ON THE SOCIAL SITUATION OF MUSIC[1]

by Theodor W. Adorno

No matter where music is heard today, it sketches in the clearest possible lines the contradictions and flaws which cut through present-day society; at the same time, music is separated from this same society by the deepest of all flaws produced by this society itself. And yet, society is unable to absorb more of this music than its ruins and external remains. The role of music in the social process is exclusively that of a commodity; its value is that determined by the market. Music no longer serves direct needs nor benefits from direct application, but rather adjusts to the pressures of the exchange of abstract units. Its value wherever such value still exists at all—is determined by use: it subordinates itself to the process of exchange. The islands of pre-capitalistic "music making"—such as the 19th century could still tolerate— have been

1. Translated by Wes Blomster from the text which appeared in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforshung* 1 (1932), pp. 103-124 and pp. 356-78. No extensive annotation is offered on this essay because of the difficulty involved in defining a boundary between that which demands explanation and that which can stand without it. Adorno touches upon only a few technical aspects of music and these can be understood by the non-musician from the context within which they appear. Adorno does speak rather extensively of two concepts, popular in German music in the years between the wars, which would have little meaning even to German readers today. For that reason they are defined here. *Gebrauchsmusik*, translated in the following text as "use music," is sometimes encountered in English as "utility music." It is not to be confused with applied or commercial music—in German *angewandte Musik*. *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* (1969) states that this term was possibly coined by Hindemith, who was the leading practitioner thereof; it is "music intended for practical use...by amateurs, in the home or at informal gatherings, as opposed to music written 'for its own sake,' (*l'art pour l'art*) and intended chiefly for concert performance by professionals. Characteristic traits...are: forms of moderate length; simplicity and clarity of style; small ensembles; avoidance of technical difficulties; parts of equal interest and so designed that they can be played on whatever instruments are available; soberness and moderation of expression; emphasis on 'good workmanship.' " The rise of *Gebrauchsmusik* is typical of the neoclassical reaction against the exaggerated individualism and *fin de siècle* refinement of late Romanticism and Impressionism. The practice was generally supported by Socialists and was marked by an interest in early music, especially that of Bach. The New Matter-of-Factness, *Neue Sachlichkeit*, is readily understood by students of German literature; in music it is today not a commonly-encountered term. *Grove's Dictionary* (1954) places the movement within music between the two wars, defining it as a "tendency...to write music entirely detached from sentiment and free from any pictorial suggestion, expressive, in fact, of nothing but itself. The *Harvard Dictionary* emphasizes "antiromantic tendencies towards an objective and even nonexpressive music." Words which occupy an important position in Adorno's vocabulary are *Musikant* and *Musikantentum*. In the total absence of corresponding English terms, they are translated here as "music maker" and "music making," using quotation marks, as Adorno himself has done with the German terms in most cases. The concepts, while not necessarily pejoritive, usually convey a certain negative bite in Adorno's usage. They can refer to an extremely healthy, gifted musicianship, which is usually characterized by the lack of an intellectual dimension. The German words often evoke images of Bohemian and even gypsy musicians.

washed away: the techniques of radio and sound film, in the hands of powerful monopolies and in unlimited control over the total capitalistic propaganda machine, have taken possession of even the innermost cell of musical practices, i.e. of domestic music making. Even in the 19th century the possibility of the domestic cultivation of music—like the entirety of bourgeois private life—represented only the reverse side of a social corpus, whose surface was totally determined by production through private capital. The dialectic of capitalistic development has further eliminated even this last immediacy offered by music—in itself already an illusion, for in it the balance between individual production and understanding by society was threatened. Since Wagner's *Tristan*, this balance has been totally destroyed. Through the total absorption of both musical production and consumption by the capitalistic process, the alienation of music from man has become complete. This process involved, of course, the objectification and rationalization of music, its separation from the simple immediacy of use which had once defined it as art and grant it permanence in contrast to its definition in terms of mere ephemeral sound. At the same time, it was this process which invested music with the power of far-reaching sublimation of drives and the cogent and binding expression of humanity. Now, however, rationalized music has fallen victim to the same dangers as rationalized society, within which class interests bring rationalization to a halt as soon as it threatens to turn against class conditions themselves. This situation has now left man in a state of rationalization which—as soon as the possibility of his further dialectic development is blocked—crushes him between unresolved contradictions. The same force of reification which constituted music as art has today taken music from man and left him with only an illusion—*Schein*—thereof. (This force of reification could not simply be reconverted to immediacy without returning art to the state in which it found itself before the division of labor.) Music, however, insofar as it did not submit to the command of the production of commodities, was in this process robbed of its social responsibility and exiled into an hermetic space within which its contents are removed. This is the situation from which every observation upon the social position of music which hopes to avoid the deceptions which today dominate discussions of the subject must proceed. These deceptions exist for the sake of concealing the actual situation and, further, as an apology for music which has allowed itself to be intimidated economically. They are also the result of the fact that music itself, under the superior power of the music industry developed by monopoly capitalism, became conscious of its own reification and of its alienation from man. Meanwhile, music, lacking proper knowledge of the social process—a condition likewise socially produced and sustained—blamed itself and not society for this situation, thus remaining in the illusion that the isolation of music was itself an isolated matter, i.e. that things could be corrected from the side of music alone with no change in society. It is now necessary to face the hard fact that the social alienation of music—that assembly of phenomena for which an overhasty and

