, the evoking of a feeling of community which supposedly is best aided by the volume of the symphony, evidently requires the presence of a large number of people in the face of the work. It is no accident that totalitarian countries, when staging their »community experiences«, do all they can to herd together as vast masses of people as possible, while those who cannot participate in the event are taken out of their physical isolation and made to face the broadcast under the title of »community reception«. Normal listening to a symphony on the air takes place under totally different conditions: people listen to their Toscanini performance in their private apartments on Saturday evening at 10 o'clock, and, whatever the collective »message« conveyed to them, they cannot experience it with that immediate feeling of togetherness as the expression of which Bekker interprets the »Seid umschlungen Millionen«. They are aware only indirectly, if at all, of the hundreds and thousands of fellow-listening neither affected by them, nor does it bring them into contact with them from whom they are literally isolated. It may be argued that the collective meaning of a symphony must not be understood so literally but rather as something internalized which must also be apperceived in an internalized way. But then it would be hard to understand why symphony should have to make use of such drastic and external means as that of »loudness«, while other musical forms, such as most of church music which to be sure makes also for an internalized community, can dispense with those means. Be that as it may, even if it is admitted that the collective message of the symphony is something not at all literal but internalized that can be conveyed to the physically isolated radio listener, there still remains the question as to how the structure of the symphony, that alone can be the »bearer« of the ideal collective message, appears in the radio phenomenon. This brings to the fore again the more concrete determination of the symphonic form. The issue is, to what extent are the inherent constituents of this form realized by radio.

One may start from the most primitive fact about symphonic music – indeed, the only one on which Bekker's theory is founded,

while it is probably also the one that accounts for the preference of the majority of listeners for symphonic as against chamber music. It may be stated in terms of »absolute dimensions«, the meaning of which is well known from the arts, particularly from architecture. A cathedral has not only its actual function but also its esthetic meaning only in proportion to the human body. A model of a cathedral in table size is something totally different not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. On the Campo Santo in Genoa, there is a tomb in the form of a diminutive imitation of the Milan cathedral. The building itself, being of utterly problematic value as architecture, becomes plainly ridiculous as a miniature: the impression one gains is much like the one which one receives when seeing the sugar-coated architecture on wedding cakes. The question of absolute dimension takes a similar shape in music. The power of symphony to absorb the individual into the organized whole, in part depends on the sound volume. Only if the sound is »larger«, as it were, than the individual so as to enable him to »enter« the door of the sound as he would enter through the door of a cathedral, may he really become aware of the possibility to submerge into the totality. This being larger could first be expressed in comparative terms of the intensity range. That implies that the intensity range of the sound is larger than any musical range the listener could conceive of in terms of being produced by himself either by singing or playing. It implies further the existence of an experience which is difficult to render in exact terms but is nonetheless fundamental for the apperception of symphony and is the true musical objective of the technical discussion of auditory perspective: the experience of symphonic space. To »enter« a symphony means to listen to it not only as to something before one but as something around one as well, as a medium in which one »lives«. And it is this surrounding quality that, in the sphere of aesthetic appearance, comes closest to the idea of symphonic absorption. Both these qualities are radically affected by radio. The sound is no longer »larger« than the individual. In the private room that largeness would cause those very disproportions which the listener has to mute down. The »surrounding« function of music, notwithstanding the value which can be attributed to it, vanishes into nothing as well, partly because of the diminution of absolute dimensions, partly because of the monaural conditions of radio listening. What is left of the symphony, even in the ideal case of an adequate reproduction of sound colors, is a mere »chamber symphony«. It may be taken as a first index for the thesis that radio is an executor of musical and social tendencies outside of its proper technical realm, that in musical production itself, quite independent from radio, the form of chamber symphony and similar chamber orchestral

forms have gained an ever increasing importance since Schönberg's *Kammersymphonie*, of 1906. However this may be and whatever the merits of this development, it certainly hits at the very point which is conventionally regarded as the main asset of radio transmission, namely, its seeming collective message. If symphony music today reaches masses that have never before been in touch with it, it does so in a way in which just the collective a priori, the inherent social qualities of symphony are practically eliminated from the musical picture.

One must be careful not to derive therefrom a premature judgment on radio, or try to »save« music from it, in the role of a panegyrist of the past. The »surrounding« quality of music challenged by radio, is certainly part of that musical dope the criticism of which is justified and considerably furthered by radio. The dope tendency is very clear in Wagner where the mere largeness of the sound into the waves of which the listener can dive, is one of the means to snatch the listener, quite apart from any specific content. In Beethoven, it has not this irrational function. But the more intrinsically it is connected with the structural devices of the work, it is therefore also the more deeply affected by broadcasting. Paradoxically as it may appear, a Beethoven symphony becomes more problematic as a broadcast than a Wagner opera. This may be made clear by such a well known piece of music as the first movement of the Fifth Symphony.

It is characterized by its simplicity. A very short and precise motif, the one with which it opens, is impressed upon the listener by an unabating intensity of presentation. Throughout the movement it remains clearly recognizable as the same motif: its rhythm is vigorously maintained. Yet here is no repetition but development: the melodic content of the basic rhythm, that is to say, the intervals which constitute it, change perpetually: it becomes perspectival by wandering from one instrument or instrumental group to another and appearing sometimes in the foreground as a main event, at other times as a mere background and accompaniment. Above all, it is presented in gradations, dynamic developments, the continuity of which is achieved by the identity of the basic material. At the same time, this identity is modified by the different dynamic grades in which the basic motif occurs. Thus the simplicity of the movement meets with an utmost richness of texture: the richness prevents the simple from becoming the primitive, while simplicity prevents richness from dissipation into mere details. It is the unity within the manifold as well as the manifoldness within that unity which constitutes the antiphonic work and promulgates the seizing power of that music finally terminating in the suspension of time-consciousness. This interrelationship

of unity and manifoldness itself, and not the mere loudness of the sound is affected by the dynamic reductions of radio.

First of all, the whole building up of the movement upon the one simple motif – the creation *ex nihilo*, as it were, which is so utterly significant for Beethoven as well as for the German philosophy of his time – can be made understandable only if the motif, which is actually nothing in itself, is presented in such a way that from the very beginning underscores it as the virtual material of everything that is to come. The first bars of the Fifth Symphony, if rightly performed, must possess the characteristic of a »statement«, or, as those German idealist philosophers would have put it, of a »positing«, a *Setzung*. This positing characteristic, however, can be achieved only by the utmost dynamic intensity. Hence, the question of loudness ceases to be a purely external one and touches upon the very structure of symphony, and therewith also upon the internalized community that could be regarded as the »idea« of Beethoven's symphonic form. Presented without the dynamic emphasis which makes out of the Nothing of the first bars virtually the Everything of the total movement, the idea of the work is missed before it has been actually stated. The suspension of time-consciousness is endangered from the very beginning: the simple, no longer emphasized in its paradoxical nature as Nothing and Everything, threatens to degenerate into the trite if the »nothingness« of the beginning fails to be absorbed into the whole by the impetus of the statement. The tension is broken and the whole movement is on the verge of relapsing into time.

It is threatened, further, even more by the compression of the dynamic range. Only if the motif can develop from the restrained *pianissimo* to the striking yet affirming *fortissimo*, is it actually proved as the »cell« which represents the whole even when exposed as a mere monad. Only within the tension of such a gradation does its repetition become more than repetition. The more the gradation is compressed – which is necessarily the case in radio – the less this tension is felt. Dynamic repetition is replaced by a mere ornamental, tectonic one: the movement loses its character of process and the static repetition becomes purposeless: the material repeated is so simple that it requires no repetition to be understood. Though something of the tension is still preserved by radio, it receives its proper bearing in Beethoven only between the extremes of Nothing and All. As soon as it is reduced to the medium range between *piano* and *forte*, the Beethoven symphony is deprived of the secret of origin as well as the might of unveiling.

It could be argued that all these changes turn the symphony into a work of chamber music which, although different from symphony, has merits of its own. A symphony, however, conceived in symphonic

terms, would necessarily become a bad work of chamber music. Its symphonic simplicity would make itself felt as poverty in chamber musical texture, as lack of polyphonous interwovenness of its parts as well as a want of extensive melodic lines developed simultaneously. Simplicity would cease to function in the symphonic way. Clearly, a Beethoven symphony played on the piano by four hands, although it is only a one-color reproduction, is to be preferred to a chamber music arrangement, because it still preserves something of the specifically symphonic attack by fingers striking the keys whereas that value is destroyed by the softened chamber music arrangement, which, by virtue of its mere arrangedness, easily approaches the sound of the so-called salon orchestra. No doubt, radio symphony bears a stronger resemblance to the chamber music transcription with its pseudo-colorfulness than to the simple yet faithful translation into the mere piano sound. For the sound colors are affected on the air too and it is through their deterioration that the work becomes bad chamber music. Symphonic richness is distorted no less than symphonic simplicity. While trying to keep the symphonic texture as plain and transparent as possible, Beethoven articulates it by attaching the smallest units of motifical construction to as many different instruments and instrumental groups as possible. These smallest units together form the surface of a unifold melody, while their coloristic differentiation realizes at the same time the construction and all its interrelationships underneath that surface. The finer the shades within the construction, the finer also necessarily the shades of changing sound colors. These subtleties more than anything else tend to be effaced by radio. While exaggerating conspicuous contrasts, its neutralization of sound colors practically blots out the minute differences upon which just the classical orchestra is built as against the Wagnerian which has much larger coloristic means at its disposal. Richard Strauss, in his edition of Berlioz' *Treatise on Instrumentation*, observes that, in a way, the second violins – never quite so brilliant and intense as the first violins – are different instruments, as it were, from the firsts.^m Such differences play a decisive part in the Beethoven articulation of symphonic texture: a single melody, subdivided between first violins, second violins and violas, becomes plastic according to the instrumental disposition, that is to say, the elements of the melody which are meant to be decisive are played by the first violins while those intended rather as incidental are played by the second violins or violas. At the same time, their unity is maintained by the similarity between them, that of strings playing in the same tonal region. Obviously, radio

^m Hector Berlioz, *Instrumentationslehre*, ed. Richard Strauss (Leipzig), I, 64.

accomplishes only that unity, whereas differences such as those between first and second violins are necessarily eliminated. Moreover, certain sound colors, like that of the oboe or the mute trumpet – the latter, of course, being post-Beethovenian – are changed to such an extent that the instrumental equilibrium is disturbed. As all these colors are more than mere means of instrumental make up, that is, are integral parts of the composition which they as well as the dynamics articulate, their alteration must again and finally touch upon the structure of the symphony. The less articulate the symphony becomes, the more it loses its character of unity and becomes a conventional and unobliging sequence and recurrence of more or less nice tunes, the interrelation of which is of no import whatever. Here it becomes apparent why it is Beethoven that becomes the victim rather than Wagner and later romanticism. For it is in Beethoven where the idea of articulate unity constitutes the essence of the symphonic scheme. That unity is achieved by a severe economy of means forbidding their reduction, which in turn is inevitable by radio.

In order to arrive at any inferences regarding its working upon the listener, it is necessary to relate the results of all those changes as they take shape in the radio symphony, for the radio symphony performs its function only in the way it appears and not as music that is »in itself«. The traditional argument that the novelty of symphonic experience in America compensates for the allegedly slight alterations loses its ground and turns into its opposite: the less the listeners know the works in their original form, the more their total impression is based on the specific phenomena delivered to them. These phenomena, in the case of the radio symphony, are far from being unambiguous. One is tempted again to call them contradictory in themselves. A process of polarization is taking place within the symphony: it becomes trivialized and romanticized at the same time.

The trivialization of symphony, first of all, is caused by its relapse into time. The smaller the symphonic time suspension, the farther away one is from that sphere of the symphony that bears all the implications for a virtual community: the individual, no longer absorbed by it, contents himself with absorbing it into his everyday existence to which he expects it to add some glamour. No longer can he experience symphonic time contraction because the technical requisites to that end have been blunted. The time the radio symphony takes is the empirical time. It is entirely in agreement with the structure of the material offered that, by switching it off, the listener can dispense with the music whenever he pleases. He can arbitrarily supersede it, – in contrast to the concert hall performance where he is forced, as it were, to obey its laws. It may be questioned whether symphonic elation is

really possible or desirable. At any rate, radio speeds up its liquidation. Every sound tends to undermine the idea of spell, of great music, and of the uniqueness of moment, which are emphasized so much by the radio business. And not only the spell and the idealistic notion of symphonic totality fall victim to mechanization. The decline of the unity that is truly the symphony, means also a decay of the manifold held together by it. The symphonic particulars become atoms. The tendency toward atomistic listening is perhaps the most universal of present day's musical consciousness. It is furthered by such divergent features as musical recognition contests that place all emphasis on the isolated detail, the »theme«; as books that tell the listener how to memorize the main tunes of famous symphonies by underlaying them with certain words, without regard to their development; and, as the standardization of light popular music where the whole is so stereotyped that only the detail can catch the listener's attention. This tendency finds its exact technical expression in radio. The meaning of the music is made to shift from the totality to the individual moments because their interrelation and articulation by dynamics and colors is no longer fully valid. Those moments become semi-independent episodes, organized mainly by their simple succession in time. One has often compared symphony with drama. If that comparison tends to emphasize the dualistic character, the dialogue aspect of symphony, it must still be admitted that it is justified insofar as symphony aims at an »intensive« totality, an instantaneous focusing of an »idea« rather than an extensive totality of »life« unfolding itself within empirical time.ⁿ It is in this sense, that radio symphony ceases to be a drama and becomes an epical form, or, to render it in less solemn terms, a narrative. And narrative it becomes in a more literal sense, too. The particular, when broken out of the unity of symphony, still retains a trace of the unity in which it functioned. A genuine symphonic theme, even if all light is centered upon it and it thus ceases to be understood in its dynamic relation to the whole, is nonetheless of such a kind as to impress upon one that it is actually nothing in itself but basically something »out of« something else. Even in its isolation it bears the mark of the whole. As this whole, however, is not adequately realized in the phenomenon that appears, the theme, or the individual moment of symphony is presented like something out of a context which itself does not appear in the performance. In other words, through radio the individual elements of symphony acquire the character of quotation. Radio symphony approaches the potpourri insofar as the musical atoms it proffers acquire the touch of having been picked up

ⁿ Cf. Georg Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans* (Berlin, 1920), p. 31.

somewhere else and put together in a kind of montage. What is heard is not Beethoven's Fifth but merely the suggestion of Beethoven's Fifth. The commentator, in grafting upon the listener's own spontaneity of judgment while chatting about the marvels of the world's immortal music, is not but following the trend of the music which, in that it seemingly reassembles fragments from a context not realized itself, seems to tell all the time: »This is Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.« The image character of radio need not be explained by abstract reference to physical conditions. It follows from the structural changes, the changes of the »sense« of symphony by broadcasting. And it is only in relation to that »sense« that the mechanical alteration of the musical object has a bearing on the listener's virtual understanding.

The issue of »quotation« again is inseparably bound up with the structure and significance of symphonic themes themselves. From the dramatic literature of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries the moment of sententious precision serving to reveal in words the sense of an entire dramatic development or situation is well known. The sententious passages in reflecting upon the action detach themselves from the immediacy of the action itself. Through this detachment they become reified, emphasized and easily quotable. The abstract generality into which they translate the concrete idea of the drama from which they draw conclusions much in the form of maxims for practical life, brings them close to the banal. At times the sententious moments gain power over the whole of the drama. There are many jokes in England and Germany about elderly ladies expressing the delight they take in plays such as »Hamlet« or »Wilhelm Tell« with the single reservation that they consist of quotations only. If in the realm of music radio has realized a similar tendency and has transformed Beethoven's Fifth Symphony into a set of quotations from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the symphonic theme as such may structurally very well be compared with the sententious element of the drama.

The symphonic theme of the Beethoven period consists in most cases of the triad upon which it is based harmonically and which it circumscribes melodically, the characteristic intervals coinciding with those of the triad. As the triad is the general principle of the whole tonality, triadic themes have a touch of »generality« themselves, they are to a great extent interchangeable. One has remarked often enough on the striking similarity between the material of pieces of such totally different character as the finale of Mozart's G minor Symphony and the Scherzo of Beethoven's Fifth. This generality, or even abstractness, of symphonic theme is balanced by its precision, mainly achieved by one short and distinct rhythmical formula apt to be remembered as well as to be repeated. Musical commentators have often compared

symphonic themes with mottoes in literature and in German musicology one frequently speaks of »head motives« (*Kopfmotive*) as opening a symphonic movement. All this points at the sententious character of symphonic themes, and it is this character that offers itself to the process of trivialization executed by radio. The triviality characteristic of symphonic themes serves a double purpose: that of »generality« transcending the specific case in which they appear, and their existence as a mere material for their own development. Radio interferes with both these purposes. Being atomized, the symphonic theme fails to show its »generality«. It catches attention just as it is. From the viewpoint of symphonic construction one could well picture a substitute for the famous second theme of the first movement of Schubert's B minor Symphony. The radio listener who does not care much for the movement and only waits for the theme would get the shock of his life if it were replaced by another. And again it is evident that the theme does not serve as a mere material of what follows if everything that follows is visualized only from the viewpoint of the theme which stands out because it has lost its dynamic function. Hence, in the isolation of the symphonic theme only the trivial remains. And in turn it is the triviality of the symphonic detail which makes it so easy to remember and serves as a stock of musical trademark articles labeled »culture«.

For, by sounding like a quotation the trivialized theme assumes a peculiar air of authority. Only what is established and accepted as a standard social value, is art, and the anxiety of the listeners to recognize the so-called Great Symphonies by their quotable themes is mainly due to their desire to identify themselves with the standards of the accepted and of proving themselves as small cultural owners within the big ownership culture. This tendency again is closely related to the material, apart from radio's general leanings toward authoritarian standardization. It has already been mentioned too that radio tends to present the symphony as a sequel of results rather than a process. The more the result is set off against the process in which it is created, the more it ceases to be questionable. Within the symphonic process the theme has its fate, it is »disputed«; by radio the theme becomes definite. In the process it is not conceived as something rigid but as fluent, even in its most emphatic first presentation. By radio even its remote transformations sound like themes of their own. If one could say, exaggeratedly, that in symphonic music nothing is theme and everything is development – which holds good literally for some modern symphonic music, particularly for Mahler – one could say as well that by radio everything becomes »theme«. The emphasis which every symphonic moment acquires in this manner is unlike the

emphasis which the symphonic theme possessed in its »positing«. As positing it owes its emphasis to the potentiality of process which it virtually contains in itself. Through radio it becomes emphasized because that process exists no longer and the theme absolutizes itself in its more present existence, in its being as it is. It is this literal-minded and pharisean self-righteousness of the theme which brings it so close to quotation. Quotation is reproduction in its decline. While genuine reproduction stands in a tensionlike relation to its object and realizes it by again »producing« it, the quotation-reproduction has dropped all spontaneity, dissolved all tension toward the object and seized upon all particulars of the object as fixed and reified individuals. It must be emphasized that the substitution of quotation for reproduction does not mean a greater faithfulness to the original but just the opposite. It has been shown that the meaning of the original is distorted by its atomization. Moreover, it is essential to the object, that is, the symphonic original that it be reproduced in the sense of being produced again instead of being photographed with degenerated colors and modified proportions. The essential of the Beethoven symphony is its being a process; if that process is replaced by a presentation of ready-made items, the performance is faithless even if achieved in the name of the utmost fidelity to the letter. One might say that it is a law of form of the great bourgeois art that its works must not be quoted and that it must be regarded as a symptom of decay of that art as well as of its reception if quotation begins to supersede it. It is the Boeotian's relation to literature that consists in quoting, and to music in whistling his favorite tunes. But his attitude does not simply indicate a lack of erudition. It betrays also the man that bows to the established and is gratified in showing that he knows everything that everybody knows. Radio symphony, among other institutions, comes to aid in this attitude.

Yet it comes to aid in the romantization of music no less than in its trivialization. The authoritarian theme, the »result« replacing the process and thus destroying symphonic spell, acquires a spell of its own. The history of musical production after Beethoven itself reveals a shift from the totality aspect to the detail which bears a strong resemblance to the process which musical reproduction undergoes by radio. That shift took place in the name of subjective expression. The less the individual was absorbed by the symphonic totality, the more it became a mere sequel of details, the lyrical expression of which tends to emphasize the atom and separate it from any comprehensive »objective« order. Radio disintegrates classical music much in the same way as romanticism has turned against it before. If radio atomizes and trivializes Beethoven, it makes at the same time the atoms more

»expressive«, as it were, than they had been before. The weight which falls upon the isolated detail conveys to it an importance that it never had in its context. And it is this air of importance that makes it seem to »signify« or express something all the time, while originally the expression was only mediated by the whole. It is characteristic that radio publicity takes such a delight in speaking about the »inspiration« of symphonic themes, although in Beethoven the movement is inspired and not the theme. It is the romantic notion of melodic inventiveness which radio projects upon classical music in the proper sense. Details are deified as well as reified.

This sometimes leads to paradoxical consequences. One should expect that radio, since it affects the sound colors, causes them to play a less conspicuous part than in line music. Precisely the opposite is true. Together with the structural totality there vanishes the process of musical spontaneity, of musical »thinking« of the whole in the listener. The notion of musical thinking applies to everything in musical apperception that goes beyond the mere presence of the sensual stimulus. The less the radio phenomenon evokes such thinking, the greater is the emphasis on the sensual side as compared with live music, where the sensual qualities are in themselves »better«. It is hardly accidental that young people when listening to a symphony on radio, so often discuss the respective merits of the various instruments or the sounds of the different orchestras. The structural element of music – the element that is defamed by the same listeners as »intellectual« though it constitutes the concreteness of the musical phenomenon just as much as the sound – is abstracted and they content themselves with the stimuli left, however shopworn those stimuli might be. Yet, those stimuli once were the bearers of musical »expression« in its specific, romantic sense. Deteriorated as they are now, they still maintain something of their romantic glamour: they sometimes assume such a glamour even if they never had it before. That is why the atoms, sentimental in their combination of triviality and expressiveness, reflect something of the spell which the totality has lost. To be sure, it is not the same spell. It is rather the spell of the commodity the value of which is adored by its prospective customers rather than the spell of the ideal »surrounding« community in Beethoven. One may say that even in the symphonic field those works lend themselves to radio the most willingly which are agglomerates of momentous tunes of both sensual richness and structural poverty, dispensing with the process of thinking that is restrained anyhow by the way the phenomenon comes out of the set. The preference for Tchaikovsky among radio listeners is as significant for the inherent nature of the radio phenomenon as for the broader social

issues of today's reception of music.^o And it is very likely, though hard to test, that Beethoven is listened to in terms of Tchaikowsky as well. The thesis that music by radio is no longer quite »serious« implies after closer technical considerations that it can no longer be related to essential spontaneous and conscious experiences of the listeners: the way it comes out of the radio no longer presents the listener with an adequate material for such activities. They are forced to a more or less passive sensual and emotional acceptance of predigested yet disconnected qualities, while those qualities at the same time and through the present use of the tool become in an odd way mummified and magicized.

It is this preliminary result which subsequently shows the necessity of starting from the sphere of reproduction of musical works by radio instead of from an analysis of listener's reactions. For, any such a beginning would imply a kind of naive realism with respect to such notions as symphony or »great music« on radio in analyzing the »effect« of such music upon the listeners who are expected to enjoy or not to enjoy it. If that music, however, is not only something that is superficially modified but fundamentally different from what it is supposed to be, listener's statements about their reactions to it must also be evaluated accordingly. There is no justification for unqualifiedly accepting the word of the mythological farmer about his sudden delight in a Beethoven symphony, if that symphony is changed the very moment it is received into something very close to the kind of entertainment against which educational broadcasters put emphasis on serious music in general, and symphonic music in particular. Further, the analysis tends to invalidate the optimistic idea that the knowledge of the deteriorated or even »dissolved« radio symphony may be a first step toward a true, conscious and adequate musical experience. But, the way symphony appears by radio is not »neutral« in regard to the original. It does not convey a dim effigy in a one-colored shape which could be »filled« and made more concrete by later live listening. It must be realized as the actual result of the analysis of radio symphony

^o A survey as of May 1937 made through the courtesy of Station WQXR (New York City) shows that Tchaikowsky ranges second among its listeners' favourite composers. He is preceded only by Beethoven. After Tchaikovsky follow Wagner, Brahms, and Mozart. – As for negative reactions to Tchaikovsky's music WQXR says »that we do find listeners who do not like Tchaikovsky, but they are a relatively small and sophisticated group«. This may well illustrate the assertion about the popularity of the Tchaikovsky type of music because WQXR puts great emphasis on serious music and reaches a large section of listeners particularly interested in it. The more significant it is to observe how big a role Tchaikovsky plays even among those listeners.

that the latter's relation to the live symphony is not that of the pale to the robust thus as if the pale could be transformed into the robust by the infiltration of more red blood corpuscles. The insight into the fact that the changes brought about by radio are more than coloristic, that they are changes of the symphony's own essential structure does not only mean that this structure does not come out fully enough. What does come out opposes that structure and constitutes a serious obstacle against its realization. Through the way of presentation by radio the listener's attention is diverted in such a manner that the criteria with which he approaches symphonic music like Beethoven's do not match that music which cannot fulfill the postulates to which it is subjected by its radio transformation. Reference may again be made to the coloristic element. Due to the change of attitude to which the radio phenomenon induces the listener, color comes to prevail and the listener's claims come to refer to sounds. Music, however, that is actually conceived in structural terms rather than coloristic ones does not satisfy these claims. The colors of a Beethoven symphony in live performance as well as by radio are incomparably poorer not only than those of Wagner, Richard Strauss, or Debussy, but poorer even than the stocks of cheap entertainment. Moreover, the coloristic effects which Beethoven achieves are valid only against the ascetic background of the whole.

The cadenza of the oboe in the beginning of the repetition of the first movement of the Fifth Symphony is striking only as a contrast to the bulk of the strings: as a coloristic effect in itself it would be »poor«, and it is the misinterpretation of such relations which leads some of today's happy-go-lucky routine musicians who are nothing but competent, to such ingenuous statements as that Beethoven was not able to score well enough. If radio, however, brings to the limelight just such particles as the oboe cadenza: does it not actually suggest such statements and provoke a resistance within the listener – a resistance which is only superficially compensated by the official respect for established values – because the symphony fails to satisfy the very same demands which it seems to raise? But the resistance goes beyond unfavorable comparisons between the full seven course dinner of Whiteman's rendition of the *Rhapsody in Blue* and the frugal meal of the symphony, consumed, as it were, as a meal merely. The transformation of the symphonic process into a set of results means that the listener receives the symphony as a ready-made product which can be enjoyed with a minimum of effort on his part. Like other ready-made articles radio symphony tends to make him passive: he wants to get something out of it, perhaps to give himself up to it, but, if possible, to have nothing to do with it, and least of all to »think« it. If it is true

that the experience of the actual meaning of symphonic structure implies something like an activity or concrete musical thinking, this thinking is antagonized by radio presentation. It is significant that the same listeners who are allegedly caught by symphonic music are also so ready to dwell upon what they call their emotions as against what they call »intellectual« in music. For it is as likely that actual musical understanding, by transcending the isolated, sensual moments of music and categorizing them by the interconnection of the past and the coming within the work, is bound to certain intellectual functions, as it is certain that the stubborn and spiteful adherence to one's private emotional sphere tends to build a wall against these experiences – the very experiences by which alone a Beethoven symphony can be properly understood. Great music is not music that sounds the best, and the belief in that sound is apt to tilt over into frank hostility against what, though mediated by the sound, is more than the sound. It is highly doubtful if the boy in the subway whistling the main theme of the finale of Brahms' *First Symphony* actually has been gripped by that music, or whether by the way he picks out that tune he translates it into the language of »A-tisket-a-tasket«. It may well be that this translation falls into a historical process the perspectives of which go far beyond the limits of traditional aesthetics, a process that contains tremendous productive powers. If this be true, however, it should not be appreciated in terms of the same aesthetic norms which it challenges, one should not speak about spreading classical music while that spreading implies the abnegation of the same concepts of musical classicism in the name of which serious music is handled by radio. At least no responsible educational attempt could be built immediately upon radio symphony without taking into consideration that the listener's reactions must be different from what is generally expected because to something different from what is expected. No such educational attempt, furthermore, is worthwhile to be undertaken that does not give the fullest account of the antagonistic tendencies promulgated by serious music in radio: the sort of resistance which the phenomenon seems to provoke almost inevitably because of its inherent contradictions.

It may well be argued that it is superfluous if not futile to trace all those changes to subtle features as those of radio symphony which necessarily remain unconscious to most listeners. It recommends itself as better common sense and less bothersome as well, to derive them from general conditions of the life of society in the present and of music life in particular. Is it not possible to explain the quotation character of symphonic music much more simply and convincingly by reference to the fact that a small number of standard works are

played again and again, thus calling for a »that's it« experience for a replacement of spontaneous apperception by mere recognition in each case? Is not the adherence to commercialized glamour so universal that the adherence to obtrusive sound colors and coloristic effects is nothing but its particular realization? Is not the passivity of the listeners determined less by the structure of the radio phenomenon than by their psychological predisposition? Do they not live in a society that allows them ever fewer choices and increasingly tends to transform them into mere employees or functionaries who no longer believe in their own initiative but surrender to prescribed pleasures as well as duties?

The insight into such broader issues, however, cannot be gained by making abstract statements about »our time« or »general conditions«. If men attain such features as glamour mindedness or readiness to accept standardized culture under present day conditions, radio itself is one of those institutions which change their consciousness in that direction. It would be nonsensical to presuppose glamour-mindedness or intellectual passivity, so to speak, as psychological invariants of the man of today and to exempt radio from the mechanism which produces such a mentality because the objective characteristics by which it helps to build up that mentality are too subtle. The being unconscious of those characteristics are no argument against their effectiveness. It rather adds to it. If people were conscious of those trends, they might easily revolt against them just as they often revolt against such clumsy attempts to subject them to the mechanism as those of the commentator who is the pseudo-objective panegyrist of the stuff he has to advertise. However, the subtler those objective characteristics and the deeper they are engraved in the phenomenon facing the listener, the better is their chance of reaching him at the very layers of his own unconscious life which correspond to the unconscious elements of the object, without being »censored« by his critical Ego. – The assertion that men are as they are because of the general conditions of production makes sense only if it is shown that they are virtually made what they are at every moment of their existence. Their following given patterns which is expressed in the argument against the »objective« analysis, demands itself the analysis of the objective patterns which are allegedly followed. To be sure, the fitting of specific conditions of radio with general predispositions of the listeners is an index of the fact that radio is not an isolated specification of a merely technological type but that it is a working social power »expressing« underlying social laws. But this expression can be spotted only within the specific structure of the radio phenomenon. Only if one succeeds in demonstrating that the radio phenomenon as it is produces certain tendencies toward

reification and atomization, is it possible to place it in the total social process of atomization and reification and to interpret it as a concrete mediation between the thus-being of the individuals and the working of social forces, instead of a social contingency adapted to the psychological mechanisms of the listeners.

One may further raise the more specific objection that it is fallacious to single out such phenomena as the radio symphony from amidst the working social forces: that one is falsely attributing to it a power which it does not possess for itself but only within the totality of all the forces to which the individual is subjected today. Such criticism would concede that one could speak about the existence of listener's passivity only if that passivity is revealed in such experiences as radio symphony. It would deny, however, that this passivity can be traced as stemming from the radio symphony itself. According to this view, the passivity of the listener existing in face of the radio symphony would have been there even if the structure of the radio symphony were identical with that of the live symphony. Obviously, it would be hard to prove such an hypothetical assertion, again to say nothing about the grave methodological reservations against an exempting of radio from the rest of today's means of social communication. In spite of all that, however, it must be admitted bluntly and unconditionally that it is impossible to actually and literally derive the listener's behavior from one isolated mechanism within the interplay of those means of public communication. If listeners »react« to a radio symphony atomistically, their way of reaction contains virtually the whole life indeed of the listeners: it contains the dulling process of labor in which they have to participate, the renunciations which they are forced to make, their adaption to given behavior patterns, but also their transfer of quite specific experiences from other spheres of mass communication to that of radio, such as the picking out of close-ups in motion pictures or the indifference to the context as created in musical shows. It appears even possible to identify the process of such a transfer, to a certain extent, by detailed case analyses of radio listeners. Nevertheless, the general knowledge that each moment represents such totalities does not supersede the postulate that there is justification in speaking about those tendencies only insofar as they can be spotted within the specific phenomena. Neither the totality of conditions nor the mediation between this totality and the single reactions of listeners are completely given to the observer at any one moment. The totality of conditions functions in knowledge only insofar as one could demonstrate on the phenomenon, like on a microcosmos, all those features which are considered as inhering in that totality though the intermediary links are missing. In other

words: analysis of the phenomenon of radio symphony is a *model*. It is to be taken literally and in all technical severity insofar as from a musical viewpoint the music itself as it is pouring out of the radio set is concerned. It is *not* to be taken literally in the sense of a causal explanation of listener reactions. True, the analysis describes certain limitations of those reactions: it follows from the structure of the phenomenon that listeners, when perceiving it adequately, cannot react to a radio symphony as to a live symphony, although the interplay of different means of communication may go so far today that, in turn, they may listen to a live symphony as to a radio symphony. But this limitation does not imply that the atomistic listening to radio symphony is caused solely and concretely by this radio symphony. It is possible that the listener listens atomistically to a Beethoven symphony on the air »because« he is used to listen to jazz only or because he is trained by the music appreciation system to concentrate merely on recognizable themes. Yet, the »model« analysis of radio symphony is to be carried out. In the phenomenon itself the sufficient conditions lie manifestly at hand for all that is to be explained in terms of causal connections, irrespective of their kind and however indirect and hidden they may be. One may put it this way: the radio phenomenon itself expresses or »utters« what should be categorized by causal analysis. One may even go a step further. Can one still adequately say that people are »influenced«? Does not the term influence presuppose a sort of stability of the individual that might be altered from outside while it is highly questionable if this stability still exists and while much points in the direction that vast numbers of people are changed into mere passive centers of reaction? It is possible that the very »thus-being« of men upon which the influences are exercised does not actually belong to them, but that, paradoxically speaking, they are already that into which they are changed. The new means of communication may »reproduce« them such as they are already in themselves because, in a way, they are already produced by the mechanism. If this be true, they would actually not be changed at all and nothing would happen. Radio, like other means of communication, would be less an instrument of influence than of social revelation: it would demonstrate to the individual the identity of the inner and the outer and thereby continue to reconcile him with the reality which otherwise he would find hard to bear. However this may be hypothetical considerations of this type would match with the analysis of the radio phenomenon. This analysis renounces to start with any causal reduction. It confines itself to a simple description but attempts to spot, within such a description, features which are interpreted otherwise in causal terms only. The actual justification for treating radio as a model and

as a microcosmos lies in the fact that radio in its very individuation and concretion concentrates and executes the same universal tendencies which the objection against its isolated treatment ascribes to influences outside of what is listened to.