unenlightened musical reformism employs derogatory terms such as individualism, charlatanism, and technical esotericism—is itself a matter of social fact and socially produced. For this reason, the situation cannot be corrected within music, but only within society: namely, through the change of society. The question regarding the possible dialectic contribution which music can make towards such change remains open: however, its contribution will be slight, if it—from within its own resources—endeavors only to establish an immediacy which is not only socially restraining today, but by no means reconstructable or even desirable, thus contributing to the disguise of the situation. The question is further to what degree music—insofar as it might intervene in the social process—will be in a position to intervene as music. Regardless of the answers which might be given, here and now music is able to do nothing but portray within its own structure the social antinomies which are also responsible for its own isolation. Music will be better, the more deeply it is able to express—in the antinomies of its own formal language—the exigency of the social condition and to call for change through the coded language of suffering. It is not for music to stare in helpless horror at society. It fulfills its social function more precisely when it presents social problems through its own material and according to its own formal laws—problems which music contains within itself in the innermost cells of its technique. The task of music as art thus enters into a parallel relationship to the task of social theory. If the immanent development of music were established as an absolute—as the mere reflection of the social process—the only result would be a sanction of the fetish character of music which is the major difficulty and most basic problem to be portrayed by music today. On the other hand, it is clear that music is not to be measured in terms of the existing society of which it is the product and which, at the same time, keeps music in a state of isolation. It is the prerequisite of every historical-materialistic method which hopes to be more than a mere exercise in intellectual history that under no conditions is music to be understood as a "spiritual" phenomenon, abstract and far-removed from actual social conditions, which can anticipate through its imagery any desire for social change independently from the empirical realization thereof. It thus becomes obvious that the relation of present-day music and society is highly problematic in all its aspects. This relation shares its aporias with social theory; at the same time, however, it shares the attitudes which this theory expresses—or ought to express—towards these aporias. In a certain sense, the character of cognition is to be demanded of any music which today wishes to preserve its right to existence. Through its material, music must give clear form to the problems assigned it by this material which is itself never purely natural material, but rather a social and historical product; solutions offered by music in this process stand equal to theories. Social postulates are offered, the relationship of which to praxis might be, to be sure, extremely mediated and difficult or which, at any rate, cannot be realized without great difficulty. It is these postulates, however, which decide whether and how the

entrance into social reality might be made. The following short circuit unfortunately develops: such music is incomprehensible, i.e., esoteric and private and must, therefore, be rejected. Such music is constructed upon the foundation of a romantic concept of primitive musical immediacy which gives rise to the opinion that the empirical consciousness of present-day society—a consciousness promoted in unenlightened narrow-mindedness and, indeed, promoted even to the point of neurotic stupidity in the face of class domination for the purpose of the preservation of this consciousness—might be taken as the positive measure of a music no longer alienated, but rather the property of free men. Politics must not be permitted to draw abstractions from this state of consciousness which is necessarily of central concern to the social dialectic, nor is cognition to allow the definition of its boundaries by a consciousness produced by class domination and which further as the class consciousness of the proletariat extends the wounds of mutilation by means of the class mechanism. Music is under the same obligation as theory to reach out beyond the current consciousness of the masses. Theory, however, stands in a dialectic relation to praxis, upon which it makes demands and from which it also accepts demands; in the same manner, music which has achieved self-consciousness of its social function will enter into a dialectic relation to praxis. This is to be achieved not through the self-subordination of music to "use" which it could do here and now only through definition of itself as a commodity and which would grant it only an illusion of immediacy, but rather by developing within music itself—in agreement with the state of social theory—all those elements whose objective is the overcoming of class domination. This music must do even where this development takes place in social isolation, confined to the cells of music during the period of class domination. It might be possible for the most advanced compositional production of the present—solely under the pressure of the immanent development of its problems—to invalidate basic bourgeois categories such as the creative personality and expression of the soul of this personality, the world of private feelings and its transfigured inwardness, setting in their place highly rational and transparent principles of construction. Even this music, however, would remain dependent upon bourgeois production processes and could not, consequently, be viewed as "classless" or the actual music of the future, but rather as music which fulfills its dialectic cognitive function most exactly. Within present society, such music encounters a vehement resistance which surpasses the resistance against all use-music and communal music, no matter how literary or political its accents might be. Nonetheless, this resistance seems to indicate that the dialectic function of this music is already perceptible in praxis, even if only as a negative force, i.e. as "destruction."

From a social perspective, present-day musical activity, production and consumption can be divided drastically into that which unconditionally recognizes its commodity character and—refusing any dialectic intervention—orients itself according to the demands of the market and that which in principle does not accept the demands of the market. A somewhat different

view is also possible: music of the first category—passive and undialectic—takes its place on the side of society; the second, on the side of music. The traditional distinction between "light" and "serious" music, sanctioned by bourgeois musical culture, ostensibly corresponds to this division—but only ostensibly. For a great share of supposedly "serious" music adjusts itself to the demands of the market in the same manner as the composers of light music, even if this is done under the cover of an economically untransparent "fashion" or through the calculation of the demands of the market into production. The disguise of the market function of such music through the concept of personality or simplicity or "life" serves only to transfigure it and to increase its market value indirectly. On the other hand, it is precisely "light" music—tolerated by present-day society, despised and exploited in the same way as prostitution with which it is not compared in vain—with its "skirt seductively raised," which develops certain elements portraying the satisfaction of the drive of present society, whose official claims, however, stand in conflict to such satisfaction. In a certain sense, such music thus transcends the society which it supposedly serves. In the distinction between light and serious music, the alienation of man and music is reflected only through distortion—in the same manner, namely, as this alienation is seen by the bourgeoisie. An effort is made to exempt "serious" music from an alienation shared to an equal degree by Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* and the latest hit song of Robert Stolz. Blame for this alienation is assigned—under the label of "kitsch"—only to that music which, as an exact reaction to the constellation of drives within this society, is the only music suitable to it; it is, however, this very suitability which disavows this society. For this reason, the distinction between light and serious music is to be replaced by a different distinction which views both halves of the musical globe equally from the perspective of alienation: namely, as halves of a totality which to be sure could never be reconstructed through the addition of the two halves.

Musical production which in the narrower sense does not subordinate itself unconditionally to the law of the market—that is, "serious" music with the exception of the obviously quantitatively dominant music, which likewise serves the market in disguise—is that music that expresses alienation. A rather crude scheme can be established: the first type of music is that which, without consciousness of its social location or out of indifference toward it, presents and crystallizes its problems and the solutions thereto in a merely immanent manner. To a degree, it resembles the monad of Leibniz; it "represents," to be sure, not a pre-established harmony, but certainly an historically produced dissonance, i.e., social antinomies. This first type—as "modern" music is the only music which offers a serious shock to the listener—is represented essentially by Arnold Schoenberg and his school. The second type includes music which recognizes the fact of alienation as its own isolation and as "individualism" and further raises this fact to the level of consciousness; it does so, however, only within itself, only in aesthetic and form-immanent

terms. It thus attempts to annul this insight without respect for actual society For the most part, it would achieve this through recourse to stylistic forms of the past, which it views as immune to alienation, without seeing that such forms cannot be reconstituted within a completely changed society and through completely changed musical material. This music can be called objectivism, insofar as it—without becoming involved in any social dialectic—would like to evoke the image of a non-existent "objective" society or—in terms of its intentions—of a "fellowship." In the highly capitalistic-industrial nations, neo-classicism is a major component of objectivism; in the underdeveloped, agrarian countries, it is folklore. The most effective author of objectivism who in a highly revealing manner manifests each of these major directions—one after the other, but never simultaneously— is Igor Stravinsky. The third type is a hybrid form. Hand in hand with objectivism, this composer proceeds from the cognition of alienation. At the same time, he is socially more alert than the objectivist and recognizes the solutions offered by his colleague as illusions. He denies himself the positive solution and contents himself with permitting social flaws to manifest themselves by means of a flawed invoice which defines itself as illusory with no attempt at camouflage through attempts at an aesthetic totality. In his effort, he employs the formal language belonging in part to the bourgeois musical culture of the 19th century, in part to present-day consumer music. These means are used to reveal the flaws which he detects. Through his destruction of aesthetic formal immanence, this type of composer transcends into the literary realm. Extensive objective correspondences between this third type and French Surrealism justify speaking in this case of surrealistic music. Such music was developed out of Stravinsky's middle period—above all, out of *L'histoire du soldat*. It has been developed most consequently in the works which Kurt Weill produced together with Bert Brecht, particularly *The Three Penny Opera* and *Mahagonny*. The fourth type involves music which attempts to break through alienation from within itself, even at the expense of its immanent form. This is normally identified as "use music." However, it is precisely this typical use music—especially as it is produced on order for radio and theater—which gives evidence of such obvious dependence upon the market that it cannot enter into the present discussion. That which demands attention is rather the effort to produce "communal music"—*"Gemeinschaftsmusik"*; this direction developed out of neo-classicism and is represented by Hindemith and the proletarian choral works of Hanns Eisler.