How is it possible that radio »utters« for itself what it is so hard to deduce causally? What actually »speaks« through radio is man: by his voice or by musical instruments. Thus the term »speaking« appears to be a purely metaphorical one. One attributes to the instrument what is due to man merely because of his invisibility and remoteness. Still, when the phenomenon is analyzed, man's remoteness from the loud-speaker and his invisibility are part of the phenomenon. Whenever one switches on his radio, the sounds pouring out bear an expression all their own, an expression which is related to the men behind it only by reflection and not by the primordial awareness of the phenomenon. Radio speaks to the listener even if he is not listening to a speaker. It might when he fools around with the dial. It might shock him when he returns home, tired, at night, quite unattentively turns it on and is suddenly attacked by a shouting stranger praising the merits of a Deity. It might even raise its eyes at the very moment when he suddenly realizes that the inarticulate sounds are taking the shape of a piece of music which is no advertisement to him. For clarifying what is meant by radio's expression, one must preliminarily distinguish it from that of the material offered by radio. What is aimed at is not the expression of the singer's voice or the commentator's words but the way any voice or any instrumental sound appears on the air. Of course, such a distinction does not hold good ultimately: the analysis of radio symphony has shown how intimately the »how« of music's appearance by radio and the »what« of the particular material are bound up with each other. Yet, starting, not from the material, but from the listener's experience the weight of the material itself cannot be measured immediately. The listener receives a sum total of the material and its modifications by the tool. It is only an analysis of this sum total which makes for a clear understanding of the interrelationship between the »how« and the »what«: the »how« totally wraps up the »what«. Radio has its own voice inasmuch as it functions as a filter for every sound. Due to the comprehensiveness of its operation as a filter, it gains a certain autonomy in the ears of the listener: even the adult experiences the radio voice rudimentarily, like the child who personifies radio as an aunt or uncle of his. It is the physiognomics of this radio voice which provides the key for an understanding of how the expression of radio tends to become a model for its social significance; physiognomics in a sense somewhat analogous to that in which one makes statements like, »This woman has a nice voice«, or »This man has an arrogant

voice«.P Little as such a »physiognomic« analysis of the radio voice is to be taken literally and much as the ascetic description of the phenomenon calls for an interpretation in more dynamic terms, it is not without justification as regards the technical structure of radio itself. One may entirely disregard the fact that radio transmits human voices or sounds in such a way that they seem to be produced by the tool, as if sounding like the tool's own voice. One may still maintain, however, that the »abstract« characteristics of the radio sound are somewhat similar to the live voice. From certain aspects the radio pick-up of live music can be regarded as a substitute for the human ear. In a way the microphone does the work of listening. Radio technicians hold that the structures of the microphone and of the ear are similar. The diaphragm of the microphone corresponds to the diaphragm of the human ear. To this diaphragm the voice coil is connected which conveys the electric »intelligence« further on its way. To the diaphragm of the ear the series of small bones is connected which convey the auditory stimulus through the nervous system. Hence, the view of the radio mechanism as patterned after human sense organs. Therefrom the concept of a radio voice is derived. Perhaps the latter's specific characteristics are due partly to such an imitation, partly to the shortcomings of any attempt made so far to replace organic human function by mechanical ones. One may even ask – and this bears immediately on the problem of the »effect« of broadcasting on the listeners – to what extent radio's ear and radio's voice replace the listener's own ear and voice. Technologically, one is justified in speaking of radio's ear and voice because the process by which the electric current is retransformed into acoustic waves is the reverse of the process achieved by the microphone-ear, namely the transformation of acoustic waves into electric waves. The

P The emancipation of the term physiognomics from real human individuals is not unprecedented in contemporary psychological research. Reference may be made to the discussion between Sandor Ferenczi and Siegfried Bernfeld on the applicability of psycho-analytical terms to biology. Bernfeld explicitly discusses (*»Zur Revision der Bioanalyse«*, in: *Image*, 23rd year, (1937), N. 2, pp. 212 ff.) the »physiognomics« of individual organs of the human body, as suggested by the Hungarian psycho-analyst who »personifies« body organs such as the bladder and the intestines. Although Bernfeld raises objections against the anthropomorphism of Ferenczi's type of thinking, he is in agreement with the attempt to establish a physiognomics of sense organs within their relative independence, provided that it is possible to free it from anthropomorphisms and its inherent personifications and to bring it finally to a more rational level than that achieved by Ferenczi's intuitive method. In the case of the radio symphony the latter postulate is certainly to be endorsed, whilst in the case of an organ of society such as radio, the idea of its appearing as something independent and self-styled and speaking for itself is certainly no less appropriate than in cases of biological functions.

standardization of listener tastes, habits, and reactions may start at an earlier stage of the broadcasting process than it is generally assumed. It is not entirely out of the question that in a sense his own ears are already displaced by the microphone which »hears«. This would be in accordance with the theory of a German student of motion pictures, Alfred Sohn-Rethel,⁵ saying that the camera, itself »seeing« in place of a virtual spectator, represents a kind of socialization of the eye.

The radio voice, like the human voice or face, is »present«. At the same time, it suggests something »behind« it. In listening, one lacks a precise and clear consciousness of what this something is. At any rate, it appears merely by means of the experience of it. Here the comparison to facial physiognomics may be helpful. Whenever one looks at a face or listens to a voice, one is dealing, too, with something more or less vaguely »behind« it, not distinctly separated from, but apparently intimately connected though not identical with it. To render it in psychological terms: in the experience of live voices and faces the phenomenon is not merely a superficial sign of whatever is behind it, replaceable by any other sign. It constitutes a unity with the content in that it is its expression. The specific characteristics of the radio voice, such as the »illusion of closeness«, tend in the same way to such an expression which is more than a contingent set of signs. The study of the elements of expression of the radio voice is the actual task demonstrated by the »model« of radio symphony. To be sure, the illusionary among those elements must finally be traced back to the conditions which necessitate the illusion. But studies aiming at a social theory cannot be content with a mere sundering of appearance or illusion from the essential and real. In a society which, like the present one, has such a gross veneer for »appearance« it is just as important to study the mechanism which produces the illusion as it is to discount it. The »illusionary« character of the radio voice is itself an element of its »reality«. Incidents like, say, the Orson Welles broadcast provide a sufficient justification for such an assumption.

Terms like »phenomenon«, »expression«, »illusion« invite one obvious objection. The radio phenomenon, apart from the objective conditions, technical and others, behind it, exempted from the world of things, is »subjective«: it is nothing but the particular experience of individual listeners in listening to radio broadcasts. Every statement about the expression of this phenomenon appears to be bound up with the listener's subjectivity and to vary within individual differences; and the »illusions« promoted are certainly subjective illusions which it would be hard to attribute to any thing-in-itself. How, then, can one start from the phenomenon, its expression and its illusionary characteristics as if it were something objective by which subjective

reactions are conditioned, whereas the »phenomenon« qua phenomenon as well as its specific qualities already belong to the sphere of subjective appearance? How is the analyst to avoid the pitfall of private arbitrariness and bad generalization? If one attributes, say, an aggressive character to the radio voice when in its full strength, how is one to know that this aggressiveness is really due to the »expression« of that voice and not to the listener's individual nervousness merely? It is the more appropriate to answer these questions plainly because there can be no doubt that the current »phenomenological« method has been abused frequently to build up ephemeral opinions as essential insights by hypostasizing the phenomenon instead of interpreting it as an index. Without entering into the epistemological discussion of relativism, however, it may be stated that in the concrete context of the social sciences the assertion that »subjective« reactions are arbitrary and accidental and that each individual may react differently, is much too radical to be true. The thesis about the unbridgeable differences between the individuals aims more at discrediting theoretical assertions based upon an »understanding« of subjective behavior patterns, than it is based on experience. Against the assertion that the shock caused by the overstrength of the radio voice is a particular effect which is not to be »generalized«, one simply has to point to the fact that under present day conditions no individual is justified to regard his own reactions as incompatible with those of other individuals. The full weight of present day experience leads to the assumption that features which appear to be totally monadological and even so »private« as nervousness are caused by general trends and can be found in vast numbers of people. The epistemological assumption of an extreme individualism of reactions sounds slightly ironic in a period where individuals, thoroughly subjected to all kinds of standardization, virtually become more and more alike. The necessity of an empirical checking of statements of a quantitative nature so as to establish the generality of the shock caused by an overstrong radio voice, cannot deter the theory from formulating such an assumption within the theoretical context. – Further, the term »subjective phenomenon« is much too abstract and undifferentiated for actually invalidating the previous propositions concerning the radio voice. Even if one grants, in a broader sense, the »subjectivity« of the phenomenon, the individual who »has« the phenomenon is very well able to distinguish within »his« phenomenon between subjective and objective, between »we« qualities and »it« qualities. The leader of a string quartet may rehearse a work, busy with controlling and possibly with altering some specific sound phenomenon – not any »thing« behind it. He is fully aware of the difference between the quasi-objective qualities of

this phenomenon, however »subjective« it may be compared with an »objective« thing such as the fiddle, and elements purely subjective in the slightly different sense of their being conditioned by his own individuality and the contingencies of his own individual listening. The leader of the string quartet may be sitting next to the cellist. At one given moment he may make two observations: that one of the parts sounds somewhat out of tune even if at first he does not know exactly what and where it is and that the cello sounds too loud and out of proportion to the whole. Eventually he will correct the instrumentalist playing out of tune because he realizes that »this«, »his« sound phenomenon of being out of tune has an objective character. However, he will refrain from asking the cellist to play more softly because he knows that the cello sound's loudness is due to his own closeness to it, whereas in the concert hall the music is likely to appear in its proper proportions. Analogously, the man facing the overstrong radio voice will regard »his« subjective phenomenon as an objective one and will behave accordingly: he will mute down his radio. And there is no reason to limit the differentiation of the phenomenon as to »subjective« and »objective« to such primitive sensual data as »too strong« or »out of tune«. Any higher intellectual differentiation of music, concerning its phrasing, its articulation, its »making musical sense«, and its expression, bears the same character of objectivity within the phenomenon and it is only this objectivity which allows to teach music, to improve the level of a performance, or to correct structural inconsistencies in a composition. The more concretely such questions are put and the more precisely they are translated into technical language, the more the wraith of relativity is prone to disappear. The musician who answers the proof, that the bass of some harmonical sequel is worked out illogically, with the assertion that this proof is merely subjective and that he just »likes« this kind of treatment of the bass, is clearly a dilettante. However, the analyses of the radio symphony which led to the notion of radio voice, are in principle not so different from the string quartet leader's statement about the playing out of tune or the teacher's criticism of a bad bass part. Such statements are based not so much on individual taste or private susceptibility to subtle stimuli but on *expertise*, that is, nothing but the developed knowledge of the structural interrelationships within a field of phenomena such as the symphony. This kind of expertise allows for inferences concerning the radio voice as being more than »merely subjective«. Radio physiognomics aims precisely at determining the objective, structural elements within the subjective radio phenomenon. If it is to be more than a loose sequel of impressions, it has to aim at the constitutive categories of the radio phenomenon.

It may be appropriate, first, to illustrate what the expression of the radio voice, the categories of which are to be sketched, actually is, and in what sense it may serve as a model. The harshness of the unadapted strength of the voice heard through a loudspeaker suggests, quite irrationally, a sort of authority behind the phenomenon. One imagines a person who holds a great contempt for the individual while at the same time pretending to be concerned about him: the contempt makes itself felt in the lack of consideration for the individual's own wishes.

The individual has no chance to raise his voice against the super-voice addressing him, – while the interest expresses itself in the directness, closeness and intensity of the commanding voice, apparently aiming at holding the individual in its spell. The disproportion between the huge radio voice and the listener's tiny voice demonstrates the unimportance of the latter as compared with the power confronting him: the fact that this power does not allow him to take any refuge in his own unimportance is revealed in the fact that the public voice catches him in his own sphere, however »unimportant« that sphere may be. All these experiences, in a way, may be illusionary. The actual owner of the terrific voice may be quite a humble person. In the studio he may speak quite normally, while the overemphasis of his voice is brought about by amplification only. But is the expression of harshness attributed to the phenomenon therefore just spurious and unconnected with radio as a whole? It gains a definite meaning when related to the typical listening situation, which accounts for the quasi-objectivity of the expression of the radio voice: a situation characterized by the clash of publicity and privacy taking place as soon as radio speaks at full strength in a small room. The »authority« of radio increases the more it reaches the listener in his privacy. An organized mass of listeners might feel its own strength and rise to a kind of opposition against the »strong man« if he is experienced as a living being: the strong men know only too well why they use loudspeakers when performing as orators in mass meetings where their natural voices are quite audible without them. The isolated listener on the other hand, feels overwhelmed by the might of the personal voice of an anonymous organization – and be it only the voice of an employee. The more strongly this voice is coming from the personal sphere of the listener and the more it appears to stream from the cells of his intimate life, the more he has the impression as if his own cupboard, his own phonograph, his own bedroom were speaking to him as a personal friend or enemy: the more perfectly he is ready to accept in toto whatever he hears. His own sphere of existence becomes the messenger of the outside world. His privacy at the same time sustains the authority of the radio voice, – because it is »his« apartment, the language of which

he cannot escape –, and helps to hide it by making it no longer appear as if it were coming from outside. It is the opposition between privacy and publicity that makes the radio voice so conspicuous in this situation that it assumes an expression all its own. The shouting of the commentator, however »unreal« in itself, brings to the fore an actual discrepancy, namely, that the illusion of privacy and individual independence is upheld in a situation where such privacy and independence do not really exist. The listener who believes that the commentator shouting through his loudspeaker is a dictator, is wrong. But the fact that he »sounds« like a dictator expresses an imposition of publicity upon privacy which gives every reason to fear dictators. It makes the radio voice the bearer of the potentialities, acoustic as well as social, of dictatorship. Thus in a way the naive listener who becomes afraid of the voice of the commentator is right: the social mechanism behind the technical one leading to those disproportions is necessarily one which he has all reason to fear, and it may easily be one that breeds dictators who in their outdoor shows really shout the way the humble commentator's voice sounds within the listener's four walls. It is hypothetical considerations of this type which show in what sense the expression of the radio voice may be regarded as an index.

The basic characteristic of the relation between radio and time is the simultaneity of the phenomenon listened to and the broadcast performance. It is this simultaneity, first of all, which promotes a feeling of immediacy: the listener has the impression that in a way he is »present« at the broadcast event. There is no gap between the time in which something is happening and the time in which one is listening to it, and therefore no mediation seems to intrude between the two spheres, such as the printed word in serving the publication and distribution of news. This immediacy and presence has a touch of paradoxy from the very beginning: though temporally »present« at some occasion, say, the ceremonious announcement of the election of a new Pope, the listener realizes at the same time that he is not at all present, that he is not at all in Vatican City but in Newark, New Jersey. Occasionally, this latent paradoxy becomes strikingly manifest. So it happened that a nightingale sang in the garden of a country home. Her voice could be clearly heard in the house. A radio company that discovered the nightingale decided to place a microphone next to the tree where the bird had its nest. The tenants of the house, listening to the broadcast and the live voice of the nightingale at the same time, observed the broadcast nightingale was heard earlier than the live one, – the difference being due to the different velocities of electrical and acoustic waves. The real nightingale sounded like her own echo.

Such an extreme case reveals a bit of what may well be at the bottom of ordinary radio experience owing to the fact that the experienced immediacy is no genuine immediacy: at the same time one knows that this immediacy is a consequence of mechanization and reification and that it may tilt over into something disavowing the kind of presence that it promulgates. The presence is the presence of phantasmagoria.

This immediacy which is one of the main temptations for radio to imitate live events is no less illusionary than the closeness of the commentator's voice streaming out of the cupboard. Radio thingifies events in a way that at the same time hides their thingification. Of a similar quality is another characteristic of radio in its relation to time: its seeming mobility.

A comparison between radio and phonography may illustrate this relation. Radio seems to be free from objectivated or »canned« material in the crude sense, that is, the phonograph record. It is this freedom which lends to the tool the appearance of much greater mobility than to the phonograph, a mobility that further aids in the illusion of immediacy and presence. There are no such narrow time limits as there are in phonograph records. Without interruption one can listen to a whole Bruckner symphony if one likes. In listening to a recorded symphony the interruptions, still reminding the listener of the distinction between the record and the live performance, destroy the musical continuum. To be sure, this continuum does not exist in the case of the radio symphony either, but, though abolished by the very structure of the radio symphony itself, the illusion of continuum is maintained on the surface of an uninterrupted stream of music. Again, the mobility of radio permits to broadcast accidental elements, such as the noises of tuning, the conversation of the audience, the solemn silence upon the entry of the conductor and the timed applause following it. The elimination of these, as it were, accidental features tends to make a phonograph record objective and disconnected from time. The more faithfully, however, those features are reproduced and the more emphasis they are given in handling the radio programs, the more does the listener feel as if he were participating in life, uncontrolled and spontaneous, wherein the essential and the accidental are unseparated and one. The careful planning and controlling of the accidental particularly aims at producing this effect. Still it must be admitted that radio's mobility is no fiction merely but inherent in the technical structure of the tool. One day it may serve better purposes. Its potentialities are already evident in certain cases, such as the broadcasting over an American network of a discussion between commentators in various European capitals following immediately upon an important political speech. With utmost rapidity the broadcast

transmission changes from one capital to the other. Much as the mere pleasure in the working of the tool may express itself in this activity, it nevertheless indicates the degree of mastery over nature already achieved by means of the temporal omnipresence of radio.

Yet, the virtual antagonism between radio's reification and its immediacy also affects the mobility of the radio voice. A phonograph record, though recorded at a special time and place, is no longer bound to its special time and place in virtue of its very cannedness. True, radio can chase live events with incomparably greater mobility than the phonograph. But its mobility is limited by precisely its »presence«, by the uniqueness of the live event. The mobility of the phonograph's product – that is, the record – is greater than that of the product of radio broadcasting, that is, the phenomenon coming out of the loud-speaker. Radio's limitation to the unique event reminds one of the telephone whose mobility is even more limited. On the other hand, the limitations of telephone's mobility are of such a kind as to soften the listener's boundness to the phenomenon rather than to strengthen it. There he is connected with a particular person and their conversation may bear upon an actual, and not merely fictitious, relation between them. The narrowness of the telephone phenomenon, having no omnipresence at all, tends to humanize that phenomenon precisely for the reason that the technical possibilities offer, its potential mechanization, are of a much lesser degree than in radio, – aside from the fact that the listener is not passively subject to the phenomenon but can speak himself. In radio these potentialities are unlimited inasmuch as one can listen to it virtually everywhere in space. But one cannot do so everywhere in time. It is this configuration which leads to so severe restrictions as do not apply either in phonograph or telephone. One is rigidly bound to the particular moment of the event or performance by means of the closeness of the radio voice to the »Now« of the broadcast performance, whilst – in contrast to telephone – that performance is neither related to the individual of whom it knows nothing, nor does it allow, roughly speaking, the individual to interfere with its contents. The listener remains the slave of radio's immediacy, of the simultaneity of the performance.

The implications for the listener are obvious. He is bound to a specific time. He can listen to things he is interested in only when they are offered and not when he would choose to listen to them. If one has only one's free time to listen to music, one cannot listen to whatever one likes, which one could do if one plays himself or chooses something out of the vast repertoire of records. One has to adapt oneself to the comparatively small range of the dial of his set, at a specific hour. Hence, the listener is subject to the will and power behind the

instrument much more than when listening to the phonograph. It may be expressed more generally this way: if radio is more mobile than the phonograph in its connection with immediate life, is close to real events, musical or non-musical, man becomes less mobile in that he must keep pace with the tool itself. The new tool, in virtue of its alleged and often affected closeness to life, may be, as the phrase goes, more »dynamic« than the older forms of technical reproduction. The radio listener becomes less mobile though, because he has to fit himself more strictly into what is given to him.

In its relation to time, radio seems to have much of the same structure as live music. It even appears to come closer to ordinary time experience than recorded music inasmuch as it temporally coincides with the live event. Its relation to space, however, is fundamentally different from that of live music as well as of that of the phonograph. Live music takes place at one particular time, at one specific locus. Phonograph records can appear at different loci, at different times. The radio phenomenon, in principle, appears at one time but at different loci. The simultaneity with the live musical performance makes it still appear as the one and original performance. But it is scattered in space. Something that appears to be, not a »reproduction« like a phonograph record, but an original at which one is present at the moment of its performance, nevertheless has the character of reproduction, as the same uniqueness of the event to which the listener is bound through its presence, is abolished in another respect: there appear »images« of the unique event at innumerable places, all of which pretend to be the thing itself.

The ubiquity of the radio phenomenon and its structural implications were first discussed in an article by Günther Stern, entitled *Spuk und Radio*.⁹ Starting with the assumption that music is, in principle, neutral in regard to space, he says that »music is nowhere and everywhere it is heard;« it transcends its Here in spite of its »hereness«, and never does its unity confine itself to a limitation in space. »As soon as music assumes a definite relation to space, its fundamental character as music is said to be somewhat altered.« The thesis is illustrated by the simple example of a street piano. Here, »in spite of the space-neutrality of music, »music is taken for a walk«, played now here in one locus, then there, in another. In thus leaving behind what was played like a trail of smoke, as it were, until meeting what still remains to be played, the unity of the piece which is neutral to space, is actually dragged over the whole length of the road.« Therefrom Stern draws the conclusion that, »if the locus of music is fixed, the space of music

⁹ In: *Anbruch*, XII year, 2nd issue, February 1930, p. 65 [Adorno's translation].

is contingent and ungiven. This space becomes articulate as soon as music moves and changes its locus.«

In radio the space-neutrality of music is destroyed completely. »One leaves his house and the music of the loudspeaker still resounds in one's car. One is still in the music – while it is nowhere. One takes ten steps and the same music sounds from the neighbor's house.« To account for the »shock« that this phenomenon is said to cause in the listener, Stern refers to several factors, such as the ubiquity of music, the possibility of a plurality and even numerability of »musics«, and the »double« or second-self phenomenon. This »shock«, Stern finally concludes, is closely related to the kind of fear which always seizes man whenever technical tools become stronger than he and threaten to overpower him.

Methodologically, Stern's reflections represent an attempt to explain a phenomenon like radio, with all its social and historical implications, in terms of the reactions of »man as such«, man as an invariant. He seeks to account for the phenomenon in terms of an anthropology of radio by attempting to deduce radio characteristics from the »essence of man«. A critical account of the phenomenon, however, cannot possibly be content with indicating radio's »human aspect«. It must also consider in how far it is alienated from man. While conscious of the latter element in radio, Stern nevertheless yields to the temptations of the Heidegger kind of existential philosophy in hypostasizing some of the historical characteristics of the radio voice as a priori features. In fact the »shock« of radio ubiquity is apt to vanish or recede into the background as soon as the listener gets accustomed to the tool. Similarly, the shock of the double or second self vanishes. The double, once a startling experience for Edgar Allan Poe and Heinrich Heine, has long since become a trite, technical term in film business. Still, something of the »haunting« character of radio's ubiquity, though no longer in the foreground of radio experience, may have migrated into deeper layers of the phenomenon and still add to the »unreality« of radio that makes everything appear as an image. But the spook of radio must not be interpreted as an ontological quality. Only if the listener assumes an attitude toward radio that is not fully rational and, further, if he does not keep in evidence all the technical implications of radio, may the shock still occur. Such attitudes of listeners, however, are not existential ways of behavior. They can be accounted for, in each case, socially and psychologically.

The premature metaphysical interpretation of the radio shock is bound up with Stern's general assumption of the spacelessness of music. He is right about the neutrality of music to space as regards the unity of music and its proper musical constitution. It may indeed be

said that in a way music has its own space, that there exists something like musical »dimensions« and even musical »perspective«, clearly noticeable by any keen listener. This space, though more than a pure metaphor, is by no means identical with empirical space and certainly different from the relation of music to the place where it is executed and heard.^r Yet, this space cannot be entirely disconnected from the experience of external space.

What is meant may thus be clarified: in the orchestral scores of Wagner's late works, particularly of the *Meistersinger*, the horn plays an outstanding role. One of the reasons is the sound quality of the horn in the piano. This sound quality enables the composer to give tones and even leading melodies to that instrument which do not sound quite »here«. They are not, so to speak, on the surface of the musical space but somewhere deeper in that space. It allows the possibility of a part which, though it is the main part, seems to be not quite in the fore. Now, it would certainly be fallacious to assume that there exists an immediate relation between this effect and empirical space. The instrument playing is no farther away from the listener than, say, the violins which seem to be more »here«. But such an effect of musical perspective would never occur unless the specific expression of the horn sound provokes the consciousness of a space that is penetrated by the horn call. And this space which the horn sound summons is precisely the empirical space. When this calling expression sounds *piano*, it sounds as if it were a strong sound coming from a distance. Thus, indirectly, by means of the specific expression of the instrument, empirical space is related to musical space where it is preserved in a sublimated form. An extensive analysis of the phenomena of musical space would demonstrate that all such phenomena are related to outside space by means of their musical »expression«. This outside space is, so to speak, left as a sediment within the internalized musical space, just as the most internalized psychology is necessarily related to external reality and can be expressed only in terms of that reality.

Even in a more primitive sense musical space is not so independent of the normal and empirical space, as Stern and also Kurth appear to assume; even if the proper musical dimensions of a work are not related to empirical space qua musical dimensions, they must still fall within that space qua acoustical dimensions. Every musical phenomenon takes place within certain spatial limits where it can be heard.

^r This is especially urged in Ernst Kurth's *Musikpsychologie* (Berlin, 1931). He treats the antagonism between musical and external space (localization) in a special paragraph on pp. 128 ff. The entire fourth and fifth chapters of Part II of his book deal with »the musical space phenomenon« and »the musical illusion of matter«, pp. 116–142.

Music, however much it seems opposed to empirical life and its space, is no island. A moving street piano or a piece of music moving from one loudspeaker in one house to another loudspeaker in another house does not by any means obtain a space coefficient which were lacking in »normal« music. The collision between music's own space and the empirical space and even the »shock« created by such a collision is frequent enough. One need only refer to an odd expression of an opera heard by a latecomer in the lobby or to the feeling retained by the listener coming from the auditorium of the opera to the lobby that he is still in the music space. Hence, the shock described by Stern, so far as it still survives, is not so much due to a conflict between different spaces well-known from pre-radio days, as to other characteristics of radio.

The so-called spacelessness of music is affected by the inherent modifications music undergoes through the radio voice. The echo character mentioned in the case of the radio symphony is of a more general nature. It makes itself felt even if the transmission is satisfactory: the music sounds as if coming from a distant place. The spatial distance between the room where a person is listening and the room where the broadcast is taking place has not altogether been bridged. This echo character may be due not to the spatial distance from the live performance but to the specific sound conditions of coming from somewhere else.⁵ Stern has noted this quite correctly. He is wrong only inasmuch as he attributes this new space relation to the sequel of music over two or more different loci, whereas it actually affects the radio phenomenon in its most elementary manifestation – namely, within the private room.

Much as Stern's general approach to the radio phenomenon remains open to criticism, his notion of radio ubiquity nevertheless points to something essential. This is true particularly of his observations on the »plurality or numerability of musics« as bound up with

⁵ One must not regard as static the relation between »phenomenal« characteristics and preceding knowledge. Musical phenomena are as little isolated as others are. Previous knowledge may very well constitute an element of one's present experience and be absorbed in the phenomenon. Just here lies the difference of conditions of laboratory tests and of concrete social experiences. The phenomena dealt with in this connection are not the »pure« acoustic phenomena which in a way are only scientific abstractions, but the concrete phenomena within the continuum of the listener's experience. In the same sense that one's tongue in discriminating between good and bad tastes sticks to previous instruction, experience, education, and even knowledge of conventions, so one's ear does not solely react physiologically, as it were, but within an »historic dimension«. The knowledge that the live performance is taking place at a great distance from the room one occupies may actually form a sediment in one's present experience.

the structure of music's mechanical reproduction – which, in his opinion, does not fit for music at all – and that this plurality comes into conflict with the claim of each reproduction to be the thing itself. For further clarifying the problem, reference may be made to a theory developed by Walter Benjamin in his essay, *L'œuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproduction mécanisée*.¹ He treats the difference between the uniqueness and reproducibility of the work of art from the viewpoint of a fundamental historical change. Up to the era of mechanical reproduction, which he studies particularly in the field of motion pictures, one of the essentials of the work of art is said to have consisted in its »hic et nunc« – its Here and Now –, its existence unique to the locus at which it is found. The »authenticity« of the work of art is based on this Here-and-Now-character and the elements which make for its authenticity strictly decline any kind of reproduction, not only the mechanical. »Only the original sustains its authority and the »aura« of the work of art is only the way this authenticity is expressed in the phenomenon of the work of art.« Benjamin traces the uniqueness of the work of art back to its ritual function in former ages. That is, he accounts for it in terms of the veneration of a particular work of art in a special locus, supposed to represent superhuman powers only in its original form, as a symbol not interchangeable with other figures at different places without affecting the metaphysical substance attributed to it by its worshippers. The destruction of that ritual nature of the work of art, the vanishing of its »aura« and its becoming reproducible are, for Benjamin, equivalent terms. In motion pictures he finds elements of a radically new, non-auratic art which is determined even within the process of its very production by the basic idea of reproducibility. – Obviously, this theory cannot be directly applied to music for the simple reason that there is no music conceivable, except perhaps for petty relics of improvisation, that were not based on the idea of reproducibility. Reproducibility as such cannot be considered to be an element of basic change accounting for the ubiquity of the radio voice. Surely, one cannot say that in music the »original« is more authentic than its reproductions for possible reproduction and nothing »in itself«. Incidentally, here lies the epistemological justification for speaking about changes »within« the work of art, say, the decomposition of »the symphony« or »the opera«. If these prescriptions for possible reproduction fundamentally relate the work to its reproduction, basic changes within the reading of these prescriptions also affect the work itself, for the work is not independent of them and their relation to a possible

¹ In: *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, V, pp. 40–68.

interpretation. Still, observations very closely akin to Benjamin's can also be made in music. The authenticity that he attributes to the original in the visual arts is characteristic of the live performance in music. The live reproduction has its Here – either in the concert hall or the opera –, and its Now – the very time in which it is executed. And what Benjamin calls the »aura« of the original certainly constitutes an essential part of the live reproduction, no matter what forces are actually reflected by that aura.^u It is this authenticity or aura of music that is challenged by its mechanical reproduction. The phonograph record destroys the Now of the live performance and in a way its Here as well. Although the ubiquity of radio tends to preserve the Now, it is definitely hostile to the Here. Authenticity and aura are disintegrated by radio's image character. All the older magical effects of music that people believed in and that make themselves felt up to the present, were bound up with a notion of music as a real power and not as a picture: music did not »represent« anything outside of itself; it was on the order of prayer and play, not painting and writing. The decay of this reality of music by its becoming an image of itself tends to break the spell. The break of the spell is to be interpreted in more comprehensive terms of philosophy of history. As the illusionary qualities, with all their apparent irrationality, increase, the archaic irrational power, formerly considered the essence of music, threatens to vanish. Terms like »emotional«, »irrational«, and »magic« can be understood only in a historical perspective. They may have entirely different meanings in different periods. It is only when it is fully realized that the image character of the quasi-magic radio voice ruthlessly destroys the remnants of that older magic, that the failures of radio in all attempts to maintain magic features can be appreciated. The tool disavows as cheat anything that radio presents in magic terms of authenticity, for radio liquidates the character of music as an act of unbroken, objective reality which is the presupposition of all those magic effects.

In the light of such considerations Stern's thesis of the plurality and numerability of musics and the contradiction in the claim of the

^u What is meant by authenticity in this connection is not the adequacy of the performance with regard to the given prescriptions, the faithfulness in preserving these prescriptions or the absence of arbitrariness from the performance, but the feeling of the listener when facing the »genuine«, the thing itself, when impressed upon by the authority of the Here-and-Now character of the live performance. Under this category the listener's attendance at the performance of a Beethoven symphony presented by a subjectivist conductor, however arbitrary it might be in comparison with Beethoven's prescriptions, is on the same level of authenticity as the experience of a visitor of Botticelli's *Allegory of Spring* in Florence.

duplication of the piece to be the piece itself, may obtain its proper weight. The analysis of the radio symphony has shown that radio has so far failed to provide the illusion of a live event that one is actually witnessing. The problem may now be set more sharply. It is commonplace to say that radio is a phenomenon of mass reproduction in regard to both its social and esthetic meaning. But one does not seem to be aware of the fact that the character of mass reproduction necessarily affects the idea of the original. In radio the authentic original has ceased to exist: the present standard of technical development has surpassed it. Yet the illusion of the original is still maintained. The shock, of which Stern speaks, is nothing but the collision between the innate tendency of mechanical reproduction to abolish the »thing itself« in its originality and authenticity, and the claim still surviving and artificially fostered that one is facing the original. The claim to be the »thing itself« is not the inherent claim of radio. It is a claim which comes from the listener and which, to be sure, is nourished also by the way radio functions under present conditions. The shock, that is, the basic conflict will disappear as soon as radio has learnt to emancipate itself from the idea of originality that it is denouncing at every step. The distinction between original and reproduction in radio may be unavoidable for the time being. Avoidable, however, is the pretense of identity between reproduction and original. Stern points out that the »plurality and even numerability of musics is not really a property of music«. That this is not a property of music applies only to the idea of the original in the sense of the live performance. Only in relation to that notion, the plurality is contradictory and shocking. The disquieting factor lies in the plurality of uniquenesses. Such a plurality of uniquenesses is the basic principle of any double. Without uniqueness the plurality will no longer be felt because the divergent claims of different Heres have ceased to exist. The »haunting« character of radio will persist as long as the vain impression of uniqueness is still maintained. It is neither due to the newness of the mechanical tool nor to the overpowering of man by the machine but to the remnants of the pre-technical notion of authenticity applied to an art technique basically opposed to it. When these remnants disappear, the »spook« in radio will disappear also.