Arnold Schoenberg decried the resistance that each new work encounters as intellectualistic, destructive, abstract and esoteric, not unlike the resistance shown toward psychoanalysis. Actually, he does manifest extensive correspondences to Freud—not, to be sure, in terms of the concrete thematic content of his music, divorced from all psychological references, but rather in terms of social structure. Like Freud and Karl Kraus, whose efforts towards the purification of language find a counterpart in Schoenberg's music, this

composer—also from Vienna—is to be counted among the dialectic phenomena of bourgeois individualism—taking the word in its most general sense—which work in their supposedly "specialized" areas of problems without respect for a presupposed social totality. In these areas, however, they achieve solutions which suddenly change and turn unnoticed against the prerequisites of individualism. Such solutions are in principle denied to a socially oriented bourgeois reformism which must pay for its insights, aimed as they are at totality but never reaching the basis thereof, with "mediating" and—consequently—camouflaging machinations. Freud, in order to arrive at objective symbols and finally at an objective dialectic of human consciousness in history, had to carry out the analysis of individual consciousness and subconsciousness. Kraus, in order to perfect the concept of socialism in the sphere of the "superstructure" for a second time, as it were, did nothing but confront bourgeois life with its own norm of correct individual behavior, thus revealing, in turn, to individuals their own norm. According to the same scheme, Schoenberg has annulled the expressive music of the private bourgeois individual, pursuing—as it were—its own consequences, and put in its place a different music, into whose music no social function falls—indeed, which even severs the last communication with the listener. However, this music leaves all other music of the age far behind in terms of immanently musical quality and dialectic clarification of its material. He thus offers such a perfected and rational total organization that it cannot possibly be compatible with the present social constitution, which then unconsciously through all its critical representatives takes up an offensive position and calls upon nature for assistance against the attack of consciousness encountered in Schoenberg. In him—for perhaps the first time in the history of music—consciousness has taken hold of the natural material of music and seized control of it. In Schoenberg, however, the breakthrough of consciousness is not idealistic: it is not to be understood as the production of music out of pure spirit. It is much rather a type of dialectic in the strictest sense. For the movement perfected by Schoenberg proceeds from questioning how this movement is situated within the material itself. The productive force which incites this movement involves the reality of a psychic drive—the drive, namely, towards undisguised and uninhibited expression of the psyche and of the unconscious per se. This is found most precisely in the works of Schoenberg's middle period, including *Erwartung, Die glückliche Hand* and the Little Piano Pieces, which place his work in direct relationship to psychoanalysis. However, this drive is confronted by an objective problem: how can material which has achieved the highest technical development—i.e. the material which Schoenberg inherited from Wagner on the one hand and, on the other, from Brahms as well—subordinate itself to radical expression of the psychic? It can do this only by submitting itself to thorough change. This means that it must surrender all alleged connections and obligations which stand in the way of freedom of movement of individual expression; these connections are the reflection of an "agreement" of bourgeois society with the

psyche of the individual which is now renounced by the sufferings of the individual. These are the traditional musical symmetrical relations in that they are based upon the technique of repetition—no matter what form it might take—and—again in agreement with Karl Kraus and also in harmony with the architectural intentions of Adolf Loose—that this technique further takes the form of criticism of every type of ornamentation. In view of the limitation of all musical elements this criticism does not restrict itself merely to musical architecture, the symmetry and ornamentation of which it negates; it extends equally to the harmonic correlation of tectonic symmetrical relations and tonality, simultaneously touched by dissonance as the vehicle of the radical principle of expression. With the decline of the tonal scheme, counterpoint—previously subject to chordal limitation—is emancipated and produces that form of polyphony known as "linearity." Finally, the total homogenous sound, supported by the substance of traditional orchestral string tutti, is attacked. Schoenberg's really central achievement—which, by the way, has never been properly appreciated from the traditional perspective of observation—is that he, from his earliest works on—for example, in the songs of his Opus 6—never behaved "expressionistically," superimposing subjective intentions upon heterogenous material in an authoritarian and inconsiderate manner. Every gesture with which he intervenes in the material configuration is at the same time an answer to questions directed to him by the material in the form of its own immanent problems. Every subjective-expressive achievement of Schoenberg is simultaneously the resolution of objective-material contradictions which continued to exist in the Wagnerian technique of chromatic sequence and in the diatonic technique of variation employed by Brahms as well. Schoenberg is by no means an esoteric to be reserved for a specialized and socially irrelevant history of music, but rather a figure to be projected upon the social dialectic from the perspective of his dialectic of musical material. This is justified by the fact that he—in the form of material problems which he inherited, accepted, and continued—found present in the problems of society that produced this material and in which the contradictions of this society are defined as technical problems. That Schoenberg's solutions to technical problems are socially relevant in spite of their isolation is proven by his replacement within all his works—in spite and because of his own expressive origins—of any private fortuitousness which might have been viewed quite correctly as a type of anarchic musical production with an objective principle of order which is never imposed upon the material from the exterior, but rather extracted from the material itself and brought into relationship with it by means of an historical process of rational transparence. This is the meaning of the revolution which technologically took the form of "twelve-tone composition." In the very moment in which the total musical material is subjected to the power of expression, expression itself is extinguished—as though it were animated only by the resistance of the material, itself "alienated" and alien to the subject. Subjective criticism of instances of ornamentation and repetition

leads to an objective, non-expressive structure which—in place of symmetry and repetition—determines the exclusion of repetition within the cell, i.e., the use of all twelve tones of the chroma before the repetition of a tone from within the chroma. This same structure further prevents the "free," arbitrary, constructively-unrelated insertion of any one tone into the composition. In corresponding manner, the expressively-obligatory leading tone harmonic is replaced by a complementary one. Radical freedom from all objective norms imposed upon music from the exterior is coordinated with the most extreme rigidity of immanent structure, so that music by its own forces eliminates at least within itself alienation as a matter of subjective formation and objective material. Music thus moves towards that for which Alois Haba coined the fine expression "musical style of freedom." To be sure, music overcomes inward alienation only through the perfected expression thereof on its exterior. And if one were to assume that the immanent overcoming of the aporias of music were consistently possible, this would be nothing more than a romantic transfiguration of craftsmanship—including that of Schoenberg—and of the finest of contemporary music, tantamount to the failure to recognize these very aporias. For with the choice of text for his most recent opera *Von heute auf morgen*—a glorification of bourgeois marriage in contrast to libertinage, unreflectingly contrasting "love" and "fashion"—Schoenberg nevetheless subordinates his own music to a bourgeois private sphere attacked by his music in terms of its objective character. Certain classicistic inclinations within the overall formal architecture which can be detected in Schoenberg's most recent works might well point in the same direction. Above all, however, the question is whether the ideal of the hermetic work of art, resting within itself, which Schoenberg inherited from classicism and to which he remains true can be reconciled with the means which he has defined and, further, whether such a concept of a work of art, as totality and cosmos, can still be upheld at all. It might well be that at their deepest level Schoenberg's works stand in opposition to this ideal; the impulse resulting from the total absence of illusion in them offers proof thereof. This impulse was expressed in his struggle against ornamentation and still more strongly in the sobriety of his present musical diction—and in the diction of the texts as well. It might well be that the secret which dwells within his work is hostility towards art; according to its implicit claims, the intention of this work is to force the autonomous work of art—as Beethoven knew it, sufficient unto itself and all-powerful in its symbolism—back into existence again by means both thoroughly and historically rationalized. However, the possibility of such reconstruction is—as in the case of Kraus' attempted reconstruction of a pure language—a doubtful undertaking. Here—and to be sure only here and not in the unpopularity of his work—Schoenberg's social insight reaches the boundary of this work; not only are the limits of his talent defined, but rather the limits of the function of talent per se. This boundary is not to be crossed through music alone. Schoenberg's student Alban Berg established residence at this boundary. In terms of compositional technique, his work represents to

a certain degree the reverse line of association between Schoenberg's advanced work and that of the previous generation: Wagner, Mahler and, in many respects, Debussy as well. However, this line is drawn from the perspective of Schoenberg's niveau, which embraces his technical achievements: extreme variation and through-construction and also the twelve-tone method are applied to older chromatic material, including the leading tone—as happens in Schoenberg's works—without "repealing" it. The expressive function is thus preserved. Berg's dialectic is carried out within the realm of musical expression, which cannot be repudiated unconditionally as "individualistic," as the advocates of an empty and collectivistic New-Matter-of-Factness incessantly proclaim. The question of expression can be answered rather only in concrete terms, only according to the substratus of expression, of that which is expressed, and in terms of the validity of the expression itself. If this question is seriously asked within the realm of bourgeois-individualistic music of expression, it becomes apparent that this music of expression is questionable not only as music, but as expression as well. Similar to practices in many of the "psychological" novels of the 19th century, it is not at all the psychic reality of the subject in question which is expressed, but rather a fictive, stylized and, in many respects, counterfeited reality which is encountered in both cases. In music the interlacing of the psychological concept of expression with that of the style of Romanticism is an indication of this state of affairs. If music is successful in breaking through the fictive psychological substratus—through the Wagnerian heroic-erotic image of man, to begin with—then the function of music regarding the bourgeois individual changes. It is then no longer the intention of music to transfigure the individual, establishing him as a norm, but rather to disclose his misery and his suffering, which are concealed by psychological as well as musical convention. By expressing the misery—or the vileness—of the individual without abandoning him to his isolation, but rather by objectifying this misery, music turns in the final analysis against the order of things within which it has its origins as such—just as does the expressed individual have his roots as an individual—but which in music attains to consciousness of itself and of its despair. As soon as such music—for its part sufficiently related in its content to psychoanalysis and not in vain at home in the regions of dream and insanity—eradicates the conventional psychology of expression. It decomposes the contours of the surface thereof and constructs out of the particles of musical expression a new language by means of musical immanence; this converges with Schoenberg's constructive language in spite of the totally different course by which this goal is approached. This dialectic evolves within Berg's works and it is this alone which permits an understanding of his composition of Büchner's tragedy *Wozzeck* in its full significance. A parallel to fine arts is perhaps permissible: Berg's relation to the expressive music of the late 19th and beginning 20th century parallels that of Kokoschka's portraits to those of the Impressionists. The authentic portrayal of the individual psyche, both of the bourgeois psyche and of the proletarian psyche