It may be argued that such a hope is futile because the purely technical conditions of radio are fundamentally different from, say, those of architecture where the abolition of the fetish of uniqueness by unveiled mass production does not encounter any difficulties from the material. The conflict between the unique and the ubiquitous in radio appears to go on as long as radio technique itself must reckon with the

reproduction of something that actually takes place somewhere else, namely the live performance in the studio, which in this regard is an original that may or even must rightly be imitated. But this argument is not really striking. In motion pictures, Benjamin's model of a »non-auratic« art, there certainly exist conditions similar to those in radio. There are actual events, theatrical scenes that are photographed and reproduced. Correctly, Benjamin refers to the whole technique, however, as not starting with the idea of imitating the event but with the idea of its reproduction and of the effect it has when brought to the screen. It does not matter how Charles Laughton actually talks. What matters is how he talks on the screen and his actual talking in the studio has to follow the line of how it comes out by the mass reproduction. Of course, the idea of »naturalness« still plays a major part in motion pictures, – this being one of the spots that lag behind their present potentialities. Although they are not particularly concerned with Laughton's voice the way it sounds in the studio, they are still eager to get a voice on the screen that sounds like a »natural voice«, whatever that may mean. In radio, however, aims and conditions are still below the level of such issues. The idea of allowing huge masses to »participate« in original events from which they are actually excluded prevails throughout. Not only does the actual mechanical transmission aim at an illusionary faithful reproduction of the live performance but the whole staging of the event pursues the same line, terminating in such absurdities as the broadcast of applause while it were actually for the radio listener to make up his mind to applaud or not to applaud. Certainly, the pseudopresence at a unique event artificially promoted by the system of its reproduction is not inherent in the structure of the tool. The very fact of mass reproduction, by emancipating a musical event from the place where it occurs, is antagonistic to the idea of the original. Every attempt to conceal this discrepancy is, for all its insincerity, doomed to failure. This failure is due not to the insufficiency of the tool but to its use for a wrong purpose. It expresses the fundamental inadequacy between mechanical mass reproduction and the maintenance of the original, the unique event with all its nimbus and its magic qualities preserved throughout radio in spite of the rationality of the tool itself. It ought to be seen in terms of reproduction, not of the original.

The fact that the magical idea of the unique and original is maintained by radio, though its very structure opposes it everywhere, can be understood no longer in technical but only in social terms. In offering canned food radio cultivates the idea of the live stuff or the original as a kind of symbol of individual freedom and economic security that exist no longer. Kindred tendencies have been observed by

Thorstein Veblen in his *Theory of the Leisure Class*.^v The more the process of monopolization goes on and the more individual spontaneity is dispossessed by ownership culture, the more does the process of monopolization tend to hide behind a veneer of spontaneous and individual events and to suggest to the dispossessed majority that it enjoys minority privileges. The less the customer is asked what he wants and needs, the more is it emphasized that the wants and needs of his privacy are considered vital. Radio upholds the illusion of privacy and individual independence in a situation where such privacy and independence are no longer alive. Otherwise, the subjects might not bear this situation quite so patiently. If the pressure of public mechanisms became too obvious, their effect might tilt over into the opposite and the individuals would no longer adapt themselves to those mechanisms. Their adaptation is easier as long as they believe that the mechanisms are »individual«. The pretense of the original is part of this fictitious individualism. Yet, even fictitious individualism does not go unchallenged. The more the canned food of radio attempts to imitate the live, the more does its cannedness stand out. The illusionary original may ultimately prove just as provocative as a monopolized production frankly denouncing the claims of the individual. Not only does the idea of the original become falsified by radio. The adequacy of mass reproduction is impaired by the cult of the original and the touch of authenticity in which nobody actually believes any longer. The aura of the radio original reminds one only too easily of the sociable laughter of the announcer, who, in laughing, makes fun of the listener and of his own laughter as well. The antagonism between mass reproduction and individual in radio cannot be escaped, for it merely reflects a social antagonism over which radio has no power.

Radio's ubiquity stands for standardization. The same material is offered to a vast number of people. They are forced to listen to it

^v Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, 1934). Special reference may be made to the following passage (p. 128): »The superior gratification derived from the use and contemplation of costly and supposedly beautiful products is, commonly, in great measure a gratification of our sense of costliness masquerading under the name of beauty. Our higher appreciation of the superior article is an appreciation of its superior honorific character, much more frequently than it is an unsophisticated appreciation of its beauty. The requirement of conspicuous wastefulness is not commonly present, consciously, in our canons of taste, but it is none the less present as a constraining norm selectively shaping and sustaining our sense of what is beautiful, and guiding our discrimination with respect to what may legitimately be approved as beautiful and what may not.« – The interconnection between the cult of the original or unique and the notion of conspicuous wastefulness lies at hand, though the social significance of the original is by no means exhausted by the theory of conspicuous consumption.

within the comparatively small choice offered them by their dial. This standardization takes place independent of any specific content of broadcasting, which in turn tends actually to reinforce it. It does not matter for the structural standardization of radio that the programs, particularly those of light popular music, are in themselves standardized to such a degree that in many cases it makes less difference to what station one is listening than one is made to believe. Nor does this fundamental standardization presuppose that the better technical equipment, the better wave lengths, the more expensive programs available to the big networks tend to bring vast masses of listeners to listen to the same product. The basic standardization with all the authoritarian potentialities inherent in it would hold good if there were no standardization of programs at all and even if the whole question of monopoly in radio would not exist. In a way, standardization is the essence of radio itself. The technical law of radio according to which an identical content appears at innumerable places at the same time practically coincides with standardization in its concrete social sense, namely, that the material is imposed upon large numbers of people. Whatever alterations may be recommended for radio organization and program policy, this type of standardization cannot be changed under present technical conditions. Today it would be absurd to attempt a system of broadcasting which would produce different material at the same time at different places. Radio standardization is no less a function of the technical state of the productive powers than of the social state of the interrelationships of production. It would therefore be bad simplification to consider radio just a product of monopoly capitalism: its basic standardization is certain to prevail in some way or other under non-capitalist forms of production. Technical standardization leads to centralized administration. It must be said, however, that both technical standardization and centralized administration fit completely into the more general conditions of monopolistic economy and are therefore particularly called upon to execute its orders. But radio was not invented »for the sake« of monopolistic society though it owes its existence to the very same processes of development of industrial productive powers which also further economic monopolization. The tendencies linking it to present social conditions do not coincide with the conscious intentions of the originators of radio. Those tendencies realize themselves over their heads.

The interrelationship between radio technique and monopolistic society is of a highly mediated order. Two illustrations may be given for the complexity of this interrelationship. Stokowski, in suggesting to include in radio broadcasting the missing frequency range between

5000 and 13000, proposes »to widen the channels that were apportioned some years ago by the Radio Commission in Washington« which at present »are so narrow that the full frequency range necessary for the complete and undistorted broadcasting of good music is practically impossible . . . There has been a great demand for these channels, and in order to supply this demand the channels have been made narrow. These narrow channels do not permit the necessary frequency range of about 30 to 13000 cycles per second, but up to only about 5000. The first and the fundamental need is for Washington to revise its allotment of channels so that they can be broader«. ^w Obviously, the technical shortcomings hit by Stokowski's criticism are due not to the technique itself but to the allotment. The latter is determined socially if by no other influence, so by the provision that all applicants »shall set forth such facts as the licensing authority by regulation may prescribe as to citizenship, character, and financial, technical, and other qualifications of the applicant to operate the station«. ^x No less obviously, any serious alteration of that provision would meet with the most serious resistance on the part of vested economic interests. It is by links of this kind and not by the, as it were, abstract standardization that the shortcomings of the radio symphony or more generally of the expression that the radio voice is bound up with existing social conditions. – The second illustration refers not to the present technical state but to the history of radio. It is hardly too bold to allege that the monopolistic structure of radio imposing the same material upon innumerable customers could not succeed but in the era of monopoly capitalism. Not only do the deciding improvements allowing for the transmission of acoustic phenomena, which transmission was originally limited to the Morse signals of wireless telegraphy, date back as far as 1906 while the history of radio proper does not begin before 1920. But even as early as 1885 Thomas A. Edison, in attempting to devise a means of telegraphing to moving trains, came very close to the invention of wireless telegraphy. Gleason Archer, in accounting for the reasons why »the Edison attempt nearly missed the goal«, points out: »One fact that militated against it as an answer to the problem of how to maintain telegraphic communication with a moving train was that the device was too democratic in its operation«. ^y Individualistic considerations of this kind do not count any longer in an era when more and more nations abolish the inviolability of letters, – though,

^w Leopold Stokowski, *loc. cit.*, pp. 3–4.

^x *Radio Laws of the United States*, U.S. Government Printing Office (Washington, 1938), p. 23.

^y Gleason L. Archer, *History of Radio to 1926* (New York, 1938), p. 53.

to be sure, that abolition cannot possibly be understood to be democratic either. The supremacy of authoritarian central institutions over the privacy of the citizens is not only promoted by radio: it is in part the historical presupposition of the existence of radio as well. The radio voice is the executor, the agency of those authorities. Just as these authorities alienate themselves from men, regarding men as a mere material for the realization of their will, so does the radio voice. It is its alienation, its reification in virtue of which it appears to speak itself. The expression of the radio voice bears witness of the reification of society.

B Memorandum on Lyrics in Popular Music

With regard to the analysis of lyrics and popular music, the following additional problems may be suggested:

1.) *The relation of lyrics to composition*

Generally it is taken for granted that this relation follows the traditional pattern set by the romantic song. That is to say that the music expresses in a more or less adequate way the content, the feeling, or the mood of the lyrics. Whereas in a vague way something of this sort doubtless still holds true, we will have to question whether any fundamental change has arisen in the interrelationship of lyric and music, tending to alter the whole picture.

The lyrics as well as the music are so »general«, so largely molded according to set patterns, that it appears problematic whether anything like genuine expression can still take place. It seems likely that the interrelationship is not so much that of expression, in the sense of an identity of the content on the part of the words with the music, but more or less that of a *montage*. Music and lyrics remain largely disassociated, and fulfill their function rather as two complementary media rather than as a strict unity of content, emotional or other. The relation is comparable to that of pictures and words in advertising rather than the expressive song. *Example*: The lyrics may function rather to add catch words or headlines to the music in order to make it more easily recognizable instead of expressing the feeling of the music. The fact that, according to all available information, in most cases the

music is written before the lyrics, adds to the likelihood of a non-expressive relationship, since it will always be particularly difficult to interpret and express the emotional content of music and words.

We therefore propose a comprehensive study of the interrelationship between lyrics and music in popular songs. This study should be based on analyses of lyrics and music of the same hits, which should be compared most carefully. For example, a check should be made to show how far specific features of the lyrics appear in one way or another in the music, and vice versa. Further, an attempt should be made to discover whether any specific differences among lyrics of the same class (for example, ballads) exist, and whether any equivalent in musical differences between compositions of the same songs exists. Further, the respects in which lyrics and music aim at similitude, and the respects in which they do not, should be elaborated. Here the question of the role played by the title words comes to the fore. We shall have to check whether, and in how many cases, the musical rhythm aims at a reproduction of the rhythm of the spoken word in order to make it catchier rather than to express the content or the feeling of these words. This study should be supplemented by as much information about the intentions of lyricist and musician as we can possibly obtain. The results of the study should be put at the disposal of any further analysis of the lyrics. That is, we should try to study the lyrics in functional terms, with regard to the role they play within the general setup of the music – the relation of lyrics characteristic of popular songs.

As far as possible, this study should be related to the results of studies on advertising technique. Here, furthermore, the question should be asked whether a *contrast* between words and music ever exists, and if so, what purpose it serves. This certainly is the case in some of the sophisticated songs, such as Cole Porter's, but it would be worthwhile to follow-up whether this trend has made itself felt as well in more lowbrow products, or whether they still cling to the idea of »fitting« music and words.

2.) *Attitude behind the lyrics as that of an inarticulate social psychologist*

Before entering into an analysis of the lyrics, the starting point and the aim of such an analysis should be quite clearly established. On the one hand, we are not interested in the private psychology of lyric writers. On the other, the psychological effect of lyrics should be examined in case studies centered on the listeners rather than on an analysis of the lyrics. Why then should we study the latter? The answer is this: we start from the assumption that the lyricist himself is a sort of

inarticulate social psychologist. His work and its psychological implications are not primarily based upon his own emotional structure, but rather upon his knowledge of a market; of what people want, what they do not want, and to what emotional trends it is necessary to appeal in order to sell a product. (This of course must be qualified by our knowledge of the artificial enforcement of certain materials by plugging but it may still be a safe bet that the lyricist's actual behavior comes pretty close to that sketched above.) The intention of our study is to amplify the inarticulate, socio-psychological experience of the lyric writer in terms of an inarticulate scientific analysis, which brings to the fore motives which he manipulates without fully realizing their implications. We presume that this utilization of the implicit knowledge of the songwriter will succeed better by analyzing his products rather than by interviewing him, because the song represents an actual behavior, rather than his rationalization of that behavior which an interview would be most likely to get. The question of the extent to which the motives to be scrutinized are conscious, preconscious, or unconscious, does not enter at this point. It would be the task of additional interviews to find this out. From our preliminary knowledge of the material, however, we feel free to say that the borderline of conscious and unconscious motives within the lyrics is a very fluid one. It is very difficult to tell where the tricky innuendo ends and the involuntary confession of the unconscious begins.

3.) *Male and female*

The problem of the lyrics taking the point of view of the male or the female may be supplemented by the study of its psychological implications. Is there a fundamental attitude in songs the »subject« of which is supposedly male, and those in which that »subject« is presumably female? If there is no such difference (which is our hypothesis: we expect that a large percentage of lyrics can be regarded as sung by a male as well as by a female) what inferences may be drawn from this fact?

Can it be regarded mainly as a symptom of the desire to sell the product to as many persons as possible, regardless of sex? Does this indifference have anything to do with aesthetic stylization – that is to say, with the fact that the subject of a song is not realistically to be identified with a living person and therefore must not be treated realistically. (This holds good for the serious, romantic song which, in most cases, may be sung by a female as well as by a male. There is good reason to doubt, however, that this feeling of aesthetic aloofness still prevails in popular music.)

Does the indifference between male and female point back to any actual psychological indifference to both sexes in the present situation? For example, does the phenomenon of frustration, of loneliness, of daydreaming, appearing in most song-hits, actually apply to both sexes? Here the Freudian thesis that no fundamental psychological differences exist between the sexes ought to enter the picture and should be checked against the prevailing technique of lyric making. Finally, the problem of homosexuality, strongly suggested by certain musical techniques, such as instruments imitating human voices, the sex of which is doubtful (saxophone and certain mutes of the trumpet) should also be studied. Are there any hints of a homosexual attitude in lyrics? What might they imply?

4.) Manifest and latent content of lyrics

This study should supplement the study of characteristic situations treated in the lyrics. We should try to establish whether these manifest situations have a random content (sometimes accentuated by innuendo) by which they obtain a psychological meaning different from what they imply in terms of the external wording. This whole study can be done only if a very careful survey and classification of the manifest motives has been given. Psychological interpretation should be given particularly to such motives which, though realistically their justification does not appear to be too strong, recur again and again. (Such a motive, for example, may be the motive of absence – of the separation of lovers.) We have good reason to believe that nowadays only a comparatively small percentage of young people have to suffer the fate of absence and that modern means of communication and transportation tend to abolish the phenomenon of absence which plays so large a role in traditional art. That it survives is certainly partly a relic of earlier ages and has the function described by Veblen under the heading of the survival of archaic traits.¹ This, however, apparently does not quite suffice. The fact that the absence motive plays such a large role today may be an index of the fact that it still has a very strong psychological reality, whereas its external reality appears to diminish. Paradoxically speaking, people today may be absent while they are present. An analysis of songs about absence should try to discover the mechanism behind the absence motive. Attention should be paid, for instance, to the question of the number of cases in which absence is linked up with desertion. It may very easily be the case that absence, as a whole, is a sort of camouflage for the feeling of loneliness which tends to ennoble this feeling by giving it an archaic touch.

Case analyses should be made of the latent content of lyrics in the manner sketched during our conversation of October 17th.² This would be valuable only if it were carried through in a comparatively large number of cases and checked against results obtainable from other fields of the study. A certain amount of speculation would certainly be unavoidable in such an interpretation. Its primary purpose, however, would be to formulate problems for case studies about the listeners rather than to offer a self-sustaining psychological theory. Even with a coefficient of the hypothetical, such case studies of lyrics will doubtless bring out valuable ideas for the understanding of the field. The results of the »latent« content ought to be compared with the results of the manifest content, and we should always try to find out why this and not another manifest content has been chosen in order to express the latent content. (The mechanism of psychological censorship, the adaptation to well-known patterns of daily »surface« life, and a great many other elements, would enter into this mechanism of translation.) Finally, we should try here to formulate in a hypothetical form a comprehensive theory of the unconscious structure or behavior pattern underlying the whole make up of lyrics.

5.) *The motif of the invidious*

This whole problem should center around a very specific question. It is generally assumed by social scientists that the mechanisms involved in lyrics, like those in motion pictures, magazine stories, and soap opera, are mechanisms of wish-fulfillment and psychological identification. This supposedly explains the role played by the all-pervasive motif of frustration. During the analysis so far attempted, we have been more and more forced to doubt the validity of this assumption.^a Some of the problems involved here may just be listed without any claim to link them up systematically.

a.) According to orthodox psychoanalytical interpretation, the sex motif ought to be latent and the other motifs obvious. It appears to us, however, that in popular music, the motif of sex is only slightly censored, often underscored by innuendo, and makes up the manifest content of the songs. Is this true? And what does it imply? Is a second level of sexual motifs of a different order hidden, or of an order different from those mentioned in the lyrics? Or does the deeper meaning of the lyrics have little to do with sex and should it be approached only from a completely different angle? This study is fundamental for the whole problem of the lyric.

^a Cf. Section III, »Theory about the Listener«, in my paper »On Popular Music«. [In this volume, 'On Popular Music', p. 299.]

b.) Special attention should be paid to the role played by the motif of impotence in the lyrics. Are we justified in interpreting a great many lyrics about loneliness and frustration in terms of impotence? Upon what evidence from the context of the lyrics could such an interpretation be based? Furthermore, the question of jazz rhythm in terms of a »failure« to act correctly in accordance with the ground beat should enter at this point.

c.) What role is played by the motif of the invidious or malicious either against oneself or against others? Do the lyrics derive any gratification from maliciously describing failure, weakness, unhappiness, and so on, rather than some lyrics »expressing« the feeling of unhappiness, frustration, etc. Here the lyrics of ballads will play a particularly large role. Attention should be given to detailed questions, such as how far ballads give a hint of the illusionary character of the feelings they avowedly express; how far they make a fool of themselves, and how far they imply the motive of self-contempt.

d.) Pseudo-nursery rhymes should be studied. Do they really and simply express the desire to get back to the carefree and happy days of one's own childhood, or do they rather make fun of this very happiness, and express a sort of contempt for it, particularly by swinging the music? A clue may be offered by a type of song now playing a major role: the »daddy« song, in which the identification with the child's attitude is jeered at by a strong innuendo of the supposed child's attitude as that of a prostitute who wants to get as much money from her lover as possible. It is our hypothesis that »daddy« betrays the secret of the pseudo-nursery rhyme. This of course can be answered only by a comprehensive study of pseudo-nursery rhymes and also their relationship to the music which often may have the function of disavowing the words.

e.) An attempt should be made to develop a psychology of the novelty song which as far as we know has never been undertaken. It should be found out whether the motifs of the novelty song are mainly things taken out of the world of things, isolated and obtaining a disproportionate and grotesque meaning of their own. What does this mean? Is any feeling of the overwhelming superiority of the world of things implied by it? (Is the mechanical unhuman predominance of things over man in the present situation comparable to, say, the attitude basic to Chaplin's *Modern Times*, where Chaplin's song displays the idea of a novelty song driven to an extreme of absurdity.) The interpretation of novelty songs may lead to the final societal interpretation of the whole field of lyrics.

6.) *Societal problems*

Finally, an attempt should be made to get at a societal nucleus of lyrics. It is our leading hypothesis that the motive of sex is only a surface one, whereas actually the lyrics try to set out patterns for social adjustment to existing conditions. This assumption is strongly corroborated by the fact that in spite of all the talk about unhappiness, frustration, and so on, recurring throughout the lyrics, the motif of resistance or of a negative attitude toward life practically never occurs. If we may state our hypothesis in an exaggerated way, it would run like this: that sexual relations as implied by song lyrics actually fulfill only the function of »social tests« by which people have to prove that they are like everyone else. The feeling of impotence stems mainly from the fear of failure in this test and being different. The sort of relief offered by the song is that, while everyone fails, no one is actually different and even the weak person is admitted to the society of the normal. It will be particularly hard to study this mechanism. A clue would be a study of the songs in which the motif, »I am not«, plays a large role. What does this song-subject suppose he is not? How does he react to this being different? How does he want to overcome it and what effect does he attribute to it? Another element of the problem of the hidden social content of popular lyrics would be the problem of the magic word. A great many words play an outstanding role in lyrics – for instance, »rhapsody« and »reverie« – the meaning of which is unknown to the majority of listeners. Further, there are very often allusions to the social status or to the magic of a particular social layer from which most of the listeners are likely to be excluded (the campus, the graduation ring, etc.). What is the function of these paraphernalia? (Does the very fact that they are beyond the actual range of experience of the customer play a particular role in the lyrics?) Here also the motif of »fun« ought to be studied. Does the element of humor represent a social agency controlling and, as it were, criticizing the reaction of the private and isolated individual? All the latter questions, however, are just first hints of the possible problems. The problems themselves can be studied in a positive way only if the psychological analysis of the lyrics themselves has been advanced to such a point as to allow for these more far-reaching societal influences.

C Experiment on: Preference for Material or Treatment of Two Popular Songs among Twelve Subjects

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Material vs. Treatment

Introduction

In a market situation where the names of bands and band-leaders seem to count for more than whatever they play, and where they are trademarked according to the so-called style («King of Swing»), this style of presentation of whatever it may be appears to play a greater role than ever before. It is not too difficult to see how the development of light popular music leads to this particular concept of style. The stock arrangements of the hundreds of mass-produced and standardized hit tunes which flooded the market then as now tended to cause all dance bands to sound alike. And so the dance men started using special arrangements, identifying their individuality and the individuality of their orchestra with the characteristics of the arrangements played. The increase of the importance of arrangements in recent years expressed the growing need for a belated individualization of the material which otherwise would be indistinguishable. The actual songs which are clothed in this style seem to play a less important part. This study is based upon the idea that people today are more concerned with the perfection of the machinery and the way something is transmitted than with the music itself. (This tendency is not confined to light popular music. It can be found in serious music listening as well. This is indicated by the usual stress laid upon names of soloists, conductors and orchestras in serious concerts instead of

emphasizing the programs.) In swing, however, there is in a sense more justification for this behavior. Here the material is rather inconsequential and not very characteristic. Frequently, as in the »St. Louis Blues« and the »Tiger Rag«, the melodic material is thoroughly inconsequential and this very characteristic allows a variety of treatments. Now, this very prevalence of style over material in »swing« is the effect of standardization. In every dance type not only is the basic rhythm rigidly defined, but also the meter, number of bars, and even the harmonic proportions. Moreover, a number of these dance types imitate one given pattern of one particular successful hit. Furthermore, in view of the mass sales of sheet music and records, it is necessary that the basic material of a hit – that is, the melody and corner harmonics – must be extremely simple, and this again limits any sort of invention. This leads to complete triviality; but that would endanger the chances of success for a piece of music because it can be kept in mind only if it is distinctive in some way. Paradoxically, the consideration of popularity means a threat to that very popularity. So, since these fundamentals of the material cannot be altered, the only possible escape is to make this material more distinctive by the manner of its presentation, by embellishing and ornamenting it without touching its fundamental simplicity which remains preserved in the music the listener receives when he buys the sheet music. Therefore, any spontaneity of musical invention to be found in light popular music lies in the treatment and not in the material. It is not accidental that real musical experts in light popular music are to be found not among the so-called composers but among arrangers and sometimes band-leaders and bands soloists.

In addition to this tendency to emphasize the treatment of light popular tunes, there is a second tendency. One of the essential functions of modern light popular music seems to be that of upholding the impression of immediacy – of fostering the illusion that the music is improvised, spontaneous, constantly changing and entirely free of the bonds of standardization. This illusion cannot be produced by the material but only by the treatment. For obviously if the material itself were handled in this manner, it would lose the very standardized character which is the presupposition for its success. (Still, the success of song-hits cannot be understood only in terms of standardization or non-standardization. These terms must be properly related before we can arrive at a complete understanding. It may be defined preliminarily as music which is fundamentally standardized, but apparently non-standardized.) Then, too, since the material is fixed and not spontaneous, it is impossible to make *it* sound spontaneous and improvised, so this must be done by its presentation. The absorption

of older feudal or negro tendencies in modern light popular music serves really to create this illusion.

We must add, however, that the freedom of improvisation, variation and the like in swing varies greatly. Although we admit that a certain amount of real improvisatory jamming still exists, it still seems fairly certain that they are much more frequently fixed and pre-determined than the listener is made to believe, if they are not in fact actually written down. Furthermore, the freedom of improvisation is greatly limited by the standardized framework of the music. One of the results of the rigid definitions of the harmonic cornerstones of a melody and its rhythmical length has been the working out of new standards among the anti-standard improvisations, and the constant recurrence of certain formulae for improvisations. The advocate of the spontaneity of light popular music will probably call these recurring formulae the »swing style«. Since, however, they are bound to the limitations of the standardized pattern, and not to the spontaneity of the improvisation itself, we refrain from calling them the »style«, and prefer instead the term, »treatment«,^a since we consider the former term entirely unsuitable for swing.

Since a preponderance of treatment over material can be found in the music, it should accordingly be expected that people will therefore respond more strongly to the treatment than to the material. The issue, however, is much more involved than it appears on the surface. Only a pure empirical investigation can settle it because there are strong counter-tendencies to those which we have outlined here, which grow out of those tendencies that we have just mentioned. We become able to cope with them by a closer analysis of the implications of the increase in the importance of treatment over material. From the start the difference between material and treatment must not be handled as if it were clear-cut, and the weight of the treatment must not be over-rated.

On the surface, the treatment may appear comparable to the variation technique in serious music. But this is not so, even of the jammed swing treatment. Here the material is not actually »developed«; it is merely disguised. The arranger does not aim at drawing consequences from the given material as much as he hides it and plays the game of asking the listener, »Where is it now?« It is a sort of musical hide-and-seek. The fundamental proportions are not changed and the jammed choruses are mere circumscriptions of the basic material

^a This is discussed at greater length in the introduction to our Experiment II, »The Tape Study«. Both that study and the present one supplement each other. [This study could not be found.]

which remains the same and which remains obvious. Apparently the Goodman record of »Avalon« (used in our experiment) is exempt from this rule, especially in the piano chorus where the basic harmonies are maintained. But this exemption is deceptive. The freedom of the harmonic treatment in the Goodman version does not mean that the harmonic scheme of the music is developed, that it becomes broader, more dynamic or more differentiated. It is much more similar to an aberration. One of his jobs is suspending the musical scheme for a few bars, leaving the listener helpless: but then he very soon returns to it. The aberrations of the Goodman version are concerned with the arbitrary playing of false notes and similar devices so prevalent in swing more than with an attempt fundamentally to develop the basic material by variations. He is just pulling his listener's leg.

This has certain consequences for the whole question of treatment vs. material. Strictly speaking, we cannot speak of treatment, but only about »make-up« in the same sense that a woman's face remains fundamentally the same in spite of the rouge on her cheeks and lips and the mascara on her eyelashes. Now, if the treatment is only »make-up« the importance of the underlying material is probably greater than we might expect. It would be wrong to say that a man prefers the make-up on the face to the face itself. It would be equally wrong to say that listeners prefer treatment to material. Correctly phrased, the question would ask, »Do they prefer made-up material to non-made-up material?« The question of treatment vs. material, then, holds good only within these limitations which adequately consider the importance of the invariants of swing practice – that is, the triviality of the basis of the entire treatment.

It seems more reasonable to consider the question of »makeup« vs. »non-make-up« because at first sight it seems that the higher musical tide chooses treatment automatically – that is, swing – whereas the lower, more primitive type chooses material – that is, sweet.¹ Now, the range of musical understanding of our subjects does not follow this assumption (as we shall show later). One of the possible explanations of this inconsistency is the question of caliber. That is, even more sophisticated and pro-swing listeners prefer a sweet number which is well done to a swing number which is only average. But there may be a different, and perhaps a more deep-reaching explanation. If the treatment is really a mere disguise of something fundamentally unaltered, then just the more advanced musicians or musical experts who react to our question may sometimes be ready to prefer the »thing itself«, no matter how primitive, to a version which makes it appear more than it really is without changing it. If we assume that the progressive attitude in modern architecture is that attitude which is

critical of ornamentation, we may assume that, paradoxical as it sounds, the »sweet« people are more modern than the »swing«, in this sense, or at any rate could be more modern because they are more hostile to a false veneer and prefer a musical product adequate to the musical content. This could explain the fact that musical experts do not necessarily show a positive response to swing even though it seems to display a higher degree of musical expertness.

There is a last possibility which, although it does not come out as a result of this experiment, may be shown by a more refined experimental set-up. This possibility is clearly connected with the problem of the rubato. A generally accepted sign of higher musical taste is the absence of any rubato, that is, any modification of the musical ground beat. Part of the contempt of swing fans for old-fashioned adherence to sweet is based upon the fact that »sweet« people are considered to be too fond of rubato. Jitterbugs call it »schmalz«. (This is particularly evident in the Guy Lombardo-style.) But the question of the rubato is not quite so simple. Certainly the criticism of rubato is justified to a great extent. The people who approve of it display a lack of musical discipline and a preference for their private emotions (which in most cases are simply residues of past conventions, long since disappeared). Nevertheless, this type – primitive, undisciplined and musically inadequate as it may be – still displays in his rebellion against the iron ground beats which are the sacred rule of the swing fan, a spontaneity and immediacy which has disappeared from the field of swing, remaining only in the pseudo-form of improvisations which must fit the rhythmical schedule at the beginning and at the end. Possibly some part of certain person's reactions against swing (the reactions of completely naive people as well as musicians who can no longer stand the swing machine) is based upon this very rebellion and grows out of their spontaneity. It may be that they hate the mutilation of freedom in swing, no matter how doubtful their own concepts of freedom may be. In this respect the so-called sentimental light popular music may preserve trends which could be considered, from a sociological viewpoint, more progressive than the general trends of swing. It is significant that practically all established norms of our music life today agree in their contempt for the rubato and the bad taste of sweet. Our theory, a priori strongly in favor of the underdog, is very much inclined to defend the lowest type of light popular music, namely sentimental music. Still, oppositional motives of this sort may be found wherever the sweet type prevails, and the interpretation of the conflict between material and style certainly should not overlook these tendencies.

There is an additional factor, though, which comes into play. The question of material vs. treatment is not simply a question of the tune

and its simple harmonization on the one hand, and its embellishment or jammed version on the other. In this sense, it is a question of two »styles«. Light popular music today does not consist only in the different types of swing and syncopated music. There is another type of treatment which fundamentally renounces the idea of presenting material in a more interesting fashion by altering it; instead, it sticks as closely as possible to the material and attempts to make it attractive merely by the quality of sensual sound colors. Although it borrows the sound colors partly from swing, it is on the whole the heir of older types of salon music from which it has borrowed that essentially sentimental character which we have already mentioned in the discussion of the rubato question. This type of music shows its connection with that other, more decisive trend of modern light popular music by a certain colorfulness and richness at which it constantly aims. We are speaking of the type of *sweet* music expounded today mainly by Guy Lombardo and André Kostelanetz. The music in principle sticks to the material which it presents with the sound colors but never with the rhythm of swing.

Insofar as this »treatment« is characterized principally by the emphasis laid upon the material, the question of material vs. treatment coincides to a certain extent with the question of sweet vs. swing. Our experiment has tried to combine both viewpoints.^b

Some finer reservations ought to be made without which the experiment, isolated as it is, could lead to premature inferences. First of all, the styles of different bands are much more similar than they are advertised to be or than they and the swing fan wants himself and others to believe. The importance of varying tastes and selecting between the styles, too, is probably less than most people would guess. The listener regulating his radio-dial is led to believe that in the last analysis it depends upon his whim which band or which style he listens to. As a matter of fact, however, the whole mechanism of plugging, the similarity between the music offered to him and all the ways of establishing current values

^b It is interesting to note that the style of different bands is always attributed to the leader. At first the styles really may have been created by the leader, and they may have been their own arrangers. Certainly today, though, the majority of bands have specific arrangers whose names are not published. This practice is very likely related to a tendency which will be discussed in the following paragraph – that the illusion of improvisation and spontaneity is upheld as a means of advertising the bands. If the arranger were known, the belief in the very factors of skill and improvisation would be jeopardized. It may also play a great role for many listeners to see immediately the man who has written the arrangement, who juggles the tunes, sings, and conducts and plays different instruments, apparently disposing of the division of labor which would otherwise be necessary. If listeners knew that these things are pre-arranged, the »personality value« of the leader's presence would probably be weakened. Thus the arrangers do their work, often very competent work, in the dark.

which are at the disposal of the large organizations, determine him much more than he is aware. Even the very belief in the »difference« is a means of advertising a standardized product.^c Today there is some doubt if musical instrumentalists who deliver mass products to the man in his home really care much about his taste as they make him believe in order to make him swallow their products more readily.

The problem of this experiment, then, was: What is the comparative importance of material and style of treatment and preferences for certain popular tunes?

The material used consisted of two popular songs which have lasted well, but which are not at present being featured. We chose »Avalon« and »The Russian Lullaby«. Each of these tunes has been recorded in swing style and sweet style. Thus four records were used: (for further information about them, cf. the feature analyses given in the interpretation of Experiment II, *The Tape Study*).

»Avalon« – sweet style – Lombardo

»Avalon« – swing style – Goodman

»Russian Lullaby« – sweet style – Garber

»Russian Lullaby« – swing style – Berigan

Twelve subjects were used. They were all from metropolitan areas, six males and six females, all between the ages of twenty and twenty-eight. Five of the twelve were of Jewish extraction, four were of German extraction and three were English. All had had highschool education, and some had had some college training. One subject, referred to in Table I as number ____,² is a young public school music teacher. One subject, referred to in Table I as no. 12, may be considered a »swing fan«.

The procedure: The paired comparison technique was used in rating preferences for the four records. The records were presented in pairs. After each pair of records the subject indicated which of the two he liked best. The records were presented in the following order:

I. »Avalon« – Sweet

»Avalon« – Swing

II. »Lullaby« – Sweet

»Lullaby« – Swing

III. »Avalon« – Sweet

»Lullaby« – Sweet

^c We have noted that sometimes mass products are advertised under the slogan, »It is different«.

- IV. »Avalon« – Swing
»Lullaby« – Swing
- V. »Avalon« – Sweet
»Lullaby« – Swing
- VI. »Avalon« – Swing
»Lullaby« – Sweet

The results and interpretation: Table I shows the choices made by each of the twelve subjects after each of the six combinations of records.

The table is read as follows: Subject no. 2 shows consistency pattern no. II. According to the »Key«, given below the table, consistency pattern no. II shows a consistent preference for »Lullaby«. We may now

TABLE I

Subjects	CONSISTENCY PATTERNS						RECORDS					
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l
1												
2	II											
3												
4	III											
5												
6	III											
7												
8	III											
9												
10	III											
11												
12	III											

- Keys:**
- I. Consistent Avalon pattern -- (a or b); (e or d); e; g; i; k
 - II. Consistent Lullaby pattern -- (a or b); (e or d); f; h; j; l
 - III. Consistent swing pattern -- b; d; (e or f); (g or h); j; k
 - IV. Consistent sweet pattern -- a; e; (e or f); (g or h); i; l

check to see if subject no. 2 actually did show this pattern of preference. In the first group of two records, he may check either the first or the second record because neither is »Lullaby«. In the second group, he may choose either because both are »Lullaby«. In the third group, he must check the second record. In the fourth group he must check the second. In the fifth group he must check the second. In the sixth group he must check the second. Since subject no. 2 has checked in this fashion, he is said to have expressed a consistent preference for »Lullaby«.

Preferences for Swing and Sweet

By totaling checkmarks, we find that the sweet records were checked in 24 cases, and the swing records were checked in 46 cases. However, in column 3, both records are sweet, and in column four both are swing, so to get a total on preferences we must subtract 12 from each of these totals. Thus the sweet records were preferred in twelve cases (26%) and the swing records were preferred in 34 cases (74%). This result fits the main result of the study, that is, the prevalence of treatment over material. By its very nature swing demands a greater role from treatment, and sweet demands a greater role from material. However, we must make specific reservations at just this point. As we have pointed out, our subjects were all young people; the antagonism between swing and sweet takes the form of an antagonism between generations. The younger generation is usually inclined to prefer swing. They associate sweet with sentimentality, old-fashioned prejudices and even hypocrisy; while swing appeals to them for its »freedom«, a certain excessiveness, and even sex on the one hand, and on the other for its more sportive requirements – keeping the time while improvising, the tendency of the music to »test« the listener, which particularly impresses young people in this country. If we assume that this is a general trend among younger people, the result of this experiment as far as sweet and swing are concerned must be considered somewhat tautological. It only shows that young people react according to the reaction to be expected from young people. To make the experiment more valid in this respect it must be enlarged to include people of different ages. Another factor which might be reflected in this result is that our subjects were chosen from the metropolitan area. People growing up in rural conditions, who are more restricted, are likely to react more favorably to sweet.

(It will be noted that subject no. 1 failed to mark two of the pairs. This accounts for the total of 70 checks instead of 72.)

Preferences for »Avalon« and »Lullaby«

Now, by totaling in terms of tunes instead of sweet or swing, we find that »Avalon« was preferred in 21 cases (46%) and »Lullaby« was preferred in 26 cases (54%). For these figures columns 1 and 2 were, of course, omitted since no preference for tune was expressed here. This difference (8%) is very small, and considering the small number of subjects in our sample, almost negligible. Therefore we refrain from any definite interpretation here. From a purely musical viewpoint this difference is hard to understand, and since it is so small, we consider its validity highly doubtful. As a melodic curve »Avalon« is certainly more

elaborate, richer and more distinctive than the »Lullaby«. Musically the latter is pretty poor and the only thing in its favor is its sentimental appeal. The experiment, however, has refuted the strength of this appeal since the majority of our subjects prefer anti-sentimental to sweet in general. The most plausible explanation here is that in our group, at least, the recognition value of the »Lullaby« was greater than of »Avalon«. Of course this cannot be viewed as a result of experiment, but only as a hint in the direction of future experiments on the problem of recognition value which we shall have to carry through later.

Consistency

Probably the most significant way of ascertaining which is dominant and which is recessive, in considering material and style, is to see which factor seems to dictate patterns of preference.

In order to do this, we must set up for key patterns. If the subject shows »Avalon« consistently, he would check either a or b, either c or d, and e, g, i, f, and k (see Table I). This pattern might be set up in more concrete form as follows:

»Avalon« – (a or b); (c or d); e; g; i; k.

The other three keys are set up in similar fashion:

»Lullaby« – (a or b); (c or d); f; h; j; l.

Swing – b; d; (e or f); (g or h); j; k.

Sweet – a; c; (e or f); (g or h); i; l.

Now, by studying the table in terms of these keys, we find that the »Avalon« pattern does not appear at any time. The »Lullaby« pattern appears once – subject no. 2. The swing pattern appears five times – subjects 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12. The sweet pattern does not appear.

Thus far, patterns of consistency have appeared in six out of the twelve cases.

In the case of subject no. 1, who did not indicate a preference in two cases, there appears to be a tendency toward the »Lullaby« pattern. Subject no. 1 had marked j as her preference in the fifth group but then erased the mark. If this may be counted as indicating a slight preference for j over i, we would have a »Lullaby« pattern in this case, since either a or b fit that pattern.

A coincidence is worthy of note. On the basis of very short acquaintance with the subjects, the experimenter assigned numbers to their test forms, giving the highest number to the subject who seemed to know the most about jazz music, and the lowest number to the one who seemed to know the least. The others, being ranged between. It would seem that when the papers were stacked in this way, evidence of consistency and taste would cluster around the high numbers.

Instead there appears a perfect distribution of consistency patterns throughout the sample. Subjects 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 do not show consistent patterns, and subjects 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 do show consistent patterns.

Limitations

Certain limitations of this study should be pointed out:

1.) As indicated under *The Subjects*, our sample was neither representative nor large enough to allow unreserved generalizations.

2.) The phonograph on which the records were played was not of excellent caliber. The faulty quality of the reproduction might have something to do with the preference for swing over sweet, since poor quality probably detracts more from sweet music than from swing, for a very simple reason. One of the major features of swing treatment is the rhythmical element, the interrelation between ground beats and cross rhythms. Now, the rhythmical element is not affected by the quality of the phonograph. In sweet, however, where no rhythmical issues exist, the actual stimuli – apart from the melody itself – consist almost entirely of the sound. The sound element is not isolated, either, but to a certain extent it also affects the harmonies upon which the swing versions are based. Now it is this very sound quality which is certainly distorted by poor phonographs. Thus the experiment has not been quite fair to sweet, and any repetition of the experiment will have to take the quality of the phonograph into consideration.

3.) At the beginning of the experiment, the complete record was played each time. However, it soon became evident that this process would be long and boring to the subjects. Consequently, two choruses from each record were played instead of the whole record. Two choruses seem to be the minimum, especially for a swing record, because one chorus is necessary to set the theme, and of course one jammed chorus is necessary to indicate the style of the soloist.

At this point we must be very critical of our own experiment. It is clear that the cutting down of the selections interferes with the experiment to a great extent, seriously endangering its validity. Some of the reasons may be stated. First of all, precise reactions take place only within the whole. To put it more cautiously, if they do not take place within the whole, we must start with the whole anyhow before being able to say anything about the role of the whole or the parts in determining the listener's reactions. For example, we can correctly judge how an individual is impressed by the straight chorus and the jammed chorus only if we consider them as they are really related. It is possible that the

listener to only the jammed chorus may dislike it because he lacks the melodic treatment. When he hears the straight chorus, however, and remembers the melody, he may enjoy the way it is modified, embellished, and even concealed. On the other hand, taken in itself, a tune may be meaningless, but may turn out to be quite pleasant for the listener when he sees the different purpose it can serve (for instance, in the »Tiger Rag« which we used in some other experiments). Thus the experiment would be much more valid if it were carried through with whole records instead of isolated parts. This tendency is reinforced secondly by the fact that the listener is more intent and listens with more concentration in the beginning than he does later on. (This experiment took almost two hours – a long time, particularly when we consider the limitations of the basic material consisting, as it did, of very simple and trite tunes.) This lowering of concentration is now furthered by the selection of parts. The reduction to parts, however, was necessitated because no subject would have listened to the complete recording again. But in listening only to parts, the listener does not take it as seriously as when listening to the whole. It is more like a rehearsal than a performance, and it was obvious that at the very moment we played only parts of the record, a relaxation took place among our sample. People started to talk, laugh, and the concentration which they showed at first dwindled. We had to choose between boredom (which would probably have created an aggressive mood among the subjects) and remaining patient, although on a lower level of concentration. We chose the second possibility but we must point out that as far as the objective results, and not just the subjective comfort of the subjects concerned, it was probably as disastrous as the first possibility would have been.

Now it is much easier to offer this criticism than to suggest any real improvement. For the value of the experiment consists mainly in the thoroughness of combinations helping us to check any possible reaction of the listener. If we consider it our task to keep the whole experiment on the same level, as long as it may take, then we must necessarily renounce the idea of playing the whole selection all the way through. As a substitute, we tentatively suggest that when the experiment is repeated, both tunes should be played in the simple sheet version on the piano. This would be sufficient to give the audience a rough orientation to the whole piece. But on the other hand, the difference between the piano and the record sound, and the difference between the treatment on the records and on the simple sheet version, would exclude any possibility of confusing the whole, heard in a piano version, with the record version. It is most unlikely that they will prefer what they hear on the piano to the stuff they get in the actual experiment. It is more difficult to select the parts from the records. It certainly would be no good to

offer them continually the beginning and the first jammed chorus which would tire them very soon; and it would also be bad to continually select the beginning and the end of each record where the disproportion between the thematic material and the treatment would be too obvious. We must consider here the fact that the repetition as a whole works against the material and in favor of the treatment. That is, people become bored much sooner with the melody that can very easily be recognized when it is played in its simplest sooner than when they are presented with jammed choruses which sometimes (as in the case of the Goodman »Avalon«) present them with rhythmical difficulties which take longer to overcome even for trained musicians. Thus, the mere fact of repetition acts in favor of treatment which, as far as the experiment goes, is very hard to overcome. The best procedure seems to be this: the material should be played to the subjects on the piano, and after they are familiar enough with it, a chorus should be selected. This chorus should maintain the material clearly enough, but not in too primitive a form; yet, on the other hand, some of the more extreme jammed choruses should not be used.

One thing, however, could be said in favor of such a procedure. The advantage of swing over sweet, which is shown by the tendency of the material to become more characteristic than the treatment, is not specific to this experiment but works the same in practice. It would not be astonishing to find that the real reason for the preference for swing over sweet is this very same element which is so hard to exclude from our experiment. If this is true, if the material itself necessarily proved boring and the treatment itself necessarily proved interesting, then it could not, and should not be excluded from the experiment. The only thing is to handle the question fairly and give sweet, especially the material, the best chance possible. This is the reason for choosing a modified jammed version of the experimental selection.

4.) The difference between the range of styles is much greater, probably, than the difference between the caliber of the two tunes. Thus the dominance of style shown in the results might be attributed to the nature of the experimental data. However, the experimenters feel that, taken in general, the range of styles in jazz is comparatively large, and the range of difference between tunes is comparatively small. Therefore, the materials used are considered by the experimenters to be fairly representative of the field of jazz music.

Conclusions

After all the reservations stipulated in our discussion, the result of the experiment itself may be stated as follows:

- 1.) Style is more important than material in determining preference.
- 2.) Five subjects out of twelve showed perfect consistency in choice of favorites in terms of style.
- 3.) One subject out of twelve showed perfect consistency in choice of favorites in terms of tune.
- 4.) Swing was chosen over sweet in 74% of the cases.
- 5.) Consistency in taste does not appear to have any correlation with ranking of subjects in terms of »expertness in listening« (ranking according to subjective criteria of experimenters).

D The Problem of Experimentation in Music Psychology

Note: The following remarks are the elaboration of a paper read at the Psychology Department of Princeton University on March 2, 1939. Fragmentary as they are, they hope to clarify some methodological issues arising out of two totally different approaches to experiments in music psychology. Being mainly critical and negative, they intend to pave the way for the development of new methods which are to be used in our future empirical work. Thus, they may be regarded as a modest contribution of the music section to the task which was set to the Project for the first two years of its existence, namely to try to establish and to discuss new methods of radio research. The main results of the present study are probably to be included in the first theoretical volume of the *Music Study*.

* * *

In talking to you about the psychological aspects of the *Music Study*, which is a part of the Princeton Radio Research Project, I have to choose between two possibilities. One is that I could just tell you something about the psychological experiences we had within the study, or outline for you some of our experiments apart from their function within the whole. Such an approach would not satisfy me for the reason that all the concrete items of the music study are involved to such a degree that practically none of them can be understood properly without their relation to the whole. The other possibility is a sort of general methodological survey. In such surveys the danger of emptiness and meaninglessness appears to me always a

very great one. Therefore, I made up my mind to try a third possibility. I want to discuss one particular method with reference to the concrete topics to which it is related. As such a method, I selected the experimental one. There are different reasons which recommend it for such a purpose. First of all, as far as I know, your own work is to a large extent an experimental one and it might interest you to see which issues one has to face when one applies experimentation to a comparatively new field like music psychology, taking the term in a sense which comprehends more than the purely acoustic sensory reactions. Secondly, the particular difficulties which the musical psychologist has to face when making use of experimental methods, appears to me to be of a certain significance. It is this very field of experimentation where I personally could observe in myself the clash between the European tradition in which I have been brought up, and the American approach, which I had to face for the first time during my present work. Speaking in experimental terms, you could use me as a sort of guinea pig just for the purpose of finding out how a European psychologist reacts to experimental methods within the field which he was taught to regard as exclusively one of *Geisteswissenschaften*.

To express briefly the experience I had: What impressed me greatly about the American approach is its *basic rationality*. Whereas in Europe matters of art are to a great extent left in vague emotionalism and unobliging talk, the approach in this country shows a tendency to bring questions of art to a discursive level where problems are no longer to be decided in terms of individual taste and mere contingency but in such a way that they are getting near to the decision about truth and falsity. It is my conviction that such rationality is today not only a matter of »science« concerned with art, but of art itself. That is to say, that by its very structure every art which deserves our serious attention, approaches the aim of rationality and tends more and more toward »knowledge«. Baudelaire said, about the middle of the nineteenth century, that no art is valid any longer which has not fundamentally in itself the element of science. And it is certainly not accidental that the great American poet, Edgar Allan Poe, was his particular favorite, a poet in whom rational thinking, not as an obstacle but as a moving force of artistic production, becomes quite clear for the first time in the history of literature. Today these tendencies have become so strong that it would be utterly futile to build up for the arts, in whatever sense it may be, a private reserve where they could go on undisturbed by thinking and conscious control. In a period when the experiment becomes the basic category of production in art, the experiment certainly must be highly appro-

priate as a means of finding out anything about the way art works are impressing men.

On the other hand, it appears to me necessary that the rational approach to art and particularly to experimentation should take into account the full depth of the sphere of art itself, not only in the strictly aesthetic sense but in the social one as well. The »clash« I experienced does not consist of any objection I had or felt against the will to solve problems of art in an objective way; I only felt that experimental methods, borrowed from the proper field of the sciences and applied to art without further differentiation, may not always lead to satisfactory results. The sphere of art is the realm of the concrete and differentiated: sciences aim at abstract laws as devoid as possible of any specific differences; they appear, according to the postulate of generality, as mere contingencies or disturbing factors. It could well be that whereas by these methods one apparently gets very exact and measurable results on the surface of music psychology, the deeper layers would remain untouched and left free for exactly that sort of vague emotionalism and subjectivism which it is our aim to overcome. One of the common trends of scientific experimentation is the simplification of problems and experimental conditions. In the case of a chemical experiment such a simplification can be made very easily. We know what is essential and what is inessential. A chemist who has to experiment with copper can quite easily neglect other materials which might also be adherent to the piece of copper with which he has to deal. In art, and particularly in music, the process of simplification does not work as satisfactorily. First of all, in art works it is by no means certain that the »simple« is the essential and the complicated the accident. In the case of the sonata, you may regard the sonata form, the underlying structure, as the fundamental or simple, and the particular motives or themes which the composer has elaborated as mere variables or accidents. However, a psychological analysis of a Beethoven sonata which would reduce it to the »simple«, namely to the standard form which can be found again and again in every sonata, and neglect the concrete being of this very work, would be utterly superficial and would actually give us no help in understanding a concrete work and its psychological implications. I know that this type of analysis still prevails throughout the world wherever so-called music appreciation is taught. (This, by the way, is quite independent of the specifically experimental approach which I have to discuss.) But I firmly believe that this approach tends more to darken the issue than to enlighten it. Furthermore, even if one would take for granted that the difference between the essential and the contingent or accidental holds

good in music too, any attempt to sever them forgetting experimental conditions meets the most serious obstacles. The musical experimenter will tell you that usually when finding out anything of the effect of music he has to take into account only the music itself and not the surroundings within which it is offered, not the mood of the person who listens to it, not the biographical conditions of his subjects, etc. But music, being from its very beginning not a mere system of sensory stimuli, but a social entity, may be something totally different when you listen to it in a concert hall or when you listen to it on the radio from listening to it in a sound-proof cell. And this not only in the sense that additional factors come into play when you listen in a concert room but in the sense that our total apperception, for instance, that of a symphony, may work differently in the concert hall than our appreciation in the cell. Not that I believe that an experimental approach to these questions is impossible, but I think that valid experimentation has to be adequate to the specific nature of music and to the potentialities of its effect, deriving from its nature instead of just imitating methods of science which, under these conditions, may lead to results the exactitude of which would be illusory.

I would suggest the following plan. First, I would like to discuss with you some of the basic categories of experimentation in music psychology – not experiments themselves – as they are set up in Seashore's book, *Psychology of Music*,¹ which as far as I know is generally accepted as a sort of textbook. After this critical discussion I shall outline for you some of the experiments which we have carried through within the Princeton Radio Research Project and I shall try to elaborate one particular point: namely the apparent inconsistency between the results of two experiments which lead to a criticism of our approach. After having elaborated that criticism in a more fundamental way, I hope to be able to give you at least some theses about the role of experimentation in music psychology.

First, it is necessary to enumerate some of what Seashore calls the basic principles in the psychology of music. Above all, there is measurability. He starts with the plain physical truth that sound waves are measurable and that there are only four variables of them which have musical significance, namely frequency, intensity, duration and form. He regards the recognition of this as a great advantage because »it brings order and simplicity out of chaos and despair«.² For these characteristics of the physical sound have their psychological equivalents as pitch, loudness, time and timbre. By merit of these equivalents, »we . . . obtain a basic classification of all music phenomena and give each its place in the family tree with its four large branches: the tonal, the dynamic, the temporal and the qualitative«.³ Seashore knows, of

course, what every psychologist since Weber and Fechner knows, namely that there is no entirely constant correspondence between the physical fact and the mental one. He calls the difference between them simply »illusion«. This appears to me to contain the basic error of supposing that musical understanding aims first at an adequate and passive perception of the outward stimuli so that every change that is made in the sensual perception of music by mental spontaneity ranges first of all among »deceptions« for which afterwards Seashore finds words of appraisal. Which would be hard to understand if our musical apperception actually were some error about facts which, by our approach to music, we would try to apperceive according to their »reality«. But that is not all. For after having drawn his classification of measurability from the physical stimuli and after having described the »mental factors«, that is to say, the deviations from the stimuli, as »illusion«, he still applies to them the same categories of measurability which, according to his own outlines, could be applied only where a strict equivalence between stimulus and sense datum would be taken for granted: »It is a triumph of science, however, that we can identify, measure, and explain each of these illusions.«⁴

He applies without hesitation his concept of the »first and regular« from the physical to the musical medium and introduces only afterwards the specifically musical activity in the form of the »deviations« by which music differentiates itself from the first and the regular. He does not even examine if such a »deviation« actually takes place or if the very *material* of music, properly understood as a psychological and not as a physical material still has anything to do with physical regularity, and if perhaps his whole concept of deviation is not an arbitrary super-construction built up only for the sake of making good afterwards some of the shortcomings of his concept of musical material as being something thoroughly measurable; something which can be reified in quantitative terms.

His concept of deviation does not prevent him from sticking to his concept of musical measurement. He carries this concept to consequences which are apt to frighten anyone who has any experience of what a work of art actually means. I shall give two examples: »Norms of artistic performance may be set up in terms of objective measurement and analysis of superior performance for the purpose of evaluating achievement and indicating goals of attainment.«⁵ And again: »Musical talent may be measured and analyzed in terms of a hierarchy of talents as related to the total personality, the musical medium, the extent of proposed training, and the object to be served in the musical pursuit.«⁶ It is hard to tell what results such tests may have had in the case of the late Beethoven, and what results

they will have in the case of an advanced non-conformist modern composer.

I selected these principles of Professor Seashore's quite arbitrarily, just as examples, an analysis of which may show you some of the danger spots of musical experimentation I mentioned before. At some of them, we have already hinted. Neither does Seashore give any criterion for the applicability of measurement to a psychological sphere which he himself characterizes as fundamentally different from the physical sphere from which he borrowed his categories of quantification. Nor does he account for his concept of illusion. This concept is evidently built upon a mere analogy with the optical field. He calls musical facts illusionary in a sense similar to that in which we call illusionary any optical perception which does not correspond to any outer fact or event. He completely neglects the possibility that our »musical world« – to use the term from Ernst Kurth's *Psychology of Music*,⁷ which is not even mentioned in Seashore's book – may not be as much an imitation or a passive reception of some world within the sphere of sound waves, as a spontaneous creation of our own. We will come back to this point later. For the moment, however, I would like to show that even the simplest and most fundamental of Seashore's assumptions are full of traps and difficulties of which he is by no means aware. He coordinates with his four »variables« of physical sound waves four psychological equivalents and stresses them as a comprehensive classification of the musical material, evidently for the reason that in the physical sphere such a classification comprehends every possible feature. Now it is easy to show that this classification does not work correspondingly in music. That is to say that the different classes cannot be regarded as independent of each other in any sense similar to that in physics. Let me give you an example. The second of Seashore's psychological correlate classes is called loudness, the third, time. In musical terminology we call these elements dynamics and rhythm. Now, it is absolutely impossible to sever these elements. You all know that people regard swing mainly as a rhythmical achievement. Still if you define rhythm strictly in terms of time, nothing rhythmical happens in swing: The time units remain unaltered from the beginning to the end of any piece of swing music. The whole rhythmical variety which is appreciated by swing fans consists only of *accents* by which new units of rhythm are brought out which are submerged in the total rhythmical scheme. Now these accents certainly do not mean any deviation from the order of time in this music and if any such deviation actually occurs, which is often the case in syncopation, it is always compensated for within very brief periods. In other words, what one regards as rhythmical achievements, as achievements within the order of time – and very rightly so because the appear-

ance of the time scheme is actually affected by it – is actually a function of dynamics, or in Seashore's language, of »loudness«. If the loudness did not vary, if every note were played exactly as loudly as the others, even the boldest piece of swing would sound rhythmically totally monotonous and uninteresting. This assertion could be settled very easily by experimentation. If, however, rhythm and the time element of music depend on dynamics as the element of loudness, a classification which strictly separates them from the very beginning is arbitrary and inadequate to musical facts. What holds good even on the primitive level of light popular music, of course, could be proved even more strikingly within the sphere of serious music. I shall not go into any detail here. Let me just tell you that in music like that of Wagner's, the formal structure of whole units or of smaller ones – which according to Seashore's classification would fall among the time categories – are articulated by the scheduling of sound colors which he arranges among »timbres«. A classification which fails to take into account such relations which actually make music what it is, fails its purpose before it has even started to work. You may notice that I do not speak about *Gestalten*, structures or totalities. I speak about facts which can be stated musically in clear and exact technical terms but which do not fall within the range of Seashore's psychology.

What I have shown you so far is only that Seashore's claim of exactitude, being as it is, just leads to inexactitudes which could be avoided only if one would not start with a straightforward classification borrowed from a sphere hardly as compatible with music as Seashore believes. But what I want to show you now goes beyond that. Not only are Seashore's basic concepts inexact and insufficient – *they miss their actual subject*.

This may be cleared up by a methodological consideration. The psychological science of music has for a long time been divided into two main groups: tone psychology and music psychology. This difference is particularly stressed and elaborated in the beginning of Ernst Kurth's book. He defines the actual borderline between them as the borderline between passivity and activity. He situates tone psychology on the passive side a great part of what is treated by Seashore as »psychological«. »Although the change from stimulus to sensation already consists of a complicated psychological activity, the tone as it is perceived is a transformation which is not arbitrarily built up but which is already given as some sensual structure or sensory image. It is the sensory reception, whereas musical activity starts only with it as with its datum upon which it works.«^a This defines the difference between

^a Kurth, *a.a.O.*, p. 2. [Adorno's translation.]

tone psychology and music psychology. The former »starts from the translation of the physical into the psychological phenomenon, is oriented essentially on physiologics and undertakes its attack from their musical laws; the latter starts from a totally different side; for the tone presents itself as a phenomenon which connects its mental events with the outer world, makes them sensual«. ^b Or, in Kurth's summary, for tone psychology the tone means breaking into the interior, for music psychology, it's a breaking out of the interior. This difference and the whole difference between tone and music psychology is neglected by Seashore altogether. His passion for measurement and experimentation leads him to treat the whole sphere of music psychology in physicalist, or at his best, in physiological terms. He does not see that the »constancies of direction« [*Richtungskonstanten*] are entirely different in both cases. He treats the psychology of music as if music were nothing but the sum total of sensory reactions to physical stimuli, more or less independent of any free activity of human will and imagination. The psychology of music remains within the layer of merely reflex reactions. What he omits is nothing but the total range of the *spontaneity* of the human mind within music. That is what makes his method so simple and so appealingly scientific. That is also what prevents him from any understanding of what is actually going on in music. Of course, the sensory sphere is the basis of every musical activity and we have no right to speak about any such musical activity which does not express itself within the sensory layer. But this layer is only the basis, the »material« upon which music works as a living force for subtler musical trends. And even as a basis, this layer cannot be understood properly as long as it is treated as something entirely determined by external stimuli and not within relation to the spontaneous human trends which may express themselves within the sensory sphere. By substituting tone psychology for music psychology, Seashore remains below the actual issues of music psychology which he sets forth to settle.

By omitting the spontaneous element within musical behavior, he excludes nothing less than the actual *sense* music makes. For him musical experience is defined by those four »sensory capacities«. ^c He overlooks that they are linked together and »categorized« not only in the way we mentioned above, namely by influencing each other, but by a fundamental functioning of what Seashore himself calls the »musical mind« without becoming aware of the full implications of that term. It is only this spontaneous »giving a meaning« which

^b *Ibid.*

^c Seashore, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

makes sensory reactions »musical«. It is interesting to see how Seashore – because out of his sensory elements themselves no such meaning can possibly be derived – must interpret the so-called sensory capacities in a way which already goes far beyond mere passive sensory reaction, by which he previously defined them. I shall give you an example. Seashore mentions the sense of consonance. Now the term »consonance« appears to be an unequivocal one. It can mean either the capacity for grasping the difference between concord and discord, or in a wider sense, the capacity of becoming aware of any simultaneity of tones. If we take the first meaning of the term, it is obvious that it has implications which cannot possibly be reduced to simply physical conditions or to mere sense datum. The relation between concord and discord is an entirely historical one. As a whole, it is characteristic of occidental music exclusively and even there it has changed to an amazing degree: What yesterday was discord has become concord today and in the most advanced compositions of our time, the antagonism between concord and discord appears to have been liquidated altogether. It is upon these historical conditions and not upon any sensory capacity which has been linked with physical conditions that the »sense of consonance« depends. This »historical« sense of consonance still rules present-day musical consciousness to such an extent that it is more than likely that Seashore has substituted it silently for what he regards as »natural capacity«, that is to say, one which corresponds invariably with the invariant characteristics of physical sound waves. But even if we assume that he takes a broader view of the issue and means by a sense of consonance the general capacity for becoming aware of musical simultaneity, it certainly would involve more than passive sensory reactions. Whatever this awareness may be, it is more than the mere faculty of recognizing the simultaneous tones of the sound and even more than linking them together in a unity, although even this apparently very primitive two-fold apperception of simultaneous sounds can hardly be stated in terms of mere reaction. But the actual »sense of consonance« in the broader sense is not only the awareness of a unity within the manifold, or an awareness of the manifold within the unity, but in musical terms it means the understanding of the *function* of the sound within the context. Metaphorically, one could well speak about the sense of harmonic »weight«, that is to say, when actually understanding the chord one has to understand if the step which leads from the preceding step to it and again the step which leads from it to the next chord is a strong or a weak one, if it leads upward or downward, and so on. Again, I do not want to associate myself with cheap talk about *Gestalten* which threatens today to become the Jack-of-all-trades in

psychology. The facts about which I am speaking can well be spotted within relatively isolated phenomena, provided only that this phenomena is understood in terms of the one »whole«, namely musical language. An actually musical ear when listening to one relatively isolated but rather complex chord^d must be able not only to grasp its tones and the somewhat vague unity which they make just because they appear simultaneously, but it must be able to appreciate the inner tension between the components of such a chord, the tendencies it has for developing itself and so forth, as well as the tendencies of its own tones either to become similar to each other or to become more distinguishable. In other words, we must be able to realize an element of *dynamics* within the sound which has nothing to do with the sense of loudness as which dynamics appear in Seashore's book. Only in terms of such dynamics does the »sense of consonance« actually function. This dynamic sense of a chord, however, cannot possibly be defined in terms of sensory reaction. It is the effect of action; it constitutes what we call the musical sense and at the same time it depends on the sense, for only if a musical context makes »sense« can its elements be apperceived as related to each other in the dynamic way which we tried to sketch. Whatever one may say against the exclusively *geisteswissenschaftliche* method of Ernst Kurth, it certainly has the great merit of developing this concept of psychological dynamics in music and it is certainly a pity and a bad sign for the present international organization of science that scholars in different countries know so little about each other's activities.

It is quite difficult to define more exactly what I mean by this musical »sense«, which is omitted by Seashore. I want to emphasize that, in the first place, it has nothing to do with any descriptive or expressive content of the music. It is something intrinsically musical which cannot be severed from music or musical experience and which certainly cannot be stated in terms of any abstract »meaning« behind music. It is nothing but what makes music a language. It is the criteria which allows us to say that a certain musical phrase is »understandable« in a way corresponding to our speaking about a sentence in language »being formally understandable« no matter what its actual intention may be. It is the equivalent of human activity and spontaneity in music. Simply speaking, the musical sense is exactly what in music is more than sensory perception. No acoustic event in itself is a priori meaningful or meaningless. A decision about its being meaningful or meaningless depends entirely upon whether it functions

^d Example given: The chord of which the last of Schönberg's *Piano Pieces*, op. 19, consists almost entirely.

as a bearer of such an activity and whether or not it is brought by it into a musically understandable unit. I am fully aware that the concept of a musically understandable unity is valid only in relation to the sensory reality of music, and remains mere speculation as long as the activity lacks the material upon which it can impress itself. But, however complex this interrelationship may be, musical sense can never be expressed in mere terms of passive perception but only with reference to the dynamic aim imposed upon it by man. It is necessary not to misunderstand this statement by attributing to it too primitive a meaning. Whenever one comes to a concrete musical issue, it would be difficult and almost impossible to sever completely the spontaneous element of meaning from the passive and purely sensory element. It will be more difficult because practically all elements of musical activity throughout history have a tendency to become reified, to tilt over into what appears to be a mere sensory quality (as in the example of the first meaning of the term sense of consonance) and to establish themselves as a sort of second nature. Impossible as it may be, however, to divide up any concrete musical fact or event into its subjective and spontaneous elements on the one side, and its passive and sensory ones on the other, and fluent as the limit between them may be, the deciding factor remains that such an event can be properly understood only as a *product* of spontaneity and perception and cannot be separated out to either side of the equation. It is not my aim to replace Seashore's positivistic psychology of music by an idealist one. What I want to make clear is only that in music psychology the scientific concept of »given facts« is as problematic as the romantic one of the »creative idea«.

Perhaps I can give you a clearer idea of what I baptized as the »musical sense« by discussing the next of Seashore's principles which I mentioned before. I mean the concept of »deviation«. Leaving aside for the moment the fact that his concept of the rigid and »normal tone« is a physical and not a musical concept, we may grant him, for the time being and to facilitate our discussion, that something like a »normal tone« exists also in the musical, psychological sphere. Now it is his assertion that every musical value consists of »deviations« from that normal tone. He holds that »the quantitative measurement of performance may be expressed in terms of adherence to the fixed and so-called ›true‹, or deviation from it in each of the four groups of musical attributes.«^e On the basis of this assumption, he hopes to develop what he calls a definable, constant and verifiable music terminology. What I want to show you now is that the relation between

^e Seashore, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

the normal and the deviation and therefore what Seashore himself regards as the basis for any psychological measurement in music cannot be understood without reference to musical »sense«. Let us take the example of an »ugly« tone of a very high cello note. Subjecting the right of deviation as he does particularly in his chapter about the vibrato to criteria such as »pleasing flexibility, tenderness and richness« of the tone, such an ugly cello sound certainly would have to be discarded according to the standards of sensory reactions, their measurements and the gradation between the rigid and the lawful deviation. It may very well be, however, and actually happens very often in serious modern music, that such an ugly tone and even uglier ones, like certain effects of the mute trombone, are required according to the musical »sense«. In such cases Seashore's method is doomed to failure. Even such trivial cases as most of the characteristic swing effects would fall within the same line. To condemn them for the simple reason that they are deviations which do not fulfill the criteria set up by Seashore, would be the same as if one would reject a picture because its colors are »ugly« or going even further the people painted on the picture are not good-looking enough. In the aesthetics of art, concepts like that have been discarded for a long time. In music, they still go on unchallenged. It is obvious that only the concept of musical »sense«, of the function which each sound has, instead of mere measurements according to its physical constituents, is the only bulwark against such fundamental misunderstandings by which musical psychology risks losing its hold on actual music and limiting itself to the achievements of some crack tenor or their relatives in the instrumental sphere.^f The objection that the cases we mentioned are mere exceptions, whereas the psychology of music is concerned with the rule, does not hold true. Besides the fact that it appears somewhat oblique to give the idea of the normal such weight within art, which has as its basis a certain abnegation of the normal, it must be stated that in the most recent musical development, the very same traits which appear to be »exceptional« have become the rule. There are whole schools of composition today – and just the ones which I would regard as the most important ones for reasons which I could fully explain to you – which limit themselves almost entirely to sounds which are necessarily excluded by Seashore's scheme. It is hardly imaginable how any of Webern's compositions can be understood, »appreciated«, or even measured according to his method. And I suspect that the reason for

^f In regard to this problem refer to the discussion of Deems Taylor's theory of gustatory listening in the second part of the physiognomics study. [In this volume, *Radio Physiognomics*, pp. 125ff.]

such an impossibility is even a deeper one than we have indicated so far: namely, that his starting point – the relation of normal and deviation – is totally bound to tone psychology and fails to deal with the issues of music psychology. If we begin with the concept of musical »sense« as the primary and ultimate force behind music, there is a strong possibility that what is called »norm« according to Seashore's »physicalistic« way of thinking, becomes obvious as a deviation from the viewpoint of musical »sense« and what he calls deviation becomes its first and adequate realization.⁸ The whole system of coordinates should probably be altered as soon as one introduces seriously the concept of musical »sense«. However, as this »sense« is not an invariant like Seashore's norms, but changes with every musical work, the whole issue of measurement becomes very doubtful as soon as one has reached this point.