which is produced by the bourgeoisie, is suddenly transformed in *Wozzeck* into an intention of social criticism, without of course destroying the frame of aesthetic immanence. It is the deep paradox of Berg's work, in which social antinomy is work-immanently defined, that this critical development is possible in reference to material from the past which is now made transparent by his criticism. This can be observed in one of the most significant scenes in *Wozzeck*, the great scene, in the tavern and here Berg's method intersects with that of the Surrealists. At the same time, it is this reference—at least in terms of the drama—which has protected Berg's work from total isolation and elicited a certain resonance from the bourgeois audience. Even if this resonance is rooted in the misunderstanding of *Wozzeck* as the last "music drama" of Wagnerian coinage, it permits a certain amount of that quality in *Wozzeck* which manifests a dark and dangerous current originating in the caves of the unconscious to trickle into prevailing consciousness through the channels of misunderstanding. Finally, within this context, brief reference must be made to the third representative of the Schoenberg School: Anton Webern. Unquestionable as the extraordinary musical quality of Webern's work is, the social interpretation of this work presents great difficulty and it cannot be more than touched upon here. In Webern, loneliness and alienation from society—conditioned in Schoenberg by the formal structure of his work—become thematic and are transformed into content. The declaration of the inexpressible and of total alienation is asserted by every sound of Webern's music. If one were to apply the basic concept of immanent dialectics, which constitutes the foundation of the Schoenberg School, to Webern, one would have to employ a sub-title from Kierkegaard—who is sufficently close to Webern—and speak of "dialectic lyricism." For here the most extremely individual differentiation, a dissolution of the material used which musically goes far beyond Schoenberg and expressively beyond Berg, is employed for no other purpose than this: for the liberation of a type of natural language of music, of pure sound, which Webern denied without fail in the regression to a natural material, i.e., to tonality and to the "natural" overtone relations. To produce the image of nature within historical dialectics: that is the intention of Webern's music and the riddle which it offers. As a riddle, it offers an answer totally contrary to all nature-romanticism. This riddle will be solved only much later.

The virtuosity of Stravinsky and his followers forms an exact antithesis to the mastery of Schoenberg and his school; here the game is opposed to the absence of illusion; the seductively arbitrary change of masks, whose wearers are consequently identical but empty, is set against responsible dialectics, the substratum of which transforms itself in sudden changes. The music of objectivism is socially all the more transparent than that of the Schoenberg School, the less compactly and densely it turns upon itself in its technology. For that reason the social interpretation of objectivism must proceed from the objectivists' technical method. In every objectivist music the attempt is made to correct the alienation of music from within, that is to say, without any clear

view of social reality; however, this is not attempted through further pursuit of its immanent dialectic, which is reproached as alien to nature, individualistic and overly differentiated. Absurdly enough, Stravinsky once compared Schoenberg with Oscar Wilde. The musically immanent correction of alienation is rather sought through regression to older, totally pre-bourgeois musical forms, within which an effort is made to affirm an original natural state of music—indeed, it might be said, a musical anthropology appropriate to the being of man and his bodily constitution is the objectivist goal. This explains the inclination of all objectivism to dance forms and to rhythms originating in the dance; they are thought to be elevated above historical change and accessible to every age. Objectivism distinguishes itself from the concept of stylistic history so important to Romanticism—defined in an extreme formula as the "sound of legend" in Schumann; this process involves not only the contrasting of a past musical condition with the negative present-day situation as something positive which it longingly hopes to reinstitute, but even to a greater degree the construction in the past of the image of something absolutely valid which might be realized here and now just as at any other time. This is why objectivism in its theoretical pronouncements has attacked Romanticism so vehemently. From a practical-musical perspective, however, all this means is that the regression of objectivism to its historical models—regardless of whether genuine or false rustic folkmusic, medieval polyphony or the "pre-classic" concertante style is involved—does not aim merely at the reinstitution of these models; only in exceptional cases has objectivism—in the form of stylistic copy—undertaken such reinstitution. In the breadth of its production, however, objectivism does endeavor under the banner of "new-Matter-of-Factness"—dutifully emphasizing its contemporaneity and the fact that it has arrived—to apply old and presumably eternal models to its actual material: to the same harmonically-free material, pre-disposed to polyphony and emancipated from the pressures of expression, which proceeds from the dialectic of the Schoenberg School and is taken over undialectically by objectivism. The ideal of musical objectivism is the formation of a highly differentiated material, manifesting all the signs of the division of labor, but doing so in a static naturalistic manner pre-dating the division of labor.