That Seashore's system of coordinates actually fails to cope with the problems he sets himself, I shall demonstrate with one more example: namely, by the concept of musical intelligence, which is where Seashore's shortcomings become most obvious. For a musical intelligence is actually a psychological function which can be stated only in terms of the musical sense. We may roughly define it as the capacity to apperceive musical sense when listening, to realize it when playing, to build up a musical scheme which makes musical sense spontaneously, etc. This type of intelligence, although it may be correlated within the personality with other intellectual functions, is by no means to be identified with the total intellectual level. Unlikely as it is, it still may be thought that a composer, who although being dull or at least naive outside of the musical sphere, is highly intelligent as a musician, that is to say, full of devices for realizing musical ideas and within the strict sphere of his material, fully aware of its problems and implications. If I had the opportunity to analyze with you one of Beethoven's mature pieces, I could easily show you in the way each piece is constructed, in the economy by which the smallest motive is fully used, in his faculty of abbreviation to the essential, and other features, the tremendous

⁸ A careful observer of advanced modern music will have noticed that within a very complicated scheme that consists only of chords, which, according to traditional harmony, were called discords, an isolated triad appearing in the middle of the scheme sounds »wrong«. The same applies to sound colors. The Wagnerian sound of, let us say, four French horns functioning as »peddles« within a very polyphonic orchestra where each instrument is treated independently of the others in a more or less soloist way, certainly would sound »wrong« too, however normal it would be according to Seashore's definition. This shows clearly that the difference between rule and exception makes sense only according to the musical »sense« of a particular piece.

amount of purely musical intelligence invested in such a piece – not in the form of abstract reflection, but in the way the problems offered by the material are realized and solved by the composer. As for Seashore, however, the musical capacities consist almost entirely of passive and merely perceptual abilities; he is unable to build up a concept of strictly musical intelligence. To him musical intelligence is largely something outside of music: the intelligence of musicians. Musical intelligence to him is only a sort of specification of general intelligence. »Intelligence is musical when its background is a storehouse of musical knowledge, a dynamo of musical interests, an outlet in musical tastes, and a warmth of musical experiences and responses. Here, as in the case of imagination, the type and the degree of intelligence may characterize or set limits for the musical achievement.«^h This comes close to the assertion that lack of general intelligence necessarily may mean a limit for the musical one which at least cannot be asserted a priori. Still Seashore's definition is vague enough to leave one in doubt as to whether he aims at the specifically musical intelligence or at the intelligence of musicians. Later however, it becomes quite clear that effectively he has only the latter in mind. When speaking about thinking in music he is concerned only with the trivial question, »Are musicians as a class intelligent?«ⁱ – a question which very often has been answered in the negative, among others by Hegel, for no other reason than that the same substitution which is made by Seashore has been made again and again, although experiences like that about mathematical intelligence, which by no means coincides with the general intelligence of mathematicians, ought to have made psychologists more careful about the issue. It is this substitution which impels Seashore to make statements as doubtful and sweeping as the one that »musicians, as a class, are of the emotional type. Their job is to play upon feeling, to appreciate, to interpret and to create the beautiful in the tonal realm. To be successful, the musician must carry his audience on a wave of emotion often bordering on the point of ecstasy.«^j It is certainly right that success in present-day music life requires a certain type of emotionalism. This emotionalism, however, as well as the background of the highly commercialized musical success of today, would itself deserve the closest analysis and cannot be granted as being essential to music itself. To identify the psychological implications of Beethoven's music with that of the Tchaikowsky type, or regard Paderewski as an example of »genius« because he lived »a life developed in balanced

^h Seashore, op. cit, p. 8.

ⁱ *Ibid.* p. 173.

^j *Ibid.* p. 174.

proportions«^k appears to us to indicate a psychological superficiality in dealing with the intelligence problem which cannot possibly be covered by the cloak of being »scientific«. Musical intelligence, in the sense of the inherent intelligence of musical activity, does not appear in Seashore's book and it may be added that none of his famous tests could ever enable us to get any true idea about its presence or absence. Hence, in a higher sense these tests could not be regarded as valid. If their outcome is positive, it still does not prove anything about the person being musical in the sense of a capacity for grasping musical sense. It only excludes, so to speak, musical color blindness; but the fact that someone is not color blind does not yet qualify in the least as visual gifts. On the other hand, if the outcome of the test is negative, even this does not exclude a priori real musicianship. If we omit the case of the deaf Beethoven, against which the objection might be raised that he originally had all the capacities required by Seashore's test and still kept them by a vivid imagery after he had lost them physically, it still can be said that there are great musicians whose capacity of hearing in the narrower sense which can be tested, are very limited. I know cases of composers for whom I have the highest esteem, who are not able to imagine exactly the music they had in their mind. They had to test at each chord on the piano because they apperceive them only within a certain vagueness and only by their critical faculty – the very same inherent musical intelligence which Seashore omits – were they able to produce in a concrete and satisfactory form the music they had in their mind. It has even happened that these composers were not able to sing the notes of their own music properly. According to the Seashore tests, possibly some of the most important composers of our age would have been excluded from musical education. I mentioned this to show you that the whole issue of musical intelligence is not a purely academic one and that the attempt to »rationalize« judgment about music and musicianship too easily may lead to the most dangerous consequences. Of course, Seashore cannot escape altogether the issue of inherent musical intelligence, but he limits it to what he calls the sphere of »imagery«, that is to say, to the capacity of imagining music which one actually does not hear. Although this imagery may be connected with musical intelligence, it is much too small a field and much too special a gift – something similar to the eidetic [*Eidetik*] discovered by Jaensch⁸ – for being regarded as its most significant feature. Some composers, among them Haydn, who composed everything on the piano, totally lacked this capacity. And it may be said that all the composers in whom musical intelligence, the power of the conception

^k *Ibid.* p. 175.

of the whole prevailed over the conception of particular sounds and colors, may often lack this capacity. In other words, the only psychological category by which Seashore apparently transcends the realm of his passive sensory capacities in a great many cases is likely only to reflect them. Again here an historical element comes into play which is totally overlooked by Seashore's »physicalism«. Imagery largely depends upon the difference between the known and the unknown. It is probably very easy for anyone that ever comes in touch with music to imagine simple harmonic events, such as the triad and melodic lines upon which it is based. It is incomparably more difficult to imagine exactly new and more complicated harmonic and melodic structures which may contain six or even twelve different tones at the same time. Therefore, the paradox may be that just the boldest composers, the ones who are the most imaginative in a deeper sense, apparently show a lack of the imagery Seashore has in mind and are forced to control their compositions, whereas some waltz composer, who only uses current and deteriorated means which are stamped upon his consciousness as upon everyone else's, is able to do his job in what Seashore would call musical imagery. I do not see in Seashore's concept of musical imagery any criterion which would exclude such absurdities. Hence, it has to be discounted as a substitute for musical intelligence.

I hope to have shown you in my critical survey that neither Seashore's concept of measurability, nor his total approach from the sensory equivalents to the physical sounds holds good. I tried to show you that his concept of deviation is arbitrary from the viewpoint of the musical sense, that his concept of musical talent is jeopardized because of his lack of understanding for inherent musical intelligence, that the musical norms he hopes to establish by measurement are more than problematic because they do not take into consideration the dependence of every musical event upon its sense but start from abstract concepts arbitrarily borrowed from the physical field. However, it is not these objections which necessitate the music study of our radio project to take a line totally different from his approach. Our project is not mainly concerned with the »musical mind«, the theme of Seashore's book. We have to deal with the bulk of radio listeners no matter how far their musical mind is developed, and therefore, the question whether Seashore's draft of the musical mind is an adequate one, plays no particular role for our actual research work. Still, the difference of approach also has some bearing upon the characteristics of the Seashore method which we venture to criticize. For Seashore's concept of the musical mind, being something which could be measured like any natural object under strictly limited laboratory conditions, pre-

vents him from dealing with musical listening as something fundamentally social with which one can deal only in social terms; the question of the dependence of the individual listener and of every piece of music upon basic social structures does not once appear in Seashore's book. For him, the musical listener as an individual is just a guinea pig, his reflexes have as little to do with the society in which he lives as the reflexes of a real isolated guinea pig. I have the strong suspicion that this sort of isolation, even in the case of the »musical mind« at which Seashore aims, makes it impossible, from the very beginning, to obtain any insight which could help to its true understanding. We, however, who regard it as one of our main tasks to analyze the psychological effect of radio as a model for the psychological effect of present-day social conditions – of the »ownership culture« – upon the masses, certainly have to develop experimental methods which do justice to these conditions. As far as I know, this has not been done before in the field of music psychology and we know that every step we make involves us in all the dangers of the jungle. Our actual concerns are the very same factors of musical reception which Seashore drops for the sake of scientific »simplification« and we realize only too well that the more we try to include them in our attempt, the more the likelihood increases that our results lose the quasi-natural generality which recommends Seashore's methods to so many researchers. If we can find any comfort in our psychological adventures, it is only because we believe that even in his proper field of approach, a psychologist like Seashore is not as well protected as he professes to be.

We are not concerned with talent, special gift or previous training in our experimental studies: We want to find out how large sectors of today's listeners, just as they are, react to the music offered to them by radio. We want to settle problems of the type: What is the concrete meaning of the musical emotions which people today profess to have?; what about their likes and dislikes about which there is so much talk and which offers such complicated problems? And finally, we are interested in types of actual listeners instead of mere listening potentialities which could be spotted in each individual.

Actual radio broadcast itself does not always offer very practicable experimental conditions. An experimental settlement of the question if and how radio listening is different from listening to live music and if listening by radio impresses people differently from listening to live music has not yet been achieved and it is one of our future tasks to develop methods in this field. The experiments which I would like to discuss with you today in order to show you some of our more specific problems, are of a somewhat different type. They are concerned with that light popular music which makes up the bulk of musical radio

programs, but which uses as a means of experimentation not radio itself, but the phonograph. This has the advantage that the musical selections, performance time, the amount of repetition and general conditions of experimentation are entirely in the hands of the experimenter, whereas in the case of actual radio performance, he is largely at the mercy of the programs offered. Still we hope that the material we selected, and which is to the best of our knowledge in accordance with the general material offered by commercial programs, allows us to draw certain conclusions which might be applied to the effect of radio. I may add here my conviction that, for various reasons, the difference between live and radio music plays a much smaller role within the field of light popular music than it does in the field of serious music. First of all, the psychological state of distraction in which people listen to light popular music might come quite near to the conditions under which they often listen to radio. Secondly, for technological reasons, the transmission of music of the swing type is often more satisfactory than that of symphonic music. I do not want to go into technical details here, however, you may check my assertion quite easily in your everyday experiences. You will find it is much easier to distinguish the radio sound of a symphonic performance from live sound than to distinguish a jazz band from a live band on radio. In spite of all this, however, it might be added that the experiments we have carried through so far are of a totally preliminary character. This is necessitated not only by the reasons I gave you, but also by the small number of subjects with whom we could carry through these experiments so far. Therefore, the results are to be taken as merely tentative. The aim of our critical discussion of the experiments is not so much to prove or disprove the validity of the results, as it is to make you aware of the implications of the *method*, particularly with reference to the theory which lies behind it. The experiments are concerned with likes and dislikes. The point to which I hope to lead you is that these categories which play so vast a role in the field of empirical research are in their way as problematical as the »physicalistic« notions of Seashore. So I hope at least to defend ourselves against the suspicion of any bias with regard to methods. We are just at the threshold of musical experimentation as evidence is born not only by Seashore's failure but also by certain inconsistencies within our own approach which I hope will find your attention.

(Here follows a short account of the *Tape Study* and of the experiment *Style vs. Material*,⁹ carried out by the Project, particularly of the methods used in both cases like feature-analysis and comparison of predictions and results and of the conclusions.)

If you compare the results of these two studies closely, you will notice that in a certain sense they contradict each other. Remember

that the difference between style and material coincides to a great extent with the difference between swing and sweet. That is to say, the so-called sweet light popular music is one in which the »material« prevails insofar as the basic melodies are offered in a comparatively unaltered and undistorted way, whereas in swing, jamming makes the material sometimes unrecognizable and in every instance foregrounds the treatment over the basic melodies. Starting from this characteristic, we notice the following inconsistency. The »atomistic listening« which we tested in the *Tape Study* shows a clear preference for the melodic element. When comparing our predictions with the actual results, particularly with the cluster spots, it became clear that we had over-rated the importance of particular effects of a rhythmical or coloristic kind and of the role played by timbres as a whole. People reacted most favorably to what one could call melodic high-spots, that is to say, either to characteristic details of the melody or to places where the basic melody becomes fairly obvious or finally to parts where the formal structure lays a special emphasis upon the purely melodic element, particularly in the recurrence of the main tune after the bridge. However, if we take the experiment about *Style vs. Material*, where the emphasis is laid upon the behavior of people to the general outlook of light popular music more than to their specific reactions, we find that a distinct majority of them prefer swing – that is to say, they prefer the type of music where the melodic element in itself remains more or less in the background, compared to »sweet«.

I would like to use this inconsistency as a model for the different problems involved in our own experimental approach.

Of course, one could offer the common sense explanation to this inconsistency. One could say that the reaction to a whole is necessarily vaguer than that to the detail. When people listen to a whole and make their judgment about it, they may be impressed by its sophistication and may appreciate it. When they have to go into detail, however, they may feel compelled to a close understanding of what is going on, particularly rhythmically. They often may fail in such an understanding, that is to say, they may not be able to grasp the full implications of complicated rhythmical formulas. They may be unable to recognize them or to relate them to the ground beats. Therefore, just for the sake of what they regard as intellectual honesty, they may decline to take a positive attitude toward it and stick to the simpler things to which they are used, not from their casual acquaintance with syncopated music, but from their total musical background as it has developed from their early childhood. The appreciation of swing details requires a sort of specialized training which, even in the

jitterbug era, only a comparatively few people can afford. Now I have to confess to you that this explanation, plain as it sounds, does not satisfy me at all. It does not stand a closer analysis. It is based upon the difference between the whole and the parts. This difference, as I hope to have made clear in some theoretical interpretations of the experiments to which I make reference here, is not watertight in the case of light popular music. The whole itself is standardized to such an extent that no one ever pays great attention to it. The musical forms being the same in practically every piece of modern dance music, one takes the formal schemes for granted and pays attention almost exclusively to details. Although the whole may still make itself felt in the different weight attributed to the parts according to their place within the schedule, we have no foundation whatever for the assumption that in light popular music there exists an awareness of wholes or totalities and of a general outlook which corresponds to them – as something basically different from the attitude toward the parts for the simple reason that the listening to this type of music is atomistic itself. This view is strengthened by the consideration that generally people listen to this sort of music in a distracted and non-concentrating mood which makes their appreciation of a whole or of a total style very doubtful from the beginning. Further, there is a more specific consideration which lessens the value of the common sense explanation. The thesis of the recognition value of the simple melodic element works satisfactorily in cases where recognition is actually a problem, that is to say, in cases where it is so difficult to grasp details that the non-specialist listener is happy when he finally succeeds in identifying something. In other words, the common sense explanation would work when the non-specialist is confronted with swing. It turns out, however, that the same also takes place in sweet where no difficulty of recognition actually exists and where one would expect people, just for the sake of having some change and some fun, to react positively to special sound colors which help to modify the fundamental triviality of the whole device which they cannot forget for one moment, in this style of music.¹ It turns out, however, that in spite of this consideration, people's reactions to sweet do not differ in this respect considerably from those to swing music, that is to say, they prefer the melodic element in its utmost simplicity even in music where it is obvious to such a degree that one should expect them to be happy to

¹ Considerations of this type are evidently behind the endeavors of »sweet« musicians such as Guy Lombardo and André Kostelanetz who, while never actually touching the melodic outline by jamming or any other deviation, try to make it as palatable as possible by the use of sound colors which they probably regard as alluring, such as the vibraphone and others.

get away from it and to enjoy some deviation which in this case would certainly never endanger the main road. Instead, even here they follow the line of least resistance and enjoy the re-entrance of the main tune although they must have foreseen it as inevitable from the very beginning of the bridge and certainly cannot have enjoyed it in the form of a »That's it!« experience. For these reasons, the common sense explanation as sketched before has to be skipped.

There is another one which, being less trivial, sounds a bit more promising. It is based upon the assumption that different psychological layers of musical reaction exist. Swing and all its varieties are hammered into people's minds by all sorts of propaganda and plugging. They are told every day that it is vital, sexy, humorous and last but not least, a sort of sport where you can test your own ability. Therefore, they follow the crowd and try to adapt themselves to the standards impressed upon them and also perhaps get a certain kick out of it. But this takes place only on a comparatively superficial layer, whereas their deeper reactions are different from attitudes of mere social adaptation. There is first of all, the musical background, the musical material which derives from their childhood experiences, from nursery rhymes and so on, which is of a totally different nature and which is established so much more firmly within them that their swing attitude is only a veneer in which they cannot quite believe because their actual musical »language«, the sort of music which they take for granted from their earliest and unconscious experiences, is of a totally different type. Secondly, there is a definite lag between their own musical training and the special requirements of swing sport, a lag which only the jazz expert is able totally to close but which to the average listener remains in full power and even may act in a threatening way. While professing to be fond of swing, they must feel uncomfortable at every moment for a lack of knowledge which makes them believe that in a certain sense they actually cannot understand things which they hear one hundred times a day and with which they ought to be, according to accepted social standards, utterly familiar. This discomfort about their unfamiliarity with the familiar may greatly add to an antagonistic attitude against jazz within the deeper layers of their consciousness. And this is not all, for, thirdly, swing is to them not a matter which is a bit hard to grasp but which after all promises some safe compensation if one takes the trouble of making oneself acquainted with it. There is something antagonizing about swing itself. The whole outlook of swing, what one could call the psychological atmosphere of swing – an atmosphere which is certainly a social atmosphere but which can be approached to a great extent in technical musical terms – has certain inherent qualities of transgressing some deep-rooted, more

or less unconscious, taboos. The disapproval of the parents, who make deprecatory remarks about their girl being a jitterbug, may be accepted by the daughter with ill-feeling. But this does not mean that the daughter does not identify herself at a deeper layer with the reproaches of her parents and feel somewhat guilty about the offenses jazz appears to commit. Even if the girl enjoys unconsciously the idea of making herself the prey of a strong colored fellow, she certainly also wants unconsciously to punish herself for the crime of her imagination and it is this desire for self-punishment which easily may turn itself against the material which she regards as responsible for the unlawful pleasure which she wants to give and to deny to herself at the same time, namely, that of swing music. And even this may not be a complete answer to the question raised. For an analysis of the structure of swing itself makes it likely that people do not quite trust the pleasures offered to them by the apparently immodest swing music. They may find in it at the same time features which, while professedly freeing them, actually make fools of them and tend to bring them into the role of clowns. And they may feel that the unalterable law of the ground beat is more likely to subjugate them than even the boldest syncopation possibly allows them to step over the boundaries. People who complain about the ugliness or noisiness of jazz do not only give voice to a sort of moralistic indignation about the forbidden pleasures which they are unwilling to grant themselves, they express at the same time a deeper suspicion that these pleasures, in the form in which they are offered by swing are actually no pleasures at all and that the industrialized pleasure cheats them even when they believe in following its appeal against frustration, inhibition and self-control. All this creates an ambivalence of feeling which tends to alter their total attitude toward jazz as soon as their superficial desire of being up-to-date no longer exercises its control upon them, namely, when they react in a more loose and less »official« way. It is, if you like to put it this way, a paradoxical psychological situation: They are official sinners but privately repentants. At the present stage of our society even the relation between sin and repentance may have undergone a fundamental change and may be the opposite of what it used to be formerly.

I did not present these considerations for the sake of discounting them again. I think that they are, if not the truth itself about the general psychological attitude to light popular music, at least elements of such a truth, although their full meaning can probably be made plain not exclusively in such psychological terms as we used them before, but only on the basis of a broader sociological understanding. But, however this may be, the argument as it stands and as it may explain the inconsistency between the experiments, necessarily takes

a critical turn against our experiments themselves. Besides the fact that the argument does not answer the question why after all swing is so popular if the counter-tendencies against it are so strong and why it is plugged if, at a deeper layer of their feelings, people actually do not like it – a question which we must briefly cope with later – it is evident that the development of our theoretical explanation by means of a critical analysis of the results of the experiments constitutes a gap between experiment and theory which comes close to devaluation of the experiment itself. To put it more exactly: *The theses which we reached here cannot possibly be corroborated or discounted by the very experiments which they are supposed to interpret.* Our experimental setting where people state their preferences on sheets of paper or by pressing a button offers no opportunity to make any statement about different »layers« of their conscious or unconscious life. The introduction of these terms is a hypothesis which transcends the limits of the experiments which we have done and gets their justification from a totally different field of psychological approach, namely, from psychoanalysis. Not only do they go beyond the limits of the present method but one may even raise some doubts about whether they can be settled at all by experimentation. Another example is this: While discussing the attitude toward swing, we introduce the notion of ambivalence, or ambiguous feeling. In such a reified measurement as the lines of a polygraph sheet report, no such ambivalence can be spotted. Still just this assumption is more than purely hypothetical. As the record of the experiment shows, it happened several times that our subjects asked us how to act after having heard musical passages which they might at the same time like and dislike, which certainly is a strong hint in the direction in which our interpretation aims. However, as these remarks were of a more or less accidental character and did not take place within the strictly defined conditions of the experiment itself, any follower of rigid experimental methods might easily skip them. It is obvious that for settling such subtle questions as that of different psychological »layers« of musical apperception or of ambivalence in the behavior toward music, one will have to invent totally new experimental methods about which we cannot yet say how far they will succeed.

But this is not all. Not only does the distance between experiment and result increase at an almost frightening speed, even the *categories* from which the experiments started and by which the experimental questions were defined are affected by our critical discussion. Remember that we intended to make clear likes and dislikes in light popular music, first in the primitive way that we took it for granted that such likes and dislikes happen and that we just have to find out *what* our

subjects like and what they dislike. We actually get some material which apparently gives clear indications of preferences. Now these indications did not seem to fit and we had to think of a possible explanation for their divergency. We had to take refuge in such concepts as the influence of propaganda, of the will to be up-to-date, of conflicting drives within the individual, and so forth. It is only one step further to raise the question: If all this is true and if the apparently plain and simple reactions of the experimental subjects hide such tremendous tensions, have we still any right to talk about their likes and their dislikes? Are these not very superficial and arbitrary categories by which people may rationalize their behavior but which do not actually explain anything of their behavior? Do they really »like« swing if, in fact, they prefer the pre-swing melodic element? Is not the whole alternative of like and dislike something superimposed artificially by the setting of the experiment which misses the actual structure of people's reactions? To find out what sort of popular music people profess to like and to dislike may be of some interest to an advertiser who needs some information for his immediate practical purposes because the sphere within which his decisions have to take place coincides to a great extent with »outward« behavior and self-styled opinion of people whom he regards mainly from the viewpoint of an administrator. However, we scientists have to be more cautious. We do not want to know the reactions people tell us in order to accommodate our behavior to their expressed opinion. We want to know what is going on behind the screen and we do not fear even the blame of arrogance in attempting to sometimes understand our subjects better than they do themselves. The distance between the theory and its practical use is to us incomparably greater and we may even have a feeling that just the deciding knowledge may be of such a nature that prevents its immediate usefulness.

At this point, I am afraid you will blame me for being incurably European. But I have the feeling that the issue raised here holds good for the American realm of problems as well as for the European one. Perhaps you will allow me to give at least a hint in the direction in which I see the specific nature of the question here involved. The like-dislike scheme, which plays such a vast role in research, is likely to have developed out of market research. It is the competitor's desire to find out something about the type of commodities his customers like and to mold his production or his purchases according to their wishes in order to gain by means of such information an advantage over his competitors. Now the principle of free competition, although formally still upheld, largely has been jeopardized in reality. A monopolization of production took place which largely made competition illusionary.

And it is often just the vanquished competitor who clings desperately to scientific methods developed out of free competition as a last safeguard against his own liquidation which already has been decided upon. No one could seriously dispute that trends of the monopolistic type make themselves felt in light popular music and particularly in radio, no matter if, from the viewpoint of the law, there exists monopolies or not. The standardization of the products here involved cannot possibly escape the eyes of any unbiased observer. You just have to switch on your radio and turn your dial to find out that within large limits and with certain very definite exceptions you get »the same practically everywhere«. Wouldn't it be sensible to assume that the monopolization and standardization which we can witness everywhere bears its heavy marks upon the ears and the minds of listeners? If no choice is left to them, do they still actually choose? Do they still actually like or dislike? Is it not much more likely that unconsciously they substitute for their likes the thing which is most emphatically offered to them and which they have to accept anyhow? Is their preference for swing still the preference of the old-time customer or is it more like the preference of a prisoner for the walls of his prison because nothing else is left to him which he could like? I know that such an idea in its generality fails to explain the differentiations, that is to say, the actual statements of like and dislike with which we are faced and it certainly will have to be completed by much more subtle considerations, perhaps of the type of those which I used when I tried to sketch the complicated attitude toward swing. However, this does not matter too much here. I only intended to show you that the like-dislike alternative, skepticism towards which you might regard as the remainder of stubborn European individualism, is particularly doubtful in a country where the process of monopolization has gone as far as it has in this country. I wanted to bring to your attention the question, whether tests about like and dislike are still adequate to our present situation or if at this point the scientific method clings stubbornly to a structure of society and of men as social beings which no longer holds good. In this sense I believe that the analysis of the inconsistency of our sample experiments turn against the framework of categories from which we started. The postulate which we reach at this point is clear enough. We would have to elaborate experimental methods by which we could settle the implications of the very same categories against which our criticism has turned. We would have to make experiments to find out if people still actually like or dislike, what they mean by using the terms and what is going on behind their decision. To put such a question is almost identical with becoming aware of its tremendous difficulties. If we blamed Seashore for the superficiality of his

categories and of his results, we have at least to blame ourselves for similar shortcomings while acknowledging that every step which approaches the actual facts behind the veneer of button-pressing leads to speculations which you will find hard to reconcile with the experimental method as a whole. But even leaving apart for the moment the question, how the psychological implications of terms such as like and dislike empirically could be verified, I would like to show you that even much more elementary questions, which would mark only the first steps of an experimental approach to the kernel of the problem, meet tremendous obstacles. The basic difficulties about which I spoke are apt to express themselves as concrete difficulties of the technique of experimentation. When discussing our opinion that the attitude toward swing largely depends upon the mechanism of plugging and advertising, we finally came to the hypothesis that a deciding factor here is that no choice is left and that people accept what is given to them in an authoritative manner. Translating this assertion into the more concrete language of behavior, one could say that in present-day attitudes of the masses, the recognition value of a piece of music largely substitutes its actual acknowledgment for the pleasure one actually gets out of it. On the occasion of the interpretation of our experiments, I already hinted at this element by introducing the concept of a »That's it!« experience. There the term was limited to the recognition of the main melodic elements of a hit when they recur. But, of course, the »That's it!« factor reaches far beyond that. You just have to witness the tremor which goes through a nightclub crowd when the band plays something which everyone knows after some lesser-known tune to realize what I mean. It is my opinion that the »That's it!« effect, the recognition value, is one of the most determining factors in the musical behavior of today's masses. Now, a practical-minded experimenter could say, »I can catch you here. We will make a test case of it. It is easy to think of an experiment by which the point you raise can be settled. Let us form a panel to be confronted repeatedly with light popular music for a longer period. Some hits possibly of poorer quality are repeated to them again and again. Some other ones and perhaps those which experts regard as good are played only at the final session. If your theory holds good, the bad plugged ones will find more favor in the final session than the good novelties. To avoid any chance of bias, all of the tunes have to be totally new ones which the subjects did not know before. To refine the experiment, one may even think of different groups with different combinations of the material in order to find out something about the interrelationship of these reactions with different conditions under which the material is brought to the attention of the subjects.« This all sounds good enough. Still I feel very

uncomfortable about it even though there is a fair chance that people actually would prefer the plugged stuff so that I probably must not be afraid that my vanity would be hurt by a refutation of my theory. But what I actually fear is that an experiment of such a type, however well it may come out, would neither refute nor corroborate the theory. Remember the little measure of caution which our practical experimenter introduced, namely, to exclude songs which are already known and which already may be »hits«. In his caution, he is certainly justified. If among a group of unknown songs you would play »My Reverie« the unknown material would not have a fair chance. But this slight precautionary measure at the same time alters the whole outlook. The term »recognition value«, if it is actually used as a social category which could explain the disappearance of actual likes or preferences, is something more than mere repetition. It implies the whole status of official acceptance. What people profess to like is not only something which they heard often, but something which has been presented to them in such an authoritative manner that by identifying it they may be able in a vague way to identify themselves with a big power behind the success. Without this element of what one might call »social corroboration«, the mere repetition may not create the effect we have in our mind and it may even turn out the opposite way: It is possible that people tolerate the ceaseless repetition of the same tune only if it is certified by some radio announcer that »This is the beautiful »Penny Serenade««, whereas without this official certificate the very same type of repetition may revolt them. This, however, means for the experimentation we have in mind that one would have to include for the sake of adequacy to reality the very same elements which one had to exclude for the sake of pure experimental conditions. It appears to me very hard to escape this alternative. When we appeal to our concrete life experience, the exact experimenter will object that conditions of such an experience are much too vague, that entirely too much depends upon the subjective factor, etc. for the experience to be valid. However, if we try to substitute objective methods instead of this experience, we are in danger of being cut off from the very problems which we try to settle, that is to say, if we would »plug« a song ourselves and the song were rejected by our subjects the result would neither prove nor discount our hypothetical assumption. Any attempt to bring living conditions into play in the experiment would mean that the experiment already presupposes the same factors as working ones which it intends to test. The viewpoint of experimentation is often maintained against the more theoretical approach as a genuinely empirical one. However, it appears to me that when one tries to settle deeper-lying social issues by experimentation, a certain

antagonism arises within truly empirical insight. The living observation and experience of concrete facts and their scientific handling which distills them to such a degree that the decisive empirical elements, those of experience, are eliminated and only a meager and poor skeleton remains. It is by no means certain that the results of social research become more »objective« by the elimination of the subjective factor, of such keen and conscious living experience. And it is quite possible that there exists certain types of social objectivities such as the ones treated in this discussion which presuppose a large degree of subjective spontaneity, of life observation, and of thinking on the part of the researcher. An empirical-minded person with eyes in his head will find it very hard to dispute the substitution of actual preferences by the recognition value, the »That's it!« experience, and the factor of »social corroboration«. To prove them by experimentation, however, appears to be almost impossible because it is not due to isolated influences but to our present-day life as a whole that these effects are created and any isolation – no experiment is possible without isolation – necessarily excludes the working forces which we otherwise note. Under certain circumstances, empirical verification may become the enemy of empirical knowledge.

And there is a last difficulty which emphasizes the problems I tried to bring before you. You remember that the process of reflection we carried through when discussing our experiment led us to the hypothesis that something may be wrong today about likes and dislikes; that the standardized mass products and the way they are impressed upon people does not leave them much choice and that their »like« is only a sort of acceptance of the inescapable. Although my life experience gave me plenty of evidence for this assumption, and although from the viewpoint of deduction from given social conditions it appears to me convincing enough, I found very often that just this hypothesis, which must have been something hurting and insulting to our self-respect, provoked the strongest possible protest. One can point to the fact that many people are very outspoken in their likes and dislikes in light popular music and that my hypothesis is an open contradiction to what people say about themselves. It is taken as a sign of lofty speculation and imputed arrogance to pretend to understand better what people like and what they dislike than people themselves understand it. But I am afraid the social scientist must sometimes take the risk of making himself unpopular. The frank insistence of subjects upon their likes and dislikes cannot vanquish my skepticism about their actual attitude. In fact, it incited my suspicion more than it soothed it. I started thinking about the whole problem when it first came to my attention that laymen appeared to show strong preferences and dis-

likes in cases of a musical material in which I, as a musician, could not discover any difference in quality. The same question arose when I observed people, particularly young people, discussing jazz bands and proclaiming merits and shortcomings where my ears could only discover repetitive sameness. Speaking quite frankly, what finally excited my suspicion was a certain over-eagerness and emphasis when people spoke about their preferences. It sounded to me, from the very beginning, as if they were somewhat on the defensive and would profess their enthusiasm for something more or less accidental merely to prevent the insight – their own insight as well as mine – that actually there was no choice left to them. Their attitude reminded me somewhat of that of many Germans released from the concentration camp with whom I had the opportunity of speaking. The odd thing about these people is that even if we know that they were ill-treated and even if they are telling you themselves that they were ill-treated, they always show a certain readiness to tell you that it was after all not too bad, that it could have been worse, that they learned a lot by it, that they met some nice people there – not to mention the fact that very often their way of self-expression shows a certain tendency to adapt itself to the language and the way of thinking of camp commanders and guards. I do not intend to go so far as to say that the sphere of present-day light popular music is a sort of concentration camp although there may be something said about such an assumption. Anyhow certain doubts about the spontaneity of people's affirmative reactions appear to me justified.

Thus, I was confronted with the problem: Why – when the material appears largely undifferentiated to such a degree as not to allow much for like or dislike and if the attitude of people themselves appears problematic – do they so violently maintain their likes and dislikes? And further, one has to notice that their likes and dislikes very often show a certain consistency, clear preference for swing or clear preference for sweet: clear preference for one particular tune no matter in what style it is presented; sometimes, in the case of expert listeners, clear preference for the »caliber« of performance no matter whether it is swing or sweet or what tune it is. This certainly appears to contradict our assumption about the futility of likes and dislikes however much may be said for it from another point of view, and our hypothesis will lack any plausibility as long as it does not fit with these experiences.

Let me offer you briefly what appears to me a possible explanation. You may have noticed in modern advertising the role of assertions of the type of »it is different«, of the particular role played by adjectives such as »quaint«, of the peculiar emphasis laid upon the specific

characteristics of objects, which on closer observation, look exactly alike. It appears to me that our ownership culture as a whole shows trends which, unconscious as they may be, follow somewhat the same line as the conscious tricks of those advertising slogans. The more standardization increases and the less any choice is left to the people, the more does the tendency increase to hide standardization, to make the surface of the consumer goods offered to the customer as manifold as possible and to reaffirm in the subject the view that it is his taste upon which everything depends, just because he loses more and more his influence upon the stuff forced upon him. This tendency goes deep enough to account also for such trends as the apparent inconsistency of what people like and what they dislike. It is not a mere matter of propaganda, of coining slogans, and of just dulling people, although the art of praising the quaint, insurmountable quality of some gasoline which, even to an expert driver, makes no difference from twenty others, has reached a peak which sometimes makes one dizzy. But the necessity for hiding standardization which has its very deep social roots, impels the »culture-owners« to actually differentiate their products enough to create pseudo-likes and dislikes without affecting the basic standardization itself. One may characterize the whole sphere of production of light popular music today as a sphere where everything is the same and everything appears to be different. And the masses, to whom the unveiling of standardization would be almost unbearable, take only too eagerly the opportunity of accepting the pseudo-differences which themselves make an inherent part of standardization. The likes and dislikes are not genuine insofar as the differences are not genuine and it will be one of the most difficult tasks of further experimentation to show what distinguishes them from real likes and dislikes, that is to say, how they are, in spite of their outspokenness, due more to »reflexes« than to spontaneous, free and conscious choice. To elaborate this point it will probably be necessary to introduce the concept of »game rules« which plays so vast a role in light popular music. The acceptance of the enforced material, as well as the veneration of like and dislike, probably has an intermediary link between production and the reception of the game rules which are taken from the production and imply the standardized laws but which, at the same time, are of such a type as to allow and even to prescribe the differentiations which appear to the listener-customer as his likes and dislikes. Still, we must profess that the actual working of this mechanism is largely in the dark and that what we presented here cannot be regarded as more than a hypothesis which might be altered.

The previous considerations necessitate two inferences. First of all, our thesis about the substitution of preferences by the recognition

value of the accepted and the factor of »social corroboration« has to be differentiated. We mentioned before the ambivalence of people's psychological attitude toward swing. Here perhaps is the place to understand this ambivalence in somewhat broader sociological terms. Whereas fundamentally, like and dislike, as a spontaneous act, has been eliminated and replaced by authoritarian values, it still survives within the sphere of differences created by the process of standardization itself, and the ambivalence, emphasis, and doubtfulness of these preferences has its roots in the deep feeling of listeners that, while they want to like something and to dislike something else they are already cheated and perceive artificially their individual taste within a sphere where it has been liquidated beforehand. The assertion about the replacement of likes and dislikes holds good only if it is understood in its full complexity, that is to say, in relation to the counter-tendencies which it provokes. Still, the somewhat hectic preference of a jitterbug for a band – let us say, for Artie Shaw's – combined with contempt for Jimmy Dorsey and Benny Goodman, is psychologically different from the marked preferences for a special composer or a particular work of great music. Still, this fact is hard to dispute.^m I may give you an index for this assertion. The more contingent the likes and dislikes become, and the more they take place within a standardized sphere, the more they become in a certain sense merely »subjective«, that is to say, the more the material is standardized and the more the specific differences between pieces become those of their »make-up«, the more it becomes arbitrary what one likes or dislikes and the less one is able to give any reasons for one's likes and dislikes based upon the structure of the material itself – which of course, does not exclude that a subjective analysis of the material could produce such reasons. The over-emphasis laid upon personal likes and dislikes in a sphere where no deep differences exist may partly be accounted for by this process of subjectification. Subjectification here means, of course, only the

^m The »hectic« character of these preferences appears to me corroborated by the following observation: Whenever you take a hit tune which, at the very same moment it is at its peak (that is to say, a tune which you will hear the same day almost automatically if you switch on your radio), you will get in a conspicuous number of cases the answer that the tune in question is already passing away and obsolete. The desire to be up-to-date becomes so abstract that it works automatically and pushes things in the background at the very time when they are in the foreground. At the same time, the ambivalence between like and dislike, which we mentioned before, may express itself in this very fact, that is to say, people accept the tunes which are most often played as their favorite tunes, but at the same time, their antipathy expresses itself in the fact that they regard them as already gone just because they are so often hammered upon them. The reaction in question could easily be checked by systematic interviewing.

dependence on surface contingencies of the »taste« of the subject and should not be over-rated as an expression of deeper layers of the personality. In other words, it is the subjectivity of defiance; the subjectivity of a subject who is on the defensive because he knows that his specific differences from the standard are so faint that they may be taken away from him at any moment.

The second inference leads us back to our problem of experimentation in music psychology. Let us take for granted, for the sake of our discussion at present, that the same process of standardization which necessitates the substitution of likes and dislikes by the type of acceptance we sketched, necessarily produces its own veneer of pseudo-differentiations and further, let us take for granted that the masses of listeners are eager, for the sake of their self-esteem and the belief in their own independence, to respond to these pseudo-differentiations by what one could call pseudo-likes and dislikes. (You may accept both assumptions, however daring they may sound, because I intend to show you the difficulties of experimentation at their worst; if it is not as bad as all that, so much the better for our experimentation, but we can see the real obstacles only if we start from extremes, such as were implied in my hypothesis, which as I know, empirically necessitates many reservations.) If these assumptions are true, it appears to me that they imply this great likelihood: that whenever experiments are constructed to find out the truth about likes and dislikes, all the unconscious mechanisms, all the drives and impulses which make people ready to accept the pseudo-differentiations and which promote the pseudo-differentiations, come into play in aid of the professed likes and dislikes. The mechanism which we want to analyze works against the experimenter. From a psychological point of view, it appears to me likely that the more unstable the actual likes and preferences are, and the more they are mere rationalizations of acceptance, the more emphatically they will be emphasized against us. Anyone who is bound to acceptance will probably stick to accepted ideas, and in current musical life, there is no idea more firmly accepted than that of like and dislike upon which the whole mechanism of conformity is built. It does not appear to me too bold a prediction that just the most weak-willed jitterbug will show the most »spontaneous« and definite reactions under experimental conditions. It will be very difficult to reveal a working mechanism by reactions which reflect the mechanism in such a way that they help to hide it. Necessary illusions are an inherent element of present-day society. We will find it hard to discount them by »reactions« because the way people »react« to given conditions is itself under the spell of such illusions. Thus, the experimenter may find himself easily in the position of Münchhausen who tries to

draw himself out of the swamp by his own pigtail. And this is actually the last and main difficulty about experimentation in our field, which is a *social* field. I have a feeling that our present world will produce more and more »data« which obtain the function, willingly or unwillingly, of deceiving people about its nucleus. Any type of experimentation which sticks exclusively to these data runs the risk of becoming deceived itself. The leading idea behind empirical research is that of a security of results which may not be obtainable by speculative thinking. I wanted to lead you to a point where you could see that this very same empirical security is endangered by the method which we have always regarded as the most empirical and secure one.

At this point, I feel that I have definitely exhausted your patience. You will regard me as a hopeless case. You may compare me with that type of psychoanalyst who, when he offers an explanation to his patient, cannot possibly be convinced that he is wrong. If the patient agrees, then according to his view, the hypothesis is right anyhow. If the patient objects, this is regarded as a »resistance« which is produced out of deeper psychical reasons proving even more the truth of the assertion. I just have to appeal to your mercy and ask you to believe that my last criticism has no such intention and that I have as clear-cut ideas about the truth or falsity of a theory as you may ever conceive and further, that I believe that the hypotheses I brought forth in our discussion are open to a plain decision about their truth and falsity. I only want to say that so far the method of experimentation does not appear to me sufficiently developed to allow such answers: It appears to me that the experimentations which we have done ourselves concerning likes and dislikes still remain within the sphere of »illusions« about like and dislike and do not yet allow us any definite conclusions regarding the validity of those categories but only tend to reproduce reactions which take place within the framework of those dubitable categories. Beyond the insufficiency of our present method, which I confess to criticize not less frankly than Seashore's physicalistic approach, I have one question to raise which applies equally to Seashore's approach and our own. Namely, whether the settlement of the problems brought before you can ever be achieved by a mere experimentation which necessarily presupposes such concepts as that of the datum, of the reaction and of the exact experimental conditions which fall within the limit of possible criticism themselves. I brought to you criticism as well as self-criticism in an exaggerated form with the purpose of leading you to a point where the function of theory becomes obvious to you. Where you see that the theory is more than a mere anticipation or a mere abbreviation of purely »empirical results«, it is a means of our knowledge of its own merit. Only the

interplay of social theory and experimentation and not the isolated experimentation, can possibly permit the solving of the issues I brought before you. Theory in this sense means the interrelationship of specific facts such as are brought out by experimentation with the basic structure of our present-day society which, however »real«, however persistent it may be, can never be brought out totally in terms of data or facts because it is part of the structure to produce facts which contradict it and hide it. It is this particular difficulty which necessitates the interplay of theory and experimentation and only if we finally succeed in articulating such an interplay will our facts be more than superficial illusions and our theories more than airy imaginings.

Perhaps you will allow me to condense the results of our survey in some theses:

1.) Experiments in music psychology which are constructed after the pattern of experiments in natural sciences or in such branches of psychology such as tone psychology, fail to fulfill their task because they reduce the subject who is tested to a mere center of reactions instead of understanding this subject in terms of his own spontaneity. Consequently, any such attempt, which we call a physicalistic one, is unable to cope with the problem of musical sense for which it substitutes mere sensory functions.

Allow me to add in this connection one last word about the concept of musical sense which is immediately evident within our actual musical experience but exceedingly difficult to verbalize. I have already hinted at the idea that the deciding difference between music psychology and experimental (»tone«) psychology does not lie in the fact that the former deals with a whole and the latter with parts. For it is obvious that the »whole«, which makes the subject matter of the musician and of any musical study, is a whole which consists of parts, which is articulated by its parts and which only gets its true meaning by the interrelationship of these parts. In other words, it would be futile to try to make any statements about music exclusively in terms of the whole and equally futile to make any statements about music exclusively in terms of parts such as are furnished by laboratory experiments of the Seashore type concerned with abstract vibrato, frequency, intensity, etc. To avoid any confusion, we have to keep this clearly evident. Still, a psychologist who tries to define the difference between approaches such as Seashore's and Kurth's, in terms of part and whole, is aware in a vague sense of something which actually may prove decisive. They only have to try to express it differently. We maintain the view that the musical »world«, if we may borrow this term from Kurth, is not built up out of mere sense data but that these sense

data, perceptive acoustic phenomena as they may be, are at the same time results of that human spontaneity which creates musical »sense«. What our discussion has so far lacked is any elaboration of categories by which this spontaneity actually may impress itself upon the perceptive phenomena.

Here I would like to name at least one of these intermediary categories which I regard as the most important one and at the same time as the one which actually largely defines what we called musical sense. It is the category of the musical *work*. It is impossible to reduce the unity of a musical work – work here understood in the sense of a musical conception – to pure terms of sensory events or reactions. And although its unity finally may coincide with their unity, the parts are *functions* of the work and their unity is more than just something given and static. It gets its dynamic structure from the idea of the work and it is a long process, which brings the first more or less vague and abstract sensory equivalents of the concept of the work into such a concrete density that they finally coincide with the work itself. The work defines the borderline between a mere agglomeration of sense data of which every work consists and the human meaning which brings them together. If the unity of the work is nothing but the sum total of its sensory details, this sum total is only guaranteed by a spontaneous human meaning which brings the work together. Insofar as the work is the bearer of human meaning and cannot be merely perceived; and insofar as its apperception implies at the same time the postulate of understanding we feel justified in speaking of its musical sense. You may notice the deep ambiguity of every musical work, of every music in general, namely the ambiguity between the »passive« sum total of all its sensory elements and their interrelationship on the one side, and the »active« unity of meaning which constitutes such an interrelationship by a closer observation of the musical work itself, on the other. Concerning the word »work«, we may distinguish two meanings which are hard to separate but which belong to the two different sides we tried to describe. On one side, a musical work is a piece of music consisting of all its sensory details and interrelationships which we can perceive – something which we can perceive in terms of its givenness. On the other hand, work points in the direction of what has been done within that particular piece of music and defines it as the result of past human activity, as reified or objectivated labor. The interplay of these two sides of the musical world takes place within the smallest musical phenomenon. If music is actually as Seashore supposes a sort of »nature«, it certainly is only a »second nature« in the sense in which we are apt to regard any result of human activity as nature which has become objectivated and alienated from us to such

an extent that we, so to speak, fail to recognize ourselves in it. Simply speaking, the elementary trait which Seashore overlooks is that every piece of music is an artifact and not a thunder-storm, the sound of which happens to have orderly frequency.

One more note might be allowed in addition to Thesis 1. We had to criticize the mere measurement of reactions. In the light of the discussion of our own experiments and their explanatory theories, however, there arises one paradoxical issue. Namely, is it not possible or even likely that under present-day conditions the musical behavior of the masses are actually reduced to something similar to the reactions measured by Seashore's method? Does not history tend to change people actually into such centers of reactions, into the sort of guinea pigs as which they are treated by Seashore? Could it not be that in this way Seashore's method is indirectly justified? We do not intend to answer these questions here. It is obvious, however, that there must be a fundamental difference between a method which considers human beings naively in physicalistic terms and one which is fully aware that their quasi-becoming the subject matter of natural science is itself an historical function. Further it must be added that people who, by some process or other, have become mutilated to such an extent that they appear to be mere centers of reaction are by no means identical with such centers of reaction as they are taken for granted to be under laboratory conditions.

2.) Experiments which are built up in more sociological terms have failed so far as well to tackle their subject matter adequately for the following reasons:

a.) The gap between the experiments and their necessary theoretical interpretation has so far been unbridged, that is to say, the experiments themselves are unable to settle the questions which arise out of their interpretation.

b.) The experimental patterns which we have so far given appear to show that some of the main categories upon which the experiments are built are actually no longer valid or at least cannot be taken for granted without being subjected to further examination themselves. This holds good particularly for the concept of like and dislike.

c.) The difficulty of an examination, and particularly of an experimental examination of the latter question, increases because the same social trends which may virtually liquidate categories such as like and dislike, show at the same time an inherent tendency to reinforce any possible illusion about like and dislike.

d.) Formulating this last objection more generally, it may simply be stated that it is the basic problem of musical experimentation which tries to come nearer to living conditions than the laboratory experi-

mentation does, that the closer we come to living conditions the more completely the categories, procedures and results of our experiments depend on the very same social factors which we want to examine. The danger of a vicious circle becomes imminent. We have to face the desperate alternative of either isolating our experiments to such an extent from the social reality that they become socially insignificant or, to make them socially »concrete« thus bringing the same forces into play which ought to be investigated as presupposition of the whole experiment.

3.) The main result of this survey is that experimentation cannot be taken as a sufficient means of knowledge for itself in our field. It has to be brought into close relation with the theory and can obtain its proper significance only within such a relation. Theory here means more than the mere hypothesis which could be tested or the mere abbreviation of given results. Mainly, it means consequent thinking which under certain conditions has to transcend the borders of what can be immediately verified if the results fit with that of a preceding living experience which cannot be by any means in every case translated into objective experimental conditions.

4.) Experimentation in musical psychology cannot be used for just accumulating some »knowledge« which may appear very doubtful in the light of the discussion which we have carried through. It has its specific place only in the context of general considerations which lead to the point where a specific and properly defined question can be settled by experiments strictly according to the definition of the question and its conditions. Everything depends upon the exactitude of this relation. The following is an example: It would be totally superficial to attempt to settle by mere experimentation what people like and what they dislike. It has a certain meaning, however, to experiment about which spots of a given piece of music people profess to like when listening in atomistic fashion, to find out which styles of presentation they profess to like as a whole and to compare the results. Such experimental results again are not to be taken as static results. They become part of the dynamics of the theory, that is to say, in the light of such results the very questions from which they were obtained, however well defined these questions were, may have to be altered. Our analysis has shown how discursive interpretation may lead to such alterations of the questions themselves.

5.) If we regard the »work« as the sphere where the musical sense enters sensual reality, the theoretical formulation of questions which we could handle in a fruitful way by experimental methods, has to cope particularly with the work because here is a possibility of formulating in objective terms considerations of the musical sense which

later may be settled experimentally. The available chances for musical optimal experimentation appear to me to lie in an approach which starts from as intimate an analysis of works as possible – technical analysis as well as psychological – which is later to be confronted with the reactions of people to the same material offered to them under experimental conditions. The relation between such an analysis which we preliminarily call feature-analysis and the so-called reactions of people may allow far-reaching inferences. It must be stated quite openly, however, that such feature-analysis brings into play the whole theoretical background.

6.) Such an approach recommends itself also by certain sociological considerations. If it is true that the present-day reactions of people to music largely reflects the influence exercised upon them by public mechanisms working upon them, a true understanding first of all presupposes an analysis of those mechanisms. It would be worthless to measure and compare their reactions as if they were something spontaneous, whereas the very term reaction already implies that they are equal to some sort of »action«, if I may express myself for once in physicalistic terms, working upon them. The knowledge of these actions is the first requirement of experimentation. They can be understood, however, only in social terms and within the sphere of present-day musical mass production.

E Note on Classification

As to classification: It seems to me that the most important of our reflections on classification is to classify facts or events in such a way that the categories which we are using in their classification have a true bearing upon our theoretical interest. The categories of our classification ought not to be »neutral« ones. They ought not to be chosen from a merely statistical point of view, nor ought they to derive from a mere division of the empirical material we have to deal with. We ought to express our theoretical interest by means of the categories which we are using. This means that we may try to translate as many of our theoretical categories into categories or headings of the classification with the aim of checking them by the result which we are achieving. If we start, as Dr. Lazarsfeld and I agree, from the simple theory and, on the other hand, believe that every theory which we carried through our investigation ought to be checked empirically, then I see in the conscious choice of classificatory concepts one of the principal tools of interconnecting our theoretical aims and our empirical material.

But if we seriously consider the aim of checking our theory by empirical material, this also has its consequences for our classificatory concepts. That is to say, when it comes out that some of our headings of classifications do not correspond with the material which we are actually obtaining, then it would not be sufficient to leave empty the columns which are under these headings, but it would be necessary to try to find out methods by which these results are to be used in the process of classification itself. In other words, the classifications ought not to be rigid, but they ought to express the process of development

of our knowledge itself. Another means for this purpose is the use of different schedules concerning the same matter in the way I suggested schedules of production, reproduction, and intended reception for the classification of music. Of course, these schedules are not independent of each other, and it is even certain that some points of one's schedule will reappear in another one, although I should regard it as one of the aims of a more elegant classification to avoid such repetitions as far as possible. But more important than this is its elaborate method which allows us to interconnect the schedules with each other and so to close the gaps which necessarily exist between them. The way of interconnecting and of correcting each schedule by another one seems to me one of the concrete means of expressing theoretical results – that is to say, modifications of the categories from which we started in a way which allows us to use the classification as a means for theoretical purposes and not as an aim in itself. I should like to know how far it would be possible to elaborate theoretical methods for »dynamic« classification – that is to say, for the translation of one classification into the terms of another one.

It also appears to me that if one takes into account the interest of the theory, there might be cases when one has the freedom of a certain logical inexactness of which one is fully conscious. In my draft of musical entertainment, for instance, I gave several classes of entertaining music, such as »dance music«, »songs and hits«, »character pieces«, »salon pieces« and so on. Another section which I suggested is »musical arrangements and transcriptions«. This certainly is not on the same logical level as the others, that is to say, each transcription might belong to one of the other groups mentioned before. Nevertheless, according to my theory of the perusal of music, these transcriptions and arrangements of serious music for the purpose of making it entertaining music is so decisive that from a theoretical point of view it is indispensable to get a certain survey of this type of musical entertainment which, on the other hand, could not appear anywhere else but under the main heading of entertaining music. Thus I believe that I am justified from a highly theoretical point of view in using this category here in spite of its logical inconsistency with the other parts. I should like to add, however, that these suggestions are mainly concerned with a method of a first approach. If we can ever reach classifications which are to be published as results of our investigation, I should strongly advocate trying to elaborate them in such a way that such inconsistencies are to be avoided. For the present purposes, however, I regard the classification of the whole as a means of getting theoretical results and not as a goal in the sense of the representation of statistical results.

Some Remarks about Preliminary Samples

During the time between half past two and half past four, Damrosch comments on the universally known songs of the Barlachi Volga Singers, calling it an old folk song.¹ This song has definitely been made known all over the world by the Arti-crafti Variety Theater of Jushny's »The Bluebird.«² It is very doubtful to me whether it ever was a genuine folk song, and it had definitely gotten the character of a commodity before it was ever presented to audiences as a folk song. Again he presents the German song, »*Muß i'denn, Muß i'denn zum Staedtlein hinaus*« as an old folk song, giving it the same sort of archaic dignity, although I am almost certain that this song is no older than one hundred years and in fact, an art song of early romanticism which became popular. Damrosch comments on it with a very sentimental voice, using the words, »There has never been written anything lovelier.«

The singer who sings the Volga song is imitating Chaliapin in an obvious and slavish manner. It is, so to speak, the trademark article, »Chaliapin's Volga Song«.³

At 3:00 P.M. I heard over WHYH a whole program of transcriptions in exactly the sense I anticipated, consisting mainly of songs played on the fiddle with an accompanying orchestra. One of the selections was the »Preislied« of the *Meistersinger* played by a solo violin in an unbearably sentimental way, accompanied by full orchestra. At the same time I heard over 1190 the »Serenade« by Schubert, and at about wave length 1180,⁴ a concert given by a Wurlitzer organ. As a whole such a brief survey of the simultaneously played music differs astonishingly little from the European programs which we are used to. The only remarkable difference is this: That the level of jazz orchestras is remarkably higher than in Europe.

One has to analyze the special role which is played by humor in programs. It appears to me that humor is one of the main tools for overcoming the alienation and merchandising of the mechanism of radio by making fun of it oneself, not taking it seriously, and so to trying to close the gap between the musician or speaker and the audience by means of the same mechanism which creates this gap. Here also one ought to analyze very carefully the role of humor for advertising. It seems to me that humor has a definite function in today's broadcasting, mainly to create a certain atmosphere of conformism and to belittle at the same time all the obvious flaws and faults which are inherent in the procedures of present-day business radio life. We

ought to analyze the part which is played by humor in general and the proportion of »humorous« and »serious« productions. This seems to me to be applicable to all faults of radio translation, that is to say, of dramatic and literary transmissions as well as its musical ones. Perhaps one could build up a system of classification according to categories such as »humorous«, »touching«, »moving«, »serious«, and so on.

Addition to the Note about Damrosch and the Volga Song

As far as I heard the *Damrosch Hour*, Mr. Damrosch did not give any truly analytical comment upon music. He said nothing about style, about compositional technique, or even about the most elementary musical facts. Instead of that he told some stories, for example, about the general musical level in Elizabethan England, which he certainly exaggerated to a great extent. It appears to me that the success of this *Damrosch Hour*, as it is now, is due mainly to the fact that Mr. Damrosch repeats with a certain touch of authority and an expression of being personally moved by the facts, the very current and romantic ideas about musical compositions and musical standards – that folk songs, which are newly fabricated, are derivations of the very sources of the community of people – that in better times, such as in Elizabethan England, every barber shop was full of artists who were able to play and entertain and sing at the same time that they were being shaved, etc. The mere repetition of these romantic prejudices, without any attempt even to criticize or of any analytical approach, seems to be the reason for his success. Mr. Damrosch states and affirms the ideas which everyone has more or less consciously about music and that is what makes him so popular.

The analysis of his *Hour* has to be carried further and one also has to see if this *Hour* really has as great a success as it is supposed to have.

Possibly part of his success is also due to the fact that Mr. Damrosch is a very old man, so that people might regard him as a sort of musical wizard who utters sacred or authoritative opinions already out of his tomb. It is the voice of death which is obtained through the medium of the radio transmission.

Miss Kohn tells me that in her school days the name of Damrosch and classical music were practically synonymous.

Instead of real analysis of the works of music, he gives biographical sketches of the composer. We shall have to check this because it is very important.

One of the most remarkable features of American broadcasting on a first approach seems to me the fact that the broadcasting of music of the lowest type and the most trivial things are practically always on an exceedingly high level of performance. The interest seems to be absorbed much more by the way of performing things than by the selections which are actually performed. This seems to affirm the tendency which was already to be noticed in jazz, namely that the *reproduction* of music has a tendency of replacing to a greater and greater extent the *production*. Even the worst jazz orchestra, the worst accordion music, is performed on a virtuoso level. This perfection applies first of all to the elements of rapidity and clarity of the individual tone rather than to the rhythmical elements, and finally to all elements of sound. In the present stage, in any case, one seems to try everywhere to get the most full, rich, so to speak »fattish« sound, the model of which seems to be drawn from the *tutti* of the string orchestra. But jazz at the present moment seems to obey the same tendency of a rich, vibrating sound. Possibly the conception of swing music, at present opposed to what music derives from this preponderance of the mere quality of vibrating sound. Instruments such as the vibraphone aim to constitute an integral part of this sound. One of the effects of this general tendency towards a rich and vibrating sound seems to me to be the perusal of expressive elements because this vibrating sound specializes in the Wagnerian style and was the means of the highest subjective expression. But now, by the hundred- and thousand-fold reproduction and the ubiquity of this sort of expressive sound, it loses completely its original meaning of agitation. The gesture of being agitated and being moved replaces any actual being moved and anything of that sort. The gesture of expression, effectively replaces the emotion itself. It is a sort of behaviorist process in which isolated attitudes of emotion replace the total emotion of a total individual as a whole. Very similar tendencies to this are to be found in moving pictures where it is much less the function of present day film actors to express personality through emotions as a whole, but where they have much more to illustrate their ideas of certain emotions, such as love, or terror, by special gestures which are regarded as representing these emotions. The way of using musical means of expression for these things has exactly the same basis.

F On the Use of Elaborate Personal Interviews for the Princeton Radio Research Project

Whereas the use of statistical procedures is well controlled by generally accepted rules, the use of elaborate personal interviews is less well regulated because they have not always been recognized as valid tools of social research. The few schools which have made use of them (for instance, Chicago) have done so more on a hit-or-miss basis. The Princeton Radio Research Project, directed by psychologists, has a two-fold task: to bring the use of this kind of material into the foreground and to deal with it as systematically as possible. Although it is premature to attempt any systematic analysis now, the matter should be discussed among us so that exemplifying material can be collected and the general principles slowly developed. The following remarks tend only to serve as a first step in this direction; they are only loosely interconnected.

1.) Detailed interviews are necessary for the *description of psychological processes*. If, for instance, we want to know whether people who listen to a radio drama have visual imagery, or if we want to distinguish the emotions the people experience when listening to music, such descriptive interviews are necessary. Their use in this connection goes back to the Würzburg School where they have been used to describe the processes of thought, of solving tasks, etc.

Behind this approach is the assumption that some of those processes are of a very general nature and hardly different for different individuals. Whenever such use is made of them it will have to be pointed out why the student assumes that individual differences can be neglected.

2.) This does not mean, however, that such psychological descriptions cannot lead to generalizations; it only means that we are not interested in the frequency distribution of those individual experiences. In a Viennese study, for instance, it was shown that when people try to match pictures with voices they use one of two procedures: either they make their judgment intuitively or they try to arrive at a judgment by rational deductions from clues; it was shown statistically that the first procedure is much more successful. Similarly, Dr. Wiesen-Grund thinks that the less emotional a person's attitude toward music is, the more he knows about it. It is evident that even a few cases should prove or disprove such assumptions. It would be worthwhile to conduct a systematic investigation as to where this kind of statement could be found in the different sections of the project.

3.) It will be useful to distinguish the *analysis of effects* from such a description of general experiences. The »Ohio School on the Air«, for instance, has sent an elaborate questionnaire to people who had listened to one of their art courses.¹ In about fifty questions, they tried to circumscribe the effect of the course on the listener. A more modest effort of this kind has been made in our WIXAL² Study. There seems to be a growing tendency among our staff members to use this kind of approach: How has listening to the radio influenced your newspaper reading? Do farmers pay fewer visits to their neighbors since they have a radio? Etc.

It is probable that results can be gained this way especially if the questions are very specific. (This type of interview is certainly easier in regard to one special broadcast than in regard to a whole program series, let alone radio listening at large.) However, it is not certain whether the results will be valid without statistical corroboration; there seems to be no justification to assume effects which are alike for all individuals. The best use to be made of this kind of interview is probably to gain leads for further statistical studies on special points.

4.) The most tempting use of the detailed interviews is connected with the question of *why people listen* to a certain program in the sense of what it means to them, what gratification they get out of it. It is necessary to distinguish here several levels of analysis, only two of which will be discussed briefly as examples for the others. One is the level of those reasons which are either conscious or could be made conscious. The best example is the list of reasons Mr. Rorty³ set up for people listening to commentators. It is quite true that detailed interviews can often lead to surprisingly new reasons of this kind. But it probably needs very gifted introspection to be a good respondent for such an interview. The best procedure, it seems, is to get a list of such reasons by interviewing a small number of people in considerable detail and

then trying to find criteria by which less articulate people could be classified according to this list.

The use to be made of classifications of reasons on this level is probably two-fold: on the one hand it is interesting to know the distribution of these reasons in larger populations or in special groups. On the other hand, we might want to relate these reasons to other factors, for instance, effects: Do people who listen for different reasons take different things out of the program, like different parts of it, etc.?

5.) It is not quite certain, however, that a reason-analysis on this level will ever lead to very important results. The mystic desire of all modern psychology is to get at the »deep« stuff. By that is meant the use of such concepts as escape, repression, ego enhancement, compensation for inferiority feelings, etc. It is important to see the difference in the methodological approach compared with the previous paragraph. Those unconscious reasons can never be *found* by detailed interviews; it is necessary to *assume* them theoretically and then to prove or disprove their existence. Therefore, such interviews are so very difficult and even dangerous. The student really has to assume the general existence of such a mechanism and then to look for little details in the interview which point in its direction. Such interviews will mostly use the procedure of »*Deutung*«. Sometimes an inflection of the voice, a hesitancy to answer will be more important than the whole rational context of the interview. Only a student who has a well set-up theory will do a good job and only the most mature members of the staff should be using it. The main difficulty is that such results cannot be verified and, therefore, their whole value stands and falls with the value of the theory for our project as a whole. Empirical research here serves much more to exemplify the theory than to discover facts. Continuous discussion and clarification of such approaches will be necessary.

6.) A generalization of the reason-analysis is the *personality approach*. The idea here seems to be that if we know a lot about a respondent then we will understand how his radio activities fit into everything else he does. Therefore, the purpose of the detailed interview in this respect is to learn as much as possible about the respondent himself. That can be done either by tests or by other sets of comparable indices or it may be attempted by a looser description of each individual in his own right. An example of this approach is found in the relation of an individual's radio habits with his general attitude toward music, his general attitude toward politics, toward education, etc. The main effort of the student will be to develop new and appropriate concepts to describe the different areas of personal activities. The results will most likely take the form of typological classifications:

different types of personalities will be related with different types of radio attitude. Therefore, in this connection, the logic of such typological classification will be of special importance. That is also true for the next use of detailed interviews.

7.) It is probably an extension of the personality approach when we use *life histories*. Instead of using a personality test or a general description of the individual as we find it now, we try to understand him by following him through the course of his life. His musical or political development, his educational pursuits at different periods of his life are used as personal indices.

It is probable that in addition to this, life histories can be used to trace the influences of cultural and individual factors on his personality. In this way, we account for an individual's radio habits not only in terms of his personality but also in terms of those factors which molded his personality, in those respects which are especially important for a radio study. While the logic of the personality approach has been studied extensively in the last decade, the biographical approach has only been touched incidentally. Therefore, the project will probably take the psychology of personality from the best sources and leave it at that, whereas in the life-history field we might be able to make a new contribution. There is actually only the book of Dollard on life-history available⁴ and the use which Blumer has made in movie studies⁵ and Gray-Monroe in the reading field.⁶ An organized effort to clarify the technique of using life histories should be made.

The most important task of our work in the field of detailed interviews will be to lift it to a more systematic level. So far, two points can be set forth, the first being of very great practical importance.

a) *The principle of crucial groups*. Just because detailed interviews are so laborious, it is necessary to use them so that they can be put [to] their maximum utility. Therefore, one should always try to interview people who have been pre-selected by preliminary information. If, for instance, we want to know why people like programs, we should interview people who like a certain program especially and those who exhibit a special dislike. If we want to analyze in detail the influence of radio on political opinion we should select people who actually have changed their opinions recently. An especially good opportunity might come up in our reading study as Miss Curtis has discovered.⁷ Alvin Johnson has studied the reading records of thousands of people at the Newark library and distinguished several types: those who read for escape, for specific improvement, for general cultural purposes, etc.⁸ Disregarding the value of just this distinction, we will, of course, interview people of distinct reading types if we want to know the relation between reading and listening; non-readers will, of course, have

to be included. It is evident that such an approach will be much more economical than to interview just at random on the same topic.

It will be the task of all the staff members to find ways to select such crucial groups. If no information is available and a general approach indispensable, then at least accessory information should be gathered in order to distinguish different groups later on. If, for instance, we ask people whether they prefer straight news reporting or commented news over the air, we should try at the same time to get information on the recency of their political interests or on the independence of their judgment in other fields so that we may have a chance to later on pick out representatives of selected groups for detailed personal interviews.

b) In studying the attitude of people toward programs, it is useful to distinguish three kinds of studies. Those studies which are mostly concerned with the *features* of the programs; those which are especially concerned with the *influences* brought to bear upon people; those studies which are mostly concerned with the *tendencies, needs, and desires* of the listeners. The analysis of features and influences has advanced considerably in recent years and they are well taken care of in many parts of our project. What is still in bad shape is the analysis of tendencies, and evidently the entire use of detailed personal interviews centers around this problem. It will be useful to keep this distinction in mind in order to have the focus of those interviews well set. As a very good exercise for increasing one's awareness of all the possibilities, and for improving the outline given above, a reading of Chapter 15 of Cantril-Allport's *Psychology of Radio*⁹ is suggested. The ideas treated there are probably the most advanced material available in this field of analysis. By matching them with the approaches outlined above, the next steps for progress might be visualized.

G The Problem of a New Type of Human Being¹

I

As a science, psychology assumes that its object, the human being, is largely constant in nature. Its constitution is thus attributed to such ancient behavioural patterns, and such profoundly natural necessities, that the historical changes in that period of humanity of which we have some idea are inconsequential by comparison. Hunger and love, aggression, envy, ambition, desire – supposedly very little of that has changed since the ancient inhabitants of India. In the psychology of the Enlightenment, this was self-evident; and the experimental psychology of the 19th century maintained this supposition. More recently, the assumption of the relative constancy of human nature has been emphatically confirmed by Freud.

The entire traditional pedagogical system relies on the assumption of this constancy, as well as the assumption that the individual can be made ever more perfect. It divides human nature into two categories: on one hand the constant drives, on the other the products of their sublimation, the cultural artefacts. The more one succeeds in opening people up to ‘culture’ and affecting them through ‘enlightenment’, this theory states, the better. It does not ask, however, whether the drive structure of humans permits such influence through ‘culture’ in the same way during all periods. Nor does it ask whether, in certain situations, this culture becomes such a contrast to real living conditions that it can no longer carry out the task imposed on it, namely to domesticate human drives. Finally, the value of this culture itself and its problematic

character in a given situation are not considered at all. The fiction is maintained that inducing people to listen to Beethoven symphonies, read Milton and gaze upon Raphael madonnas is equally 'progressive' and humanistic at all times. Though both the possibility of a living relationship with cultural artefacts and their own worth is acknowledged as having obviously become problematic in particular cases, the pedagogical approach questions neither the possibility of cultivation as such in the present situation nor its absolute value in any serious fashion.