In this process inescapable contemporary social analogies become apparent. The estate-corporative organization of a highly industrial economic context is manifested, which in objectivist music appears as a conforming image. It appears that the sovereign composer stands in free control of the supposed musical organism, in much the same way that in fascism a "leadership elite"—*Führerelite*—appears to be in control, while in truth power over the social "organism" lies in the hands of monopoly capitalism. When a dissonance is to be introduced or when a suspended note is to be resolved is decided neither by a pre-established scheme, annulled after all by the actual material, nor by structural immanence, the rational order of which is negated precisely in the name of nature, but only by the inclination,

i.e., the "taste" of the composer. Tempting as the analogy is and no matter how much of the true state of affairs it might reveal, it is not to be made responsible for cognition without the expression of resistance. In the Russian emigrant Stravinsky or even in a neo-classicist such as Casella, who is so very ambitious in cultural politics, the relation to fascism is beyond question. The social interpretation of music, however, is not concerned with the individual consciousness of authors, but rather with the function of their work. And this is where the difficulties begin. First of all, if the association of objectivism with fascism is to be understood as something actual, categories of mediation must be found and the mediation itself must be explained. The mechanism of mediation is, however, still unknown. It could be revealed most readily by an analysis of the state of affairs in fashion, which—as demonstrated, for example, in Stravinsky's case by his generally familiar dependencies—does not permit the essential formal elements of neo-classicism to define themselves through the asking of immanent-technical questions. These elements were rather first deposited from outside the work and were then later transposed into the technical immanence of the work of art. Fashion itself, however, points back judiciously to social and economic facts. This indicates that a solution of the problem of mediation in music has by no means been found; it is rather only that the location of the problem has been designated with greater precision. And furthermore, in the interpretation of objectivism in regard to fascism, problems of content must be confronted. These difficulties are caused by the same state of alienation, the immanent-aesthetic eradication or concealment of which objectivism sets as its task. Even if it were assumed that in terms of intention and objective structure this were indeed the music of the most progressive class within monopoly capitalism, this class would still remain unable either to understand or to consume this music. In the effort of objectivism to overcome alienation only in terms of artistic imagery, alienation is permitted to continue unchanged in reality. The technical specialization of music has progressed so far that an audience is no longer in a position to comprehend this music, even when it is an objective expression of the ideology of the audience itself. In addition, ideological forces of other types, such as the concept of "education"—"Bildung"—as an accumulation of spiritual goods out of the past, have a far greater musical effect upon the audience than the immediate configuration of its social ideals in music; this audience is already too far removed from music to place contral importance upon such configurations. It might well be that Stravinsky's music reflects upper bourgeois ideology far more precisely than, for example, the music of Richard Strauss, the upper bourgeois composer of the last generation; even so, the upper bourgeoisie will nonetheless suspect Stravinsky as a "destroyer" and prefer to hear Strauss in his stead—but prefer even more to hear Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. In this way, alienation complicates the social equation. It is manifested, however, in immanent-aesthetic terms as well—and this might well be the true source of the distrust of the upper bourgeoisie against "its" music. The incorrectness of the structure within

itself, within which the contradiction between the affirmed formal intentions and the actual state of the material remains unresolved, corresponds to the arbitrariness—the negative arbitrariness—with which the composer disposes over his material. This he does with no preformation of the material in any objectively obligatory manner and without any unequivocal judgement upon musical justice and injustice pronounced by the inner construction of the musical constellation itself.

The greatest justice is done to the material by compositional practices such as those encountered in the significant Hungarian composer and folksong scholar Béla Bartok; he refutes the fiction of formal objectivity and goes back instead to a pre-objective, truly archaic material, which, however, is very closely related to current material precisely in its particular dissolution. Radical folklorism in the rational through-construction of his particular material is, consequently, amazingly similar to the practices of the Schoenberg School. In the realm of objectivism, however, Bartok is a totally singular phenomenon; his earlier collaborator Kodaly, on the other hand, falsified authentic folklore as a romantic dream image of unified-folkish life which denounces itself through the contrast of primitivizing melody and sensuously soft, late Impressionistic harmony. Stravinsky's games of masks are protected from demasking of this type by his highly precise and cautious artistic understanding. It is his great and dangerous accomplishment—dangerous to himself as well—that his music uses the knowledge of its coercive antinomy in presenting itself as a game. It does this, however, never simply as a game and never as applied art; it rather maintains a position of continual hovering between game and seriousness and between styles as well, which makes it almost impossible to call it by name and within which irony hinders any comprehension of the objectivist ideology. This, however, is the background of a despair which is permitted every expression, since no single expression suits it correctly; at the same time it brings the game of masks into relief against its dismal background. Within this oscillation a game might become seriousness at any moment and change suddenly into satanic laughter, mocking society with the possibility of a non-alienated music; it is this which makes the reception of Stravinsky as a fashionable composer whose pretention simultaneously elevates his music impossible. It is precisely the artistic security with which he recognizes the impossibility of a positive-aesthetic solution of the antinomies conditioned by society, recognizing, at the same time, the social antinomy itself which makes his suspicious in the eyes of the upper bourgeoisie. In his best and most exposed works—such as *L'histoire du soldat*—he provokes contradiction. In contrast to all other objectivist authors, Stravinsky's superiority within his métier endangers the consistent ideological positivity of his style, as this is demanded of him by society; consequently, in his case as well, artistic logical consistence becomes socially dialectical. It is only with the *Symphony of Psalms* that he seems to have warded off the suspicion of prevailing powers against big-city "studio" art, decadence and disintegration.