The question of the invariance of human nature – an invariance that probably exists only in a society based on exploitation – cannot be examined in its entire dialectic here, any more than the no less dialectical question of the value and possibility of culture. We are of the opinion, however, that at least those layers of humanity open to 'education' are experiencing such radical transformations in the present phase of society that neither the traditional assumption of an essentially equal basic nature nor the – paradoxically – closely related one of constant perfectibility can be maintained. We also believe that these changes, which have affected a very considerable number of those alive today, are of such a kind that the usual pedagogical call to 'cultivate' them can no longer be considered unfailingly applicable, in terms either of the human capacity for reception or the continued relevance of cultural artefacts themselves. Regardless of how educators might assess such issues as drive structure, sublimation or culture, their work is only of use if their reflections take the real changes that have gone on, both in people and in the power of culture, into account without any illusions. It is those reflections to which we are hoping to contribute with our planned investigations.

It seems questionable to us in the first place whether one can actually describe the changes with which we are dealing as psychological. The concept of psychology is part of liberalism; it presupposes the individual as relatively self-enclosed, constant and autonomous in its aims – as the 'ego', in Freudian terminology. While the individual as a biological unity naturally continues to exist, and hence also those of its characteristics which serve its procreation, it has entered a social constellation in which the reproduction of its life can no longer be carried out in the old sense by its 'monadological' nature, that is to say its independent and antagonistic separation from its environment. The individual seems to be on the way to a situation in which it can only survive by relinquishing its individuality, blurring the boundary between itself and its surroundings, and sacrificing most of its independence and autonomy. *In large sectors of society there is no longer an 'ego' in the traditional sense.* As all the traditional culture with which educators wish to bring people into contact presupposes the

ego, however, and appeals to the ego, the very possibility of cultural education is now highly problematic from the outset.

II

The changes we are examining are those of social reality, of the surroundings we live in. We consider these changes so far-reaching, especially with regard to the early stages of development in childhood, that the sublimation which has always consisted in an engagement with extra-mental reality can no longer take place in the same way – both because reality denies the developing ego the necessary crutch for sublimation and because this reality has taken on such dominance that it suffocates the ego and eats away at its innermost constitution through realistic fear.

The following offers a rhapsodic presentation of certain motifs of these structural changes in our surroundings, without any claims to continuity of conceptual development.

a) The world no longer offers the child any images, unless one includes the technical *imagines*² of the car and the aeroplane. The repertoire of religious imagery has disintegrated. The imagery of bourgeois art never reached most of the population, especially the industrial masses and country people. The movements arising from the Enlightenment were iconoclastic – and necessarily so – whereas in a persisting class society the need for images, as one of the central factors in any sublimation, is as strong as ever, perhaps even increasingly so. Today, however, images only appear as ready-mades supplied by monopolistic centres, with all the emblems of their own falsity. So far, there has hardly been any serious recognition of what these images mean for people, or of the consequences of their falsity. At any rate, one can safely say that the dwindling of the objective repertoire of images is accompanied by a dwindling of subjective imagination that increasingly keeps people within the boundaries of the status quo.

b) The objects of action are changing. Their mechanization means that people must ‘adapt’ in their use of everyday devices to an incomparably higher degree than ever before. The act of driving a car or repairing a radio requires an infinitely greater subordination to the prescribed nature of those objects than the work of a craftsman, for example. Even during the entire era of 19th-century industrial capitalism, the functions of the individual – at least in his free time – were not remotely as dependent on technology as they are today. The game itself becomes governed by the technical structure of things.

c) The structure of the work process has changed in most respects. It no longer permits ‘practice’ or ‘experience’ in the old sense, as

evident in farming, for example. The changes in the work process extend from actual industrial work with machines through the whole of society, even infiltrating the realm of 'intellectual' work, where experience-based thought is already beginning to be replaced by technical, formal-logical manipulations. A single path leads from the conveyor belt via the office machine to the 'capturing' of spontaneous intellectual acts through reified, quantified processes.

d) The disintegration of family authority, especially under the pressure of structural unemployment, has been emphatically shown by sociologists. However, the dissolution of the family probably begins in the deepest layers of childhood development. The family is no longer the mediating agency between society and the individual; rather, society has taken hold of the individual directly and, by depriving the individual of the protective shield of the family, prevents him from becoming an individual in the old sense. The phenomenon observed in Germany, where the National Socialists conspired with children against their schools and households, as it were, is merely the institutionalized form of social tendencies that probably extend much further. Perhaps one could also say that, for American children today, a car wields greater authority than their father. It would be rash, however, to assume that the dwindling of family authority in present society automatically constitutes an element of progress and liberation. On the one hand, the individual's most productive powers flourish in a living and direct confrontation with his family, and these powers are now deprived of their target, so to speak; on the other hand, the immediately palpable domination of the individual by society, without any intermediary, is so profound that in a deeper layer of its consciousness, the child growing up 'authorityless' is probably even more fearful than it ever was in the good old days of the Oedipus complex. It is precisely this side of the situation that is often overlooked by progressive educators.

e) The wasting away of the world of images is accompanied by that of language and the capacity for expression through language. The traditional vernacular, with its sprinklings of religious phrases, no longer exists. People regard educated language as foreign and cold. They are fed from above with a synthetic, essentially advertising-determined language that no longer satisfies them. They no longer speak for themselves, but rather with the voice of the radio announcer, as it were. The change in the body of language concerns the interior monologue most of all. So far, there has not been any investigation of the influence of this nascent speechlessness on the overall condition of the people who are made speechless.

f) People's relationships with their own physicality seem to have undergone a peculiar and very far-reaching change. One can view sport as an attempt to regain for the body one of those functions of which machines have deprived it; yet it virtually becomes a machine itself. One finds a form of technological quantification of the body in which such ideas as fitness, training, and ultimately sheer physical strength take on an increasingly important role. It is this altered relationship with physicality, especially physical strength, which is no longer impeded by any taboos, that makes the possibility of 'cultivation' extremely questionable. The path to 'barbarization' is probably connected to this altered attitude to physicality. It too should by no means be considered a 'liberation' from the body 'repressed' by bourgeois culture; the physicality of sunbathing is largely de-sexualized. For the most part, there is an effort to translate what we refer to as cultural artefacts – in so far as they can be experienced at all – into categories of physiological capacity, or at least to experience them in an analogous fashion. They become competitions, tests or physical stimulants. The 'spiritual' layer of cultural products, crudely put, is virtually receding ever further.

III

The change in our surroundings, which has been illustrated here with a few examples that were not separated from their psychological implications, points towards the ongoing development of a new type of human being. It has been aptly described as the 'Radio Generation'. It is the type of person whose being lies in the fact that he no longer experiences anything himself, but rather lets the all-powerful, opaque social apparatus dictate all experiences to him, which is precisely what prevents the formation of an ego, even of a 'person' at all. From an orthodox analytical point of view, a type of human being so incapable of ego formation would be described as neurotic. But the concept of neurosis encompasses certain conflicts with reality. As, however, the 'Radio Generation' withdraws from ego formation precisely by adapting to reality, seemingly becoming part of reality without any conflict through its egoless nature, the concept of neurosis is not directly applicable here. If all these people are sick – which there is reason to assume – they are at least no sicker than the society in which they live. At the same time, the nature of this society must form the point of departure for any attempt at change. There is reason to assume that the loss of some abilities is accompanied by the freeing of certain others, and these are precisely what destines them to carry out changes that would never have been possible for the old 'individuals'. Breaking

through the monadological wall, which enclosed each individual within itself in the liberalist era, is the greatest source of hope.

The Radio Generation has been described as 'two-dimensional'. The lack of experiential continuity largely bars them from both happiness and suffering. Happiness: because there is only as much happiness as there are dreams, and they can no longer dream. They hardly conceive any aims that go beyond their immediate field of action and their adaptation to present conditions. For them, happiness consists mostly in integrating, in having the abilities that everyone has and doing what everyone does. They are without illusions. They finally see the world as it is, but pay the price of no longer seeing how it could be. That is why they also lack suffering. They are 'hardened', both in the physical and the psychological sense. Their coldness is one of their most conspicuous traits: they are cold in the face of the suffering of others, but also towards themselves. Their own suffering has so little power over them because they can barely remember it: it disappears, just as the patient awaking from an anaesthetic does not remember the pains of the operation (Ödön von Horváth has shown the aspect of coldness particularly emphatically). The torture methods of the fascists seem to be very closely connected to these matters. If they assume that their prospective victims have been desensitized to suffering, then these can only be reached through an excess of pain. This coldness is connected to a secret complicity with those things which one strives to resemble oneself. In so far as there is still such a thing as an individual libido, one that has not yet been collectively channelled, it directs itself at tools (the phenomenon of 'toolmindedness').³ The existing world of objects replaces that of images. They believe in the religion of cars. This relationship with technology leads to a very peculiar mixture of improvisational ability and obedience, of independent 'initiative' (raiding-party mentality) and abstention from independent thinking, that allows for either extreme. We see the decisive problem in the psychological thought ban that exists today. For most people, thinking more, i.e. beyond the direct needs of one's immediate environment, now constitutes a disturbance of that very adaptation which takes possession of their entire psychological energy. At the same time, more thought already means an endangerment of their chances of advancement, perhaps even their immediate security. But this disillusionment of reality, this quantification of work processes that virtually allows everyone to work anywhere, and the relative directness with which these social powers take effect, lead to a situation in which the objective world of things supports the very realization it suppresses. The same people who will not allow themselves to think (or do similar things such as read books, discuss theoretical questions, etc.) have

become 'canny' and can no longer be fooled. It seems to us that this contradiction really circumscribes the central concern of all conscious education in the present phase. It is a matter of pushing this 'canniness' so far that it breaks through its bond to the immediate world of action and transforms itself into real thinking. If that succeeds, it is precisely those 'crippled' human beings who will be most able to put an end to that crippling. Their coldness can become a readiness to make sacrifices for truth, their improvisation can turn into a cunning in the fight against the giant organization, and their speechlessness can become a willingness – without words or arguments – to do what needs to be done. It is revealing that the achievements of pedagogy in this direction do not correspond to those of an education in traditional 'culture'.

IV

It is our intention to make a first contribution to addressing these problems – however inadequately they may be described here – in the field of music. Firstly because we believe we have done considerable preparatory work in this direction, secondly for reasons of personal qualification, but thirdly also because we believe that music objectively offers an especially good point of entry.

The fact that music is still unexplored territory in socio-psychological terms means that one finds far fewer rigid views here than in other fields, and that there are far fewer obstacles in the form of clichés to impede the posing of questions. We intend to erect a small model settlement within this unoccupied theoretical field, one that would have little chance closer to the centres; but, once its results on this remote terrain are secure, there are prospects of applying these results to the truly decisive socio-psychological and socio-pedagogical questions.

Music is especially qualified to do this because it shares fundamental characteristics with language and, like language, is clearly dominated by monopolistic centres, while, at the same time, it is not directly connected to the world of objects in its content, and hence studies on it are not subject to the same taboos and rationalizations as those concerning the immediate world of objects. At the same time, however, the influence of this object-world is palpable in all elements of musical language and its reception. Music truly is, to cite Schopenhauer's aesthetics, 'the world once again', but a model that one can use to study the defining characteristics of reality without having to discuss directly the content of that reality. The political neutrality of music is especially important for such an aim. At the same time, however, music also shows many of the changes of environment characterized in section

(II). Phenomena such as toolmindedness, test and sport mentality, the replacement of family authority through social authority (jazz generation), the receding of the spiritual side of culture in favour of the physical – all those things can be studied extremely closely through music. The individual musical studies planned were named in the previous memorandum. Their connection to the general reflections touched on here is partly obvious, and will partly transpire in the course of the investigation. We hope in particular that we shall be able to diagnose the way in which traditional ‘cultural artefacts’ have become problematic and been assigned different functions far more concretely than has previously been the case.

Our plan has two parts:

a.) We intend to treat music as a neutral model for questions concerning the new human being, its connection to traditional culture and the way in which culture has itself become problematic.

b.) It will be attempted – in the sense of progressive education,⁴ i.e. without any abstract goals, purely on the basis of the facts available concerning the current state of awareness and its connection to the general state of society – to develop aims and methods for a musical pedagogy that is suited to actual conditions. That means not concealing these conditions through nebulous ideas of progress and culture, but on the other hand also avoiding the dangers posed by the barbarism and destructive hostility to culture that are descending upon us; rather, one must make the most of the possibilities that, by the standards of a truly emancipated humanity, are visible in our present situation, however faintly or negatively. We do not simply mean the hope that musical culture will survive by hibernating during the coming catastrophe – though such a wish by no means seems despicable to us – but rather the development, in the neutral zone of music, of methods with some prospects of application to less neutral areas.⁵

H Some Remarks on a Propaganda Publication of NBC

1.) »Among the social events of Honolulu are the radio opera breakfasts [. . .] Rangers and cow punchers gather on Saturday afternoons at the Cody Museum in Wyoming (dedicated to the memory of Buffalo Bill) to hear broadcasts from the stage of the Metropolitan.«

2.) *Music is My Hobby*. »For the purpose of encouraging others to discover the pleasures of self-expression in terms of music, many distinguished persons who classified music as their favorite diversion share with the radio audiences their enjoyment in making music in the *Music is My Hobby* program.«

Comment: a.) This sentence is characteristic for the conception of pseudo-freedom and pseudo-activity which is fostered by radio business in its present form. The term »self-expression« is entirely fallacious. A person who plays the violin badly is not expressing himself by any means. It is even doubtful how far any good pianist or a violinist is »expressing himself«. But just as the amateurs are told that they are expressing themselves when they are only obeying orders which they get from some authoritative source, and creating the illusion that their controlled and dependent activities are something which are in the proper field of activity, and that childish attempts to do something badly, which other people can do much better, have any bearing upon their making themselves objective and expressing their personal feelings.

In this context I should like to stress one point. Namely, the greater the power of monopolistic institutions and the more completely people depend on these institutions, the more at the same time the idea is affirmed that they are free and independently make up their own minds. The power of monopolistic institutions and the so-called »waiting on a customer« are reciprocal terms. The more completely the listener is subordinated to the arbitrariness of radio institutions, the more they try to make him believe that he expresses himself when he switches on his radio or even when he has even got the opportunity of playing before the microphone.

b.) The criterion according to which these amateurs are chosen is not their musical gift nor even their technical skill but their being »distinguished persons«. That is to say, people who were successful in other branches of life. Significantly, later on these persons are qualified as being distinguished »in arts, letters and business«. This leads to two observations: First – and this is a point which seems to me important within the context of the whole radio theory – that music is appreciated much less according to its artistic value than according to a sort of social value which is more or less independent from its artistic qualities, and which I should like to call, as a preliminary term, its »fetish« quality. People like to listen to these amateurs neither because they are interested in music nor because they think they can learn, being amateurs themselves, anything from other amateurs, but mainly for the reason that they hope to glimpse into the private sphere of prominent people with whom they can identify themselves. This sort of listening to successful business men as amateurs belongs to the same class as the interest which newspaper readers take in reading of divorces of film stars and society people. The mechanism behind it is very complicated – partly they hope to identify themselves with these important people by knowing details about their intimate life. On the other hand, their envy of, and hatred for, them can express itself when they notice the lack of accomplishment, the viciousness, or anything of that sort. It seems to me most likely that the wrong notes played by the great businessmen are as important for the listeners of *Music is My Hobby* as are the right notes.

c.) On the other hand, this hour provides an opportunity for publicity for the prominent people who need publicity as an element of their lives. This mechanism is, so to speak, perfect. The listeners get satisfaction from pseudo-contact with leaders and prominent people and the leaders and prominent people are leading and prominent only insofar as the listeners have this sort of contact. One encounters here the problem of the relation of mass society and »personality« or »leader« in the modern sense, and it may be hinted, even at this point

in our project, that the categories of leadership or personality on the one hand, and the categories of masses and mass psychology on the other, are not just opposite, but fit perfectly within each other. This goes so far that the psychological structure of these leaders or personalities which appears to be something absolutely different from the psychology of the masses are fundamentally identical with the psychological structure of the masses who are adoring these leaders. The advertisement value of this *Music is My Hobby* hour for the prominent businessman is as great as the psychological value which it is supposed to have for the business.

One of the functions of *Music is My Hobby* is, obviously, to convince people that music is not so serious as it is supposed to be, but that it is a sort of fun which everyone can have. Mr. Street¹ told me in his interview that it was one of the basic ambitions of this hour to break down the conception of the seriousness of music. This is corroborated by a statement of Mr. Jeffrey Parsons, chief editorial writer for the *New York Herald Tribune* that is printed in the NBC publication. The decisive sentence is: »My purpose in appearing on this program is to encourage others to discover how much fun there is in making music – not to entertain critical listeners.« Obviously in this sentence, the conception of music as fun is already permeated by a certain resentment of people who know too much about the matter. It is the anti-highbrow attitude in *statu populari*. This anti-highbrow attitude is here linked up with the general tendency of the degradation of music. All these new radio activities, such as arrangements for string orchestra, *Music is My Hobby*, *Amateur Hour*, etc., serve the one purpose of degrading the music by its mass production. The concepts of art which derive from this attitude are completely quantitative ones. I quote as characteristic from Mr. Parsons's statement: »First credit belongs to the radio . . . for all we have to do is to press a button (!) and the world's best concert music (!) or the Metropolitan Opera enters the home. As a result Americans are becoming the most musical (!) of all peoples.«

d.) It appears to be worthwhile to make some notes about some of the distinguished persons who played in *Music is My Hobby*. One of them is professor Vladimir Karapetoff,² described in the publication as »professor of electrical engineering at Cornell University and consultant to many large manufacturing corporations«. Another one is a rear admiral. One of the ladies taking part is simply characterized as »prominent in New York and Washington society«. But even more interesting to me were the cultural people, so to speak, who play a part in the hour. One of them is Hendrik Willem Van Loon, described as a »prominent author, biographer and critic«. ³ He is one of these authors

of the type of Emil Ludwig,⁴ Stephan Zweig, etc., who uses great names of heroes of human history as a pretext for completely private psychological gossip. The mechanism which makes people read a book of Van Loon about Rembrandt is exactly the same mechanism which induces them to listen to the prominent amateur music-making. So the person is completely adequate to the purpose.

Among the prominent people mentioned is Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, the chamber music patroness who truly has great merit as a sponsor of serious modern chamber music compositions.⁵ It might be, however, interesting from the point of view of her playing in *Music is My Hobby*, to know that Mrs. Coolidge is almost completely deaf. This, of course, is not mentioned in the NBC publication.

3.) As to the *Music Appreciation Hour* of Mr. Damrosch, I should like to add one quotation from the NBC publication which falls exactly within the framework of the comment I wrote about this *Hour*: »Programs which teach through the hearing of standard works of great composers with authoritative explanation and comment.« My remarks about the Damrosch *Hour* were written three days before my interview with Mr. Street and before I read the NBC publication, so this quotation has a certain value for the purpose of »checking« the theoretical result.

(4) *The NBC Music Guild*. This paragraph starts with the reasonable statement that there exists a special affinity between chamber music and the radio because of the adequacy of the proportions of chamber music to the proportions of private rooms where people are used to listening to radio. And the author finds it more adequate to radio than the »spaciousness of the concert hall«. He goes on, however, with the statement »chamber music finds in broadcasting an ideal medium of transmission into the charmed circle of the family.«

(a) Here we find the conception of »family« as a kind of criterion or measurement for broadcasting in general. As far as information from Mrs. Greenberg and Mrs. Gaudets lead me to believe, the fiction of the whole family listening to radio is used everywhere especially for the purpose of checking the radio activities within any field which would be regarded as independent. In other words, with the purpose of making radio more adequate to current standards of present-day society. It would be interesting to see how far one actually can reckon with the full family as radio listeners and how far the conception of the listener-family is completely fictitious and only serves the ideological purposes of the institutions which hold the command of radio.

b.) The term, the »charmed circle« of the family, leads to another moment which might be important for the role radio music plays. It is a way of enchanting people – of distracting them from reality. As I

mentioned in my first exposé that it is one of the tendencies of radio music to destroy the »aura« of music, then this remark of mine, in the past, is only a half-truth. Whereas radio in a more advanced sense may destroy the aura, on the other hand, it just serves the purpose of preserving the elements of »art aura« for social purposes. It is exactly the same as with moving pictures. If you watch a movie scene of Greta Garbo, then the exactitude with which you can witness her kissing her partner seems to destroy the »aura« which a kiss had, for instance, on the stage where you could not witness it so »scientifically«. On the other hand, however, all the devices of cinema tend to poeticize actual and trivial lives and to create new moments of aura which guild the triviality of present-day life. In cinema as well as in radio the attitude towards the aura and the unhidden, unrevealed reality is totally antagonistic and this antagonism has to be expressed by the theory.

c.) The characterization of chamber music contains the sentence, »These works are, in fact, symphonic form in development, in sublimity of inspiration.«

Two remarks are necessary: first – the idea of symphonic form in chamber music is misleading, as symphonic as well as chamber music groups have got the sonata which is the fundamental form; but one can not say that chamber music programs are symphonic in form because the characteristic of symphonic form, just as Paul Bekker⁶ put it, is its power of social integration and this is certainly not to be found within the framework of chamber music. The conception of symphonic form seems to be such a fetish that any music which is regarded as something sublime and so on, is measured according to the standard of »symphony«.

I also noticed that instead of serious or classical music, they use the term »symphonic music«. Secondly, they speak of the sublimity of inspiration which is supposed to be equal to the symphonic one. This shows that the category of the sublime is, as I just mentioned, something connected with the symphony generally, although there is no reason for doing so whatever. Probably behind this conception is nothing but the fetish of certain standard programs of Beethoven, such as the »Eroica«, the Fifth, Seventh and Ninth Symphonies. It is also within the scope of this fetish character that the concept of inspiration appears here. The inspiration [*Einfall*] is something which is highly regarded in music as a sort of private property of the composer who has such inspirations. And laymen are especially fond of speaking about musical thieves, stealing of inspiration, and so on. In Beethoven symphonies, however, which are regarded as the standard of symphonic music, the inspiration – in the sense of the creation of the ultimate motivational elements – do not play an important role. They are

mainly mere circumscriptions of the simplest tonal chords (in the main theme of the first movement of the Ninth Symphony) and the whole quality of the works depend on the development of this material and not only on the material itself. Having become »standard« works and fetishes, however, those works are brought under the category of inspiration which is totally inadequate to them. One can find the same fallaciousness of the concept of inspiration if one examines the current pictures of Toscanini. Although Toscanini is an exceedingly sober and matter-of-fact musician in his musical style, for the purpose of his publicity he appears in these photographs as a sort of fascinating, improvising, demonic and inspired power. The frame of white hair which he shares with Einstein seems to be one of the elements of his publicity aura. One could say that music, the more it becomes a commodity within present-day life, needs more and more the ideology of being something totally irrational, based on pure inspirations which, at the same time are the indisputable property of the individuals to whom they are attributed.

5.) As to the program on Sibelius: »During the 1937–1938 season the presentation of a complete cycle of Jean Sibelius' symphonies has attracted special attention.« It is not said what sort of attention this actually was.

6.) To the theory of arrangements: »This String Symphony offers unusual programs of music for string instruments, presenting not only the standard musical classics (!) but also many novelties including another of Dr. Black's own arrangements.«

7.) When I commented upon the Damrosch *Hour*, I made some observations about the ideology of the old, old folk song and so on. The following quotations seem to prove that I was right: »Folk music [. . .] simple melodies handed down orally from one generation to another and played or sung by people for their own enjoyment have provided some of the most interesting series of programs sponsored by the National Broadcasting Company.« »Although in these broadcasts special emphasis has been laid on American folk tunes, nevertheless, many unusual programs of the simplest type of folk music have been re-broadcast from England, France, Germany and Italy, as well as from the Orient and South America.« The completely ideological character of this statement is to be proved by two obvious misstatements:

First: The idea of »simple melodies handed down orally«, and so on, is an invention. Probably all these folk songs have been printed and are taught to children in schools by teachers who are able to read music. Of course, one would have to check this, but according to European standards the actual oral tradition of music does not play any important role at all and it seems to me most unlikely that things

in America should be different. The assertion of the »oral tradition« serves only the purpose of making this music appear something reverent and near to the community of people.

I should like to lay special emphasis, on the other hand, on the point that these questions need to be checked because it is not quite impossible that the range of oral tradition in America is wider than in Europe. The decision about this question especially needs more intimate knowledge of the historical problems of the negro spirituals.

Second: If the commentator of the NBC publication, however, calls this music »the simplest type of folk music« the question is obviously wrong because most of the current folk songs which are already in the tonal system represent a comparatively highly developed and late standard of musical feelings that are fundamentally different from the actually primitive folk songs as they existed, for instance, in Africa. The simplicity is a mere assumption and they appear simple only because the elements are used everywhere in musical entertainment of today. But it is a second-hand – not a first-hand simplicity.

One must be aware of the fact, however, that the genuineness of folk music is a musical taboo of the same type as the value of a Stradivarius violin or the inspiration of Beethoven. All these taboos are, so to speak, sensitive points of present-day music life. Ideological motives are concentrated so strongly upon these points that it is to a degree dangerous to dispute them. I am fully aware of the fact that it is the mere doubting of compositions, just as any doubting of the value of musical inspiration as the basic power of composition, the genuineness of folk songs, and all that sort of thing, that will create a turmoil of resistance. And it is especially necessary to be very careful in checking these assumptions because the unconscious resistance against these assumptions is so exceedingly strong that whatever material can be found against these assumptions will be used, so that if, for instance, there actually should exist some sort of oral tradition of negro folk-music, one would use that existence most eagerly as an argument against us, although even if there are still elements of that type to be found, this would not alter the function which in present day society all these elements definitely have gained.

8.) In one of the brief memoranda which I wrote, I used the term »gehobene Unterhaltung«, or »elevated entertainment«, and a critical analysis of the attempt of radio to »raise« low types of music to a certain medium standard of controlled consumption, so to speak, to a Babbitt level, will make an essential part of our theory.

Involuntarily the NBC publication provides us with some material about that. I quote two sentences:

NBC's record of achievement in promoting musical art in the United States is not complete without mention of its notable contributions to the advancement of dance music to a higher level. [. . .] While NBC has conspicuously served in popularizing art music, it has contributed equally to dignifying popular music as art.

The conception of dignified popular music will deserve special analysis. In this connection, compare the remarks about »stabilized« jazz which I made in my essay about jazz.

9.) To the role of musical fetishes: I spoke briefly about the worth of Stradivarius violins, and so on. I find two proofs of this in the NBC publication. *First*: NBC has performed transmissions of Richard Wagner's piano, Chopin's piano and Paganini's fiddle. What was played and who did the playing apparently was of no importance. No listener who would listen to these instruments without knowing whose they were could possibly have gotten any purely musical pleasure out of them. The whole value was this extra-musical value of their being a trademark.

Second: Under an illustration in the publication one finds the following remarks:

Mischa Mischakoff, concert master, puts aside his famous \$50,000 Strad, to explain a difficult passage to a member of his string choir.

Concerning the Theory of Hits

One should examine the importance of trivial words or of terms for any sort of technical equipment, such as, for instance, the use of the word »telephone« or »movies« and so on in texts of hits. These words seem to be of special importance for the success of hits. In Germany an equivalent function seems to be that of foreign words used in light opera and hit songs.

I Theses about the Idea and Form of Collaboration of the Princeton Radio Research Project

As a basis for discussion at a staff meeting

1.) The work of the project is to be conducted subject to theoretical viewpoints. That is, nowhere will the collection of facts be an aim in itself, except for special groups of problems upon which, for some reason or other, we must consciously concentrate our activity on fact-collecting. In general, however, facts are to be selected with reference to their applicability to a theory concerning the relationship between present-day radio and society. The preparation of statistical generalities, average numbers and so on, as well, is only a means to an end.

Methodological Thesis: To my mind the justification for conducting individual analyses very thoroughly, instead of questioning or interviewing hundreds and hundreds of people in order to arrive at averages, lies in the conviction that the mechanism which works upon the individual, since it is the mechanism of the one society, is identical in most cases. Consequently, if one succeeds in tracing back the »individual« psychology of a particular individual to this mechanism, the results will most likely hold good in general. The results, of course, must be checked. The usual positivist assertion, however, insisting that generalizations should not be made on the basis of individual experiences but that the investigator should rather try to get as many cases as possible and only then try to induce general rules, is based upon the fallacious assumption that the individual is absolutely »individual« and not the product of non-individual forces behind him. To carry through the generalizing method in the usual way – that is, obeying

the taboo of not »generalizing« a specific individual mechanism – would prevent us from reaching anything but the most trivial conclusions. This is actually the basic methodological idea behind my whole attempt.

2.) Here is the chief viewpoint of the theory which we hope to verify by individual inquiries: radio is to be regarded as an instrument influencing and ruling the masses. Fieldwork concerning radio listeners, their number, their groupings, their psychology and so on, can be conducted only as subordinate parts to the theory. According to our basic conviction, all listener reactions are produced by the social mechanism, that is, at first by the radio stations. During the present monopolistic stage of society, the belief that the listener is a sort of »customer« and that radio production is modeled solely to serve his wants and needs, seems to be outdated. It will be our concern to express this state of affairs not only in the form of research »results« but in the very method of our research work as well. In other words, we shall not be content to describe, number and measure listener reactions but in every section we shall try to prove the dependence of these reactions upon the content furnished to the listener and on the manner in which this content is provided to him.

3.) I consider it the crucial problem of the project to elaborate the concrete relationship between the mechanism of radio and the reactions of the listener. On the one hand, this is necessary in order to emancipate those theoretical theses which we use as a point of departure from the realm of arbitrary improvisation. On the other hand, purely quantitative studies (*Erhebungen*) would not be sufficient for our aims. We must try to discover methods of qualitative study, with special reference to the *motivation* of the individual respondent's reactions. What such qualitative analyses may lack in »generality«, they make up by the depth of the individual mechanism of reaction which could not adequately be arrived at by quantitative questioning. If the results of a careful qualitative analysis prove to re-affirm one of the underlying theses, then we should consider this verification to be a proof of our theses as valid as, for example, averages about what programs people like to hear, and so on.

4.) If our aim is to get qualitative analyses of our interviewed respondents, it is of utmost importance not to be content with clichés about motivation such as those remarks often volunteered by the respondents themselves. If a respondent, when asked about his reaction to the broadcast of a particular dramatic work, gives »emotional reasons« in explanation, we must definitely try to analyze these reasons more concretely. That is, we must first attempt to find out what is meant by the term »emotional reasons« and then attempt to

find out what psychological reality is actually behind the phrase. For this latter purpose, we shall have to use the apparatus of psychoanalytic introspection. Here again some experimental methods recommend themselves: Immediate situations where the behavior of the respondents can be studied will have to be produced, for example, after a political speech and things of that sort. What the respondents themselves usually say about their motives is generally conventional and can furnish us only with material for the theoretical aims of our study but must not be considered as something final in itself. This is very clear in theory but it is rather difficult to realize in practice inasmuch as people are usually inclined to stick to the verity of »Mr. Smith told me so himself«.

5.) In my special section of the project, music, an idea has impressed itself upon me which I should prefer to call, at first, the idea of »infantile« listening. Compared to developed music-listening, listening to radio music shows definite infantile features. We are ready to assume that this tendency (which I shall not describe in this thesis) is not limited solely to music, but that, for instance, information which is obtained through the read word (and which is objectivated by the auditorially perceived word) is replaced by the spoken word over the radio. We are also ready to assume that this replacement expresses an equivalent tendency. I should be very grateful to the colleagues in other sections of the project if they would devote some attention to the »infantile« features of listener reactions to radio. Possibly we could exchange our experiences concerning this sphere.

6.) It appears to me that it is exceedingly important for us to avoid an alienation of the different sections of the project and different fields of activity simply because of the necessary division of labor. As a matter of fact, of course, all these fields are necessarily interrelated. For example: if we take it for granted that music itself obtains a certain character of information through being broadcast over the radio and in this respect is essentially related to the sphere of radio news-broadcasting and so on, it would certainly be the task of the political section of the project to analyze the effect of music to determine to what extent music has to be regarded as political insofar as it abstracts from politics, however apparently distant music and politics may appear to be from each other. (For example, I could think of a comparative study about listening to characteristic political information and listening to music.)

Furthermore, we could pursue the problem of whether a certain positive and stubborn attitude toward entertainment is connected with political disinterest as well as an aversion to broadcasts which make claims upon the mentality of the listener – serious music as well

as, for example, scientific speeches. From this point of view, I should again suggest that the collaborators of the various sections regularly exchange their results and experiences.

7.) As far as suggestions for the improvement of radio are concerned, we must be fully conscious of the fact that improvement of radio is by no means a priori identical with tendencies of the usual type of educational broadcasting or cultural uplift. In principle these types are as open to criticism from the point of view of the project as are commercial broadcasts. I should like to add a general warning that, under present-day conditions, we should not regard radio regimented by the state as progressive, and commercial radio as reactionary. Under certain circumstances more progressive tendencies might be realized today under the form of free competition than under bureaucratic direction and control. On the other hand, European experiences show that economic interests are manifesting themselves even in governmental, centralized and non-commercial broadcasts.

8.) Throughout the entire sphere of radio a certain type of person is to be found. I call this type of person the »*Basteler*« – a German word which is not quite expressed in the expression »radio amateur«. The *Basteler* is that type of individual – mostly to be found among youngsters – who is more interested in the radio apparatus and its function than he is in the form and content of the broadcasts. I should like to draw the attention of our colleagues to this type, as I regard it as one of the main manifestations of the »infantile« attitude of radio listeners, especially since it is fostered by the mechanism of radio. In the same connection I should like to call attention to these tendencies of *pseudo-activity* in panels, listener clubs, contests, verification collectors, and the like. This concept of *pseudo-activity* constitutes a substantial part of my memorandum and Miss Fiske's panel memorandum,¹ for example, furnishes definite proof from a completely different angle. Although on the surface these phenomena have nothing whatsoever to do with the content of the broadcasts, they will probably prove to be very important to a theory of radio just because of this apparent lack of connection; for a theory of radio such as we contemplate will have to analyze all forms of fetishes which are reaffirmed or created by the new tool.

Discography

compiled by Robert Hullot-Kentor

1) *Alexander's Ragtime Band* (Benny Goodman version)
Benny Goodman Plays Fletcher Henderson
CD Hep 1038

2) *Alexander's Ragtime Band* (Ted Lewis version)
Music From the Era: Titanic
Various Artists
CD Sony 65563

3) *A Tisket, A Tasket*
Classic Original Live Recordings
Glenn Miller
CD Pair 1218

4) *Avalon* (Goodman version)
This is Jazz, Vol. 4
Benny Goodman
CD Sony 64620

5) *Avalon* (Lombardo version)
Avalon
Guy Lombardo
LP Armed Forces Radio and Television Service P-615

6) *Bells of San Raquel*

Here's That Band Again

Dick Jurgens

CD Collector's Choice 91

7) *Cry Baby Cry*

Swing Time: Vol. 1 [Columbia River]

Various Artists

CD Columbia River 1411

8) *Deep Purple*

The History of Pop Radio: Vol. 6, 1939

Various Artists

CD OSA 205520

9) *Dipsy Doodle*The Uncollected Larry Clinton and his Orchestra
(1936–1938)

Larry Clinton and his Orchestra

CD Hindsight HCD-109

10) *Epecially for You*

Jack Teagarden and his Orchestra (1934–1939)

Jack Teagarden and Benny Goodman

CD Melodie Jazz Classics 729

11) *Forty Second Street*

Swing Here and Now 42nd Street

Dubin/Warren

CD Rodsmith 2

12) *Goody Goody*

Ella Fitzgerald [RSV/Living Era]

Ella Fitzgerald

CD ASV/Living Era 55

13) *I'm Just a Jitterbug*

1938–1939

Ella Fitzgerald

CD Classics 518

14) *I Want to Be Happy*

Air Play

Benny Goodman

CD Doctor Jazz 40350

15) *La Cucaracha*

The Soul of Blues Harmonics

Shaky Horton

LP MCA 9265

16) *London Bridge is Falling Down*

Mommy and Me: Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

CD Madacy 121

17) *Mandalay*

Al Jolson, Vol. 3: The Twenties: From Broadway to Hollywood

Al Jolson

CD Pearl 7045

18) *My Reverie*

Hits of the 30's and 40's

Various Artists

CD Gallerie 430

19) *Night and Day*

The Indispensable Tommy Dorsey, Vol. 3-4

CD Jazz Tribune 640062

20) *L'oiseau bleu*

Barlachii Volga Singers

LP Parlophone 2-20781

21) *Only Forever*

The History of Pop Radio, Vol. 8: 1940

Various Artists

CD OSA 205522

22) *Penny Serenade*

All Time Favorites

Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians

CD MCA Special Products 21090

23) *Rhapsody in Blue*

Candlelight Miller

Glenn Miller

CD RCA 68715

24) *Russian Lullaby* (Berigan version)

Pied Piper

Bunny Berigan

CD Bluebird/RCA 66615

25) *Russian Lullaby* (Garber version)

The Greatest Recordings of the Big Band Era: Vol. 29–30

Bunny Berigan and his Orchestra/Jan Garber and his
Orchestra

LPs Columbia FM-8029 & FM-8030

26) *St Louis Blues*

Fargo, North Dakota

Duke Ellington

CD Vintage Jazz Classic 1019

27) *Song of the Volga Boatman*

Feodor Chaliapin

LP Victrola 88663

28) *Sunrise Serenade*

The Essential Glenn Miller

Glenn Miller

CD Bluebird/RCA 66520

29) *Sylvia*

Ah Sweet Mystery of Life: Anthology (1931–1938)

Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy

CD Pearl 7026

30) *Tiger Rag* (Duke Ellington version)Centennial Edition: Complete RCA Victor Recordings:
1927–1973

Duke Ellington

CD RCA 3386

31) *Trees*

1937–1938

Fletcher Henderson

CD Classics 519

32) *Two in Love*

L'art vocal, vol. 14: La Selection, 1939–1943

Frank Sinatra

CD L'art vocal 14

Notes

Editor's Introduction

- 1 Evelyn Wilcock, 'Adorno's Uncle: Dr. Bernard Wingfield and the English Exile of Theodor W. Adorno 1934–8', *German Life and Letters* 49/3 (1996), pp. 329–35.
- 2 Max Horkheimer to T. W. Adorno, 20 October 1937, in *Theodor W. Adorno/Max Horkheimer Briefwechsel 1927–1969*, vol. 1, ed. Henri Lonitz and Christoph GÖdde (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2003), p. 440.
- 3 Adorno to Horkheimer, 21 October 1937, *ibid.*, p. 442.
- 4 Adorno to Benjamin, 27 November 1937, in *Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin: The Complete Correspondence*, trans. Nicholas Walker (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 227.
- 5 Adorno to Lazarsfeld, 1 January 1938, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv.
- 6 Gleason Archer, *History of Radio to 1926* (New York: Ayer, 1938), pp. 131–46.
- 7 Dickson Skinner, 'Music Goes into Mass Production', *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, April 1939, p. 485.
- 8 James F. Evans, *Prairie Farmer and WLS: The Burrigge D. Butler Years* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969), p. 155.
- 9 Leopold Stokowski, 'New Vistas in Radio', *Atlantic Monthly*, January 1935, p. 12.
- 10 Evans, *Prairie Farmer and WLS*, p. 162.
- 11 Barnett Newman, 'On the Need for Political Action by Men of Culture', in *Selected Writings and Interviews*, ed. John P. O'Neill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 5.
- 12 Joshua B. Freeman, *Working Class New York* (New York: New Press, 2000), p. 67.

- 13 Alton Coor, 'Mayor Mild in Music Talk', *World-Telegram*, December 1937, *WNYC Scrapbook for 1937*, Municipal Archive of New York City.
- 14 Skinner, 'Music Goes into Mass Production', p. 487.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 488.
- 16 Kathleen Ann Moran, 'From a Toy to a Tool: The Emergence and Growth of WOI to 1940', thesis, State University of Iowa, Ames, 1981, p. 164.
- 17 Skinner, 'Music Goes into Mass Production', p. 487.
- 18 Ben Hamilton, 'Listen and Learn' (no original publication information), *WNYC Scrapbook for 1938*, Municipal Archive of New York City.
- 19 *New York Panorama: A Companion to the WPA Guide to New York City* (New York: Pantheon, [1938] 1984), p. 298.
- 20 Hamilton, 'Listen and Learn'.
- 21 Skinner, 'Music Goes into Mass Production', p. 487. Emphasis added.
- 22 Daily statistics on radio stations in the United States, by format, *100000 Watts: U. S. Radio and TV Directory*, www.100000watts.com.
- 23 Gunther Schuller, 'A Stranglehold on the Arts', *Keynote*, May 1982, p. 25.
- 24 See J. Lautman and B.-P. Lécuyer, *Paul Lazarsfeld, 1901–1976: La sociologie de Vienne à New York* (Paris: Harmattan, 1998).
- 25 Frank Stanton to John Marshall, 17 January 1940, Rockefeller Archive Center. Emphasis added.
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 Lazarsfeld wrote to Robert J. Havighurst at the Rockefeller Foundation, 'Dr. T. W. Adorno is in charge of the conceptual analysis of this field [the Music Study section]. His qualifications for such work stems from the fact that he is a musician of rank as well as a former professor of Social Philosophy at the University of Frankfurt.' Lazarsfeld to Havighurst, 21 October 1939, Rockefeller Archive Center. For further details of Havighurst, see 'Radio Physiognomics', note 5, p. 490.
- 28 Lazarsfeld to Adorno, 26 February 1940, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv.
- 29 Lazarsfeld to Frank Stanton, 14 December 1938, Rockefeller Archive Center.
- 30 Adorno, 'Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America', in *Critical Models*, trans. Henry Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 227.
- 31 Adorno to Benjamin, 4 May 1938, in *Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Benjamin: The Complete Correspondence*, p. 251. The date of this letter (no. 103) has been mistranscribed as 4 March.
- 32 In *Essays on Music: Theodor W. Adorno*, ed. and with introduction, commentary, and notes by Richard Leppert, trans. Susan Gillespie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 288–317.
- 33 Twenty-three pages, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv. Another, earlier version of eighteen pages exists with the important title 'Aesthetic Aspects of Radio'.
- 34 157 pages, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv. Manuscript with handwritten corrections by an unidentified American editor. A separate manuscript contains ninety-one pages of additional materials to this draft.

- 35 Eighty-six pages, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv.
- 36 Thirty-five pages, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv.
- 37 'Music in Radio', p. 151.
- 38 Ibid., p. 153.
- 39 'Music and Radio', p. 22, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv.
- 40 *Theodor W. Adorno und Ernst Krenek Briefwechsel*, ed. Wolfgang Rogge (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974), p. 126. Emphasis added.
- 41 Adorno, 'Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America', p. 228. Emphasis added.
- 42 Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, trans., with an introduction by, Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), p. 35.
- 43 Ibid., p. 9.
- 44 See Yves R. Simon's *The Great Dialogue of Nature and Space* (South Bend, IN: St Augustine's Press, 2001) and Emile Meyerson, *Identity and Reality*, trans. Kate Lowenberg (New York: Dover, 1962).
- 45 Adorno insists in *Current of Music*, for instance, that 'no ready-made value judgments are to be transmitted. We do not want to make musical proselytes, we do not want to advertise music, to sell miraculous works and great composers.' Here he distinguishes his own aims completely from those of Damrosch's music appreciation. An implication, then, of the probably unchangeable view of Adorno as being narrow-minded in his judgements is that this view actually is the complementary obverse of Damrosch's educational programme; in a sense, it exemplifies the success of the mentality of music appreciation, though from the perspective of industrial entertainment. It represents something of the complexity of the achievement of a modern concept of truth that, for Adorno, the idea of dividing up music into what is and what is not worthwhile would be as obscure as it would have been to Einstein to learn that relativity means that nothing can be known for sure.
- 46 'Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America', p. 227.
- 47 *The 1940 Journal of Clifford Odets*, introduction by W. Gibson (New York: Grove Press, 1988), p. 60.
- 48 See note 59, below.
- 49 James Jeans, *Science and Music*, first pubd 1937 (New York: Dover, 1968), p. 241.
- 50 'Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America', p. 227.
- 51 *Theodor W. Adorno: Letters to his Parents 1939–1951*, ed. Christoph Gödde and Henri Lonitz, trans. Wieland Hoban (Cambridge: Polity, 2006), p. 343.
- 52 Ibid., p. 351, n. 2.
- 53 Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften* 15, pp. 163–87.
- 54 Ibid., pp. 369–401.
- 55 Trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1988), pp. 21–38.
- 56 Adorno to Philip Vaudrin, 17 May 1940 (below); Adorno to Rudolf Kolisch, 12 July 1940; Adorno to Friedrich Pollock, 3 October 1940; Theodor W. Adorno Archiv.

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- 57 There are two drafts of this text in Adorno's papers, of twenty and twenty-four pages respectively.
- 58 W. G. Preston, Jr., assistant to the vice-president in charge of programmes at NBC, wrote an angry protest to Adorno's lecture on 18 December 1939 and submitted it to John Marshall at the Rockefeller Foundation: 'The paper is so full of factual errors and colored opinions, and its pretense at scientific procedure is so absurd in view of its numerous arbitrary assertions, that it is hardly worthy of serious consideration, except possibly as propaganda. In short, it seems to have an axiom to grind' (Rockefeller Archive Center). Geoffrey Gorer, an anthropologist, was then asked to review the talk and concluded, dismissively, that 'the statement on page 6 that music today is not an art but a commodity seems to me quite meaningless. Musicians have always had to eat' (Gorer to John Marshall, 2 January 1940, Rockefeller Archive Center).
- 59 *Letters to his Parents*, p. 28.
- 60 Adorno to Hans Eisler, 4 July 1940, Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin.
- 61 See 'The Radio Symphony', note 1, p. 494.
- 62 Compare 'The Radio Voice', this volume, pp. 345–91.
- 63 See Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).
- 64 *Music in Radio* is not included in this volume because, as the very first work that Adorno wrote shortly after his arrival, the English of the text is too rudimentary for publication.
- 65 See pp. 6–7.
- 66 This text was written in German and then expanded and translated by Adorno, presumably with considerable assistance. It is Adorno's translation that is presented here, reviewed and amended as needed.
- 67 *Letters to his Parents*, p. 45.
- 68 Memo, Henrietta Yurchenko to Adorno, 10 March 1940, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv.
- 69 Interview with Henrietta Yurchenko, New York City, 22 July 2000.
- 70 Adorno's initial broadcast over WNYC is referred to in the table of contents as his 'inaugural' broadcast. This is not meant to connote a magisterial event, but only to distinguish his first broadcast on WNYC from the first broadcast in his brief series of programmes.
- 71 *Letters to his Parents*, p. 47.
- 72 *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- 73 The *American Sociological Review* has no record of Adorno's submission, since its peer review policy requires that all materials pertaining to rejected manuscripts be discarded.
- 74 *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 9 (1941), pp. 17–48.
- 75 15 June 1941.
- 76 Adorno to Rudolf Kolisch, 12 July 1940, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv. 'On Jazz' has been published in *Essays on Music: Theodor W. Adorno*, ed. Richard Leppert, trans. Susan Gillespie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 437–95.

- 77 Adorno to Friedrich Pollock, 3 October 1940, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv.
- 78 See below, ‘Notes on this edition’.
- 79 No publication information. The text is at Columbia University, School of Journalism Library, D621.338.N2133.

1 Radio Physiognomics

- 1 Gordon W. Allport, Philip E. Vernon et al., *Studies in Expressive Movement* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), p. 3. Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741–1801), Swiss writer, Protestant vicar, anti-rationalist, anti-Cartesian, anti-French founder of a modern school of physiognomy, was a friend of Goethe for a certain time, and the two men collaborated on his main work, *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe* [Physiognomic Fragments to Further the Knowledge of Human Nature and Philanthropy] (4 vols, 1775–8); *The Whole Works of Lavater on Physiognomy*, trans. George Grenville (London: W. Simmonds, 1800).
- 2 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996), pp. 396–400.
- 3 Arturo Toscanini (1867–1957) moved to New York City in 1908 as music director at the Metropolitan Opera. He conducted the New York Philharmonic Orchestra from 1928 to 1936 and the NBC Symphony Orchestra from 1937 to 1954.
- 4 The Lone Ranger is a fictional Wild West sheriff, protagonist of the eponymous radio programme written by George W. Trendle and Franz Striker. The first episode was broadcast in 1933, and by 1939 the programme was heard on hundreds of radio stations.
- 5 Robert J. Havighurst (1900–1991), an important advocate of racial integration and school reforms, began his career as a physicist and later became a famous and widely published researcher in the field of experimental education. In the 1930s he held a position as assistant director at the General Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation.
- 6 Conference material is located in the Rockefeller Archive Center, container 359, folder 3705.
- 7 WOR was a major radio station in New York City around 1939.
- 8 On 30 October 1938, Orson Welles broadcast a special Halloween adaptation of H. G. Wells’s *The War of the Worlds*, which led to national uproar and panic.
- 9 Siegfried Bernfeld, ‘Zur Revision der Bioanalyse’, *Imago* 23 (1937), pp. 212–24. Sándor Ferenczi (1873–1933), a Hungarian-born psychoanalyst, introduced the term ‘bioanalysis’ for the first time in *Versuch einer Genitaltheorie* [Attempt at a Genital Theory] (Vienna, 1924); *Thalassa: A Theory of Genitality*, trans. Henry Alden Bunker (Albany, NY: Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 1938). Siegfried Bernfeld (1892–1953), born in Lemberg, was one of the first to make a psychoanalytical contribution to a theory of pedagogy, and became known especially for *Sisyphos oder die*

- Grenzen der Erziehung* [Sisyphus, or The Limits of Education] (Leipzig, 1925), for his numerous essays on adolescence, and for studies on the physiological dimensions of the theory of drives that he carried out during the 1930s.
- 10 Paul Bekker, *Die Sinfonie von Beethoven bis Mahler* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1918), p. 17. This essay was originally a lecture, presented in 1918 at a meeting of the Vereinigung für neue Kunst [Association for New Art] in Frankfurt. Bekker plays an important part in Adorno's work, partly because he was one of the first to conceive of music sociology.
 - 11 Ibid.
 - 12 This discussion could not be documented.
 - 13 (New York: American Historical Society, 1938), pp. 53ff.
 - 14 Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Modern Library, 1934), chapter 6: 'Pecuniary Canons of Taste', in particular pp. 126–8.
 - 15 This sentence is incomplete in the manuscript.
 - 16 Wilhelm Furtwängler (1886–1954) conducted the New York Philharmonic Orchestra for a short time in 1936. His application for a position with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra was turned down in 1949 on the grounds that he had collaborated with the Nazis.
 - 17 Ernst Krenek (1900–1991), a productive composer of Austrian descent, was a pupil of Franz Schreker and Arnold Schoenberg, a pianist, music critic, and friend and long-standing critical ally of Adorno. In 1938 he emigrated to the USA, where he was initially famous through the international renown of his jazz opera *Jonny spielt auf* (1927), until it was realized that he had long abandoned jazz in favour of his own interpretation of twelve-tone composition.
 - 18 Ernst Krenek, 'Bemerkungen zur Rundfunkmusik' [Observations on Radio Music], *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 7 (1938), pp. 160f. Adorno's translation and comments.
 - 19 *Sic*.
 - 20 Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, especially chapter 6, pp. 115–66.
 - 21 Martha Deane was the radio pseudonym of Mary Margaret McBride (1889–1976), one of the first and most widely broadcast female talk show presenters in the USA, who hosted programmes between 1934 and 1952. The colloquial 'back-fence' manner in which she discussed intimate details of famous guests shaped the standard practice for modern radio interviews. *Forbes Magazine* listed her as one of 'America's twelve master sellers'.
 - 22 This volume, 'Some Remarks on a Propaganda Publication of NBC', pp. 469–76.
 - 23 Presumably WQXR, New York's avant-garde radio station in the late 1930s and early 1940s.
 - 24 Hans Flesch (1896–1944) became artistic director of the newly founded Südwestdeutscher Rundfunkdienst [South-West German Radio Service] in Frankfurt in 1924. He was known for his experimental programmes, especially his 'Zauberei auf dem Sender' [Magic on the Radio]. From 1929

- to 1933, when the Nazis removed him from his position – the event to which Adorno is referring – he was director of the Berlin programme ‘Funkstunde’ [Radio Hour]. He disappeared in the final weeks of the Second World War.
- 25 Adorno’s translation. Günther Stern, later Günther Anders (1902–1992) – moralist, novelist, philosopher, outspoken critic of the atomic arms race – emigrated to the USA in 1936, and was in close contact with Adorno during the 1930s.
 - 26 The *Psychology of Music* of Ernst Kurth (1886–1946), a Swiss musicologist and music philosopher of Austrian descent, was enormously influential; inspired by Schopenhauer and Freud, Kurth conceived of sound – in contrast with physicalist psychologies of music – as an emanation of the composer’s subconscious.
 - 27 Walter Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), pp. 219–53.
 - 28 *Ibid.*, p. 710. Adorno’s translation.
 - 29 *Ibid.*, pp. 715–16. Adorno’s translation.
 - 30 The NBC Home Symphony was directed by Ernst La Prade, who headed music education at NBC and was Walter Damrosch’s assistant; the programme became a rival of the ‘NBC Music Appreciation Hour’.
 - 31 An NBC programme that was first broadcast in 1933 and directed by William Koons, the music editor at NBC. The show presented bankers, admirals and philanthropists giving amateur performances of classical music.
 - 32 Bronislaw Huberman (1882–1947), an outstanding virtuoso violinist, who founded the Palestine Symphony Orchestra in 1936.
 - 33 Krenek, ‘Bemerkungen zur Rundfunkmusik’, p. 157.
 - 34 The English conductor and cellist Sir John Barbirolli (1899–1970) became Toscanini’s successor as conductor of the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra in 1937.
 - 35 The Kidoodlers was a novelty band whose signature was quirky instrumentation – a toy piano, an ocarina and a Hawaiian guitar – and whose songs frequently involved doll-voiced choruses (e.g. ‘Mommie, mommie’ in a rhythmic falsetto). The group made recordings for Betty Boop cartoons and was played on NBC in the 1930s.
 - 36 Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, p. 713.
 - 37 This volume, ‘On Popular Music’, pp. 271ff.
 - 38 The American composer and music critic Deems Taylor (1885–1966) was well known in his day; in extensive writings he often seemed to treat new music fairly, but just as often he demonstrated philistine opposition towards twentieth-century avant-garde music.
 - 39 Paul Hindemith, *Craft of Musical Composition*, book 1, trans. Arthur Mendel (New York: Associated Music Publishers, 1942), p. 22.
 - 40 Taylor, *Of Men and Music* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1937), p. 86.
 - 41 *Ibid.*

- 42 Rainer Maria Rilke, ‘Archaischer Torso Apollos’, in *Neue Gedichte* [New Poems] (1908); Adorno’s translation.
- 43 The Canadian-born dance bandleader Guy Lombardo (1902–1977) was famous on American radio during the 1930s and on television well into the 1970s; he was known as the ‘king of corn’.
- 44 Quoted from a jingle for a popular American candy, M&Ms.

2 A Social Critique of Radio Music

- 1 Asterisks are used here in addition to note numbers to indicate passages of an earlier draft of this essay. The asterisk at the start of a passage marks the beginning of the earlier version; the concluding asterisk marks the end.
- 2 See Paul Lazarsfeld, ‘Remarks on Administrative and Critical Communications Research’, *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 9 (1941), pp. 2–16.
- 3 ‘Aunt Jemima’ is a popular American brand of pancake mix.
- 4 In 1927, WOI – Ames, Iowa, ‘The Voice of Iowa State’ – began broadcasting a classical music programme, ‘The Music Shop’, which was presented by Andrew G. Woolfies and soon became the object of nationwide admiration. A WOI programme guide from September 1937, for example, quotes Walter Damrosch as saying: ‘Iowa offers the most sophisticated reaction to symphonic music of all American states.’ Adorno himself was very familiar with the WOI programme, and often refers to it. His detailed knowledge of the program and the radio station was based partly on a 1938 study of WOI that was carried out by the Federal Radio Education Committee and supervised by Paul Lazarsfeld. See Alberta Curtis, *Listeners Appraise a College Station: Station WOI, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa* (Washington, DC: Federal Radio Education Committee, 1940).
- 5 See Duncan MacDougald, Jr., ‘The Popular Music Industry’, in *Radio Research 1941*, ed. Paul Lazarsfeld and Frank Stanton (New York, 1941), pp. 65–109.

3 The Radio Symphony

- 1 Joseph Maier (1911–2002), a sociologist, emigrated to the USA in 1933; he studied at Columbia University and from 1935 to 1939 worked as a research assistant for Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse at the Institute of Social Research and for the Princeton Radio Project; he later became editor of *Aufbau* and professor of sociology at Rutgers University project. George Simpson (1904–1998) translated major texts by Durkheim and was professor of sociology at Queen’s College; during this time he collaborated with Adorno on several sections of this book, including this essay.
- 2 In the version of ‘The Radio Symphony’ published in *Radio Research 1941* (New York, 1941) this line, on p. 139, ends with ‘Only a Few’. In

his personal copy of this text, however, Adorno crossed out this title and replaced it with ‘Only Forever’. See the discography.

4 Analytical Study of the *NBC Music Appreciation Hour*

- 1 In Sinclair Lewis’s 1922 novel *Babbitt*, the protagonist George F. Babbitt embodies the conformism of the middle class and its disdain for the arts. He himself is a figure of mass production, incapable of aesthetic interest.
- 2 Adorno had planned to insert a note at this point, but did not ultimately do so.
- 3 *Film Fun* (New York: Leslie-Judge) was first published in 1915, though predecessor titles date from 1887. In the 1930s it was America’s most well-known ‘risqué’ film magazine.
- 4 ‘One must be able to accompany the end (of the theme) with the usual cadential chords.’
- 5 See ‘On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening’, in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 288–317.
- 6 See ‘On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening’.
- 7 Rudolf Eucken, *Die Lebensanschauungen der großen Denker: Eine Entwicklungsgeschichte des Lebensproblems der Menschheit von Plato bis zur Gegenwart* [The Philosophies of the Great Thinkers: A Developmental History of the Problem of Human Life from Plato to the Present] (Leipzig, 1905).
- 8 Adorno’s review of Bengt de Törne’s *Sibelius: A Close-Up*. See ‘Glosse über Sibelius’, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 17, pp. 247ff.
- 9 Leopold Damrosch (1832–1885) emigrated from Germany to the USA and settled in New York City in 1871; he was a conductor and patriarch of a musical family that, in addition to the work of Walter Damrosch, founded some of New York’s most outstanding institutions. Leopold Damrosch himself founded the Oratorio Society and the New York Symphony, later the New York Philharmonic Orchestra; one of his sons, Frank, founded the institute that ultimately became the Juilliard School of Music, and one of his daughters, Clara, was involved in the foundation of the Mannes College of Music.

5 ‘What a Music Appreciation Hour Should Be’

- 1 Translation begins here.
- 2 All Adorno’s footnotes here were originally in English.
- 3 ‘tunes’ originally in English.
- 4 ‘classical or popular?’ originally in English.
- 5 ‘personality cult’ originally in English.
- 6 ‘appreciation hours’ originally in English.
- 7 ‘A few lines on the tempo of the course’: handwritten.
- 8 ‘At the end against “Unfinished”’: handwritten; ‘Unfinished’ originally in English.

- 9 ‘Ad C major, No. 7’: handwritten.
- 10 ‘Russian Lullaby’ handwritten in English.
- 11 ‘e.g. the movement from Haydn’s *Surprise Symphony*’: handwritten.
- 12 ‘depravation’ [*sic*] originally in English.
- 13 ‘likes and dislikes’ originally in English.
- 14 Handwritten marginal note: ‘After that . . . second subject’.
- 15 Eduard Steuermann (1892–1964), born near Lvov, emigrated to the USA in 1938; he was a teacher and composer, but became known above all as an exceptional performer, the first to play all of Schoenberg’s piano pieces. Before his emigration he occasionally played at the readings given by Karl Kraus. For many years he was Adorno’s confidant and close friend.
- 16 As the Kolisch Quartet disbanded in 1939, this group – consisting only partly of original members – may have constituted a failed attempt to re-form.
- 17 A famous soprano of the time.
- 18 Kurt Adler (1905–1988), born in Australia, worked as a conductor at the Max Reinhardt Theatre in Vienna and later at a number of German opera houses. He emigrated to the USA in 1938 and was general director of the San Francisco Opera for many years.
- 19 Rose Landwehr (1902–1981), German-born opera singer and director.
- 20 Paul Breisach (1896–1952), conductor at the Vienna Opera and later the Berlin Opera. In 1939 he emigrated to the USA, and in 1941 he became conductor at the Metropolitan Opera in New York.
- 21 Translation ends here.
- 22 Henrietta Yurchenko (1916–2008), writer, teacher and producer at WNYC and other radio stations, was involved in establishing American ethnomusicology and also in the study of American folk music. She was one of the founders of the American Music Festival at the Lincoln Center.
- 23 Flora Rheta Schreiber (1918–1988), a theatre critic in the 1940s, studied the speech patterns of children and later the psychological origins of criminality. She was the author of the novel *Sybil* (1973), still popular today, and studied at Adelphi University, the New School and John Jay College.
- 24 Paul Kresh (1920–1977), author, critic and radio presenter, wrote scripts for WNYC between 1940 and 1942 and later edited hundreds of ‘Spoken Arts’ recordings of American poets. He reviewed both popular and classical music.
- 25 Left blank in the manuscript.
- 26 Translation begins here.
- 27 ‘Admittedly . . . in which it is located’: handwritten addition.
- 28 ‘The model . . . (play)’: handwritten addition.
- 29 ‘second’: handwritten addition.
- 30 ‘group’: handwritten addition.
- 31 ‘two-bar’: handwritten addition.
- 32 ‘I will show you . . . example’: handwritten addition.
- 33 ‘Then . . . a new one’: handwritten addition.
- 34 ‘It also forms . . . “now”’: handwritten addition.
- 35 ‘The floating effect’: handwritten addition.

- 36 'quaint' originally in English.
 37 'bumble-bee' originally in English.
 38 'sheet version' originally in English.
 39 Translation ends here.
 40 Trude Rittmann (1908–2005), a substantially talented composer, pianist and arranger, was born in Germany and studied with Ernst Toch and Hans Bruch. In the USA she worked almost exclusively, and mostly in the background, on musicals such as *The Girl in Pink Tights*, *South Pacific* and *My Fair Lady*. She collaborated closely with Frederick Loewe.
 41 Josef Marx (1913–1978), a prominent oboist, studied composition with Stefan Wolpe. In 1940 he was solo oboist in the concerts at the New School of Social Research, which were directed by Otto Klemperer and Rudolf Kolisch.

6 On Popular Music

- 1 See Paul Lazarsfeld, 'Remarks on Administrative and Critical Communications Research', *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 9 (1941), pp. 2–16.
 2 'The Popular Music Industry', in *Radio Research 1941*, ed. Paul Lazarsfeld (New York, 1941), pp. 65–110. Duncan MacDougald, Jr (1913–1969) was a freelance writer on many topics, including food, travel, linguistics and especially music. In 1939 he held a fellowship in the Office of Radio Research at Columbia University.
 3 A musical by Harold Rome (New York, 1938), premiered on 27 November 1937 on the workers' stage by actors from the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.
 4 Ginger Rogers (1911–1995), actress, singer and dance partner of Fred Astaire in many films, was honoured in 1992 by the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, as 'our ideal of the American girl'.
 5 See Ernst Kurth, *Musikpsychologie* (Berlin: Hesse, 1931).
 6 Barbara Hutton (1912–1979), infamous and in the end ruined offspring of the wealthy Woolworth family; the succession of her weddings was famous and much photographed and discussed in the 1930s.
 7 In the manuscript, this phrase reads 'without inevitable malice'.
 8 Joe DiMaggio (1914–1999), American baseball star.
 9 A non-idiomatic turn of phrase. It is nevertheless clear that both here and further on Adorno meant a decision that is intended in spiteful ways.
 10 Alfred Rosenberg (1893–1946), the erudite neo-pagan Nazi ideologue and philosopher, was made minister in 1941 of the Russian and Baltic territories occupied by the Germans. His work *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* [The Myth of the Twentieth Century] became the central text of National Socialism. He argues that all great civilizations were Aryan, and that all were destroyed by miscegenation; Germany is said to be the last Aryan civilization, fighting against Jewish racial infiltration. Rosenberg held that a new myth was necessary to lead the way for the Nordic race in this confrontation. He was tried at Nuremberg and executed for war crimes.

7 Musical Analyses of Hit Songs

- 1 See the music examples.

A The Radio Voice

- 1 Regarding the decision to include this text in the present volume, see p. 37.
- 2 Adorno's citations for this and the following footnote were left incomplete.
- 3 Adorno's translation. This citation was also left incomplete.
- 4 Dickson Skinner, 'Music Goes into Mass Production', *Harper's*, April 1939, p. 487.
- 5 Alfred Sohn-Rethel (1899–1990), social philosopher, author of *Intellectual and Manual Labour: A Critique of Epistemology and Economy and Class Structure of German Fascism*, was at one point an ally of considerable importance in the development of Adorno's thinking. See Theodor W. Adorno and Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Briefwechsel 1936–1969*, ed. Christoph Göttsche (Munich: Text und Kritik, 1991).

B Memorandum on Lyrics in Popular Music

- 1 Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Modern Library, 1934), pp. 119–26.
- 2 No documentation of this discussion was found.

C Experiment on: Preference for Material or Treatment of Two Popular Songs

- 1 Adorno discusses 'sweet' here in some detail. It is helpful to remember that, during the 1930s, the word 'sweet' sometimes described jazz interpretations that were considered pleasant. As a synonym for 'hotel style', on the other hand, 'sweet' was also often a derogatory term for ingratiating, sentimental and commercial music, in contrast to 'hot' authentic jazz. 'Sweet', for example, distinguished the music of Billy Eckstine and Guy Lombardo from that of Louis Armstrong and Fats Waller.
- 2 Left blank in the text.

D The Problem of Experimentation in Music Psychology

- 1 Carl E. Seashore, *Psychology of Music* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1938).
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 29.
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

- 6 Ibid., p. 31.
- 7 Ernst Kurth, *Musikpsychologie* (Berlin: Hesse, 1931).
- 8 E. R. Jaensch, *Eidetische Anlage und kindliches Seelenleben* [Eidetic Predisposition and the Emotional Life in Childhood] (Leipzig: Barth, 1934).
- 9 Adorno was evidently summarizing two of his experiments. See ‘Experiment on: Preference for Material or Treatment of Two Popular Songs’, p. 399.

E Note on Classification

- 1 See discography, *L’oiseau bleu*.
- 2 Yuri Yuschni’s *Bluebird* was a Russian cabaret, similar to *Die Fledermaus*, set in 1920s Berlin. See Lawrence Senelick, *Cabaret Performance: Europe 1920–1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
- 3 Feodor Chaliapin (1873–1938), celebrated Russian bass. See discography, *Song of the Volga Boatman*.
- 4 It is not possible to say exactly which New York radio station Adorno is referring to here, since the frequencies used were not exact. The station using the frequency 1190, for example, did not exist when this essay was written.

F On the Use of Elaborate Personal Interviews for the Princeton Radio Research Project

- 1 The ‘Ohio School on the Air’ began broadcasting in January 1929 with WEAO (now WOSU). It reached twenty-two states and a listenership of over 10,000 schoolchildren, who heard an hour-long daily performance, reading, or conversation.
- 2 *Sic*. This study could not be identified.
- 3 Presumably James Rorty (1890–1973), who wrote widely on communication in both books and pamphlets, among which were *Our Master’s Voice* (New York: John Day, 1934) and *Order on the Air!* (New York: John Day, 1934).
- 4 Presumably John Dollard, *Criteria for the Life History, with an Analysis of Six Notable Documents* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1935).
- 5 Presumably Herbert Blumer, *Movies and Conduct* (New York: Macmillan, 1933).
- 6 Presumably the study by William S. Gray and Ruth Monroe, *The Reading Interests and Habits of Adults: A Preliminary Report* (New York: Macmillan, 1929).
- 7 Presumably Alberta Curtis; see ‘A Social Critique of Radio Music’, note 4.
- 8 Alvin Saunders Johnson, *The Public Library: A People’s University* (New York: American Association for Adult Education, 1938).
- 9 Hadley Cantril and Gordon Allport, *The Psychology of Radio* (New York: Harper, 1935).

G The Problem of a New Type of Human Being

- 1 Translation begins here.
- 2 '*imagines*', *sic*.
- 3 'toolmindedness' originally in English.
- 4 'progressive education' originally in English.
- 5 Translation ends here.

H Some Remarks on a Propaganda Publication of NBC

- 1 Not identified.
- 2 Vladimir Karapetoff (1876–1948), born in Russia, emigrated to the USA in 1902; for many years he was an active socialist and later was a consultant to various industrial concerns. He was very interested in the links between music and science, invented a five-string cello, and was known in his profession for a design for an electrical calculator.
- 3 Hendrik Willem Van Loon (1882–1944), born in the Netherlands, was a speaker, journalist and author of more than a dozen titles in the series 'The . . . History of Mankind' covering the science of history, the natural sciences and the arts. His works sold in their millions.
- 4 Emil Ludwig (1881–1948), of German origin, was later a Swiss citizen and the author of biographies of Napoleon, Schliemann, Hindenburg, Cleopatra, F. D. Roosevelt, Stalin and Freud.
- 5 Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge (1864–1953) was an influential American music patron and early advocate of education and culture on the radio. She was successful in combating efforts to commercialize many of the music programmes she sponsored.
- 6 Paul Bekker, *Die Sinfonie von Beethoven bis Mahler* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1918).

I Theses about the Idea and Form of Collaboration of the Princeton Radio Research Project

- 1 This memorandum could not be identified.

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