The essential social function of Hindemith is the decontamination of Stravinsky's objectivism by means of the naivété with which he assimilates it. His objectivism offers a picture of consistent seriousness; artificial security becomes artisan respectability, whereby the idea of the artisan as a "music maker" again corresponds to the ideas of a state of production not based upon the production and reproduction in music. Hindemith's satanic irony regarding "healthy humor," the health of which indicates the unreflected state of nature in objectivism, disturbed by the grin of Stravinsky's masks and his humor regarding aggressive irony—no matter whether it is avant garde irony or snobbish irony—both reveal his principal reconciliation with social conditions. Stravinsky's despair—this totally historical despair driven to the boundary of schizophrenia in *L'histoire*—is the expression of a subjectivity achieved only through fragments and ghosts of past objective musical language. In Hindemith, this despair is moderated to a naturalistic, unresolved—but still undialectic—melancholy, which looks upon death as an eternal state of affairs similar to numerous intentions of contemporary philosophy, evading concrete social contradictions under the banner of "existentialism" and thus subordinating itself willingly to the anthropological super-historical ideals of objectivism. Stravinsky absorbed social contradictions into artistic antinomy and gave them form; Hindemith conceals them and for that reason his blind configurations turn out to be filled with contradictions. The more perceptive technical eye, which is able to penetrate the surface of consistently interlocking movement and infallible security of instrumentation within the acoustic inventory, locates the flaw of Hindemith's technique everywhere; it discovers the differences between arbitrary material employed as motifs and would-be rigidity of form, between the principal unrepeatability of the components and the forms of repetition which grant surface continuity, between terraced architecture on a large scale and the lack of discrimination—along with the necessity of ordering—in the ordering of the individual terraces. All of this happens simply because "objective" architecture does not embrace the individual productive impulses as a prescribed organizational principle, but rather is imposed upon them by compositional arbitrariness, resulting in a false facade under the sign of the New-Matter-of-Factness. The thematic content of objectivism here remains arbitrary, just as it is in Stravinsky and, to be sure, in the legions of his followers; it is arbitrary in the sense that it is interchangeable and replaceable according to changing ideological needs. It is not unequivocally predetermined by a social constitution and nowhere is it that order for which music might bear witness; it is rather a class order, to be concealed by music under the sign of its humanity. Now mere formal objectivity, totally lacking in content, is offered in its emptiness as thematic content—objectivity for the sake of objectivity, as is often the case in Stravinsky. This obscure vacuity is thus praised as an irrational natural force. Now—as in Hindemith—it is introduced as proof of a community, as such is often formed as a petit bourgeois protest against capitalistic forms of mechanization or in the

manner in which the Youth Movement would like to influence production, while simply avoiding the capitalistic production process. Now music is supposed to be an aural game, providing man with relaxation or creating community; now it should offer him cultic or existential seriousness, as in the instance when the critics demanded of Hindemith—who was then still much more aggressive—"great depth," to which he responded with the composition of Rilke's *Marienleben*. The thematic contents of musical objectivism are as divergent as the interests of the prevailing forces of society and a difference such as that between upper and petit bourgeoisie—to use the concepts as vaguely as the state of social cognition still proscribes for the present—is reflected clearly enough in the objectivist product. The question of "mediation" would also have to be asked here. All objectivist music has one thing in common: the intention of diverting attention from social conditions. It attempts to make the individual believe that he is not lonely, but rather close to all others in a relationship portrayed for him by music without defining its own social function; it attempts to show the totality as a meaningful organization which fulfills individual destiny positively merely through its transformation into the aural medium. However, the foundation and the meaning of this state of relationship are interchangeable. Insofar as the intention of diversion is actually present and not merely the reflection of wishes within an isolated aesthetic realm, it can be looked upon as unsuccessful. The petite bourgeoisie, intensively courted by objectivism with choral societies and instrumental ensembles, "guilds of music makers" and work collectives, has accomplished nothing for the market. The distress of the capitalist crisis has referred the groups addressed by objectivism and its popularizers to other, more tractable ideologies and to those complicatedly manipulated ideologies of objectivism which are of undefined content. They will hardly feel an inclination to distinguish between the "esoteric" Schoenberg and the "music maker" Hindemith; under the label of cultural bolshevism they will reject both of them and, for their part, cling to resurrected military marches.

This anticipates the essential problematic social dilemma of those types of composers who no longer come to terms with the fact of alienation in the aesthetic image, but rather wish to overcome it in reality by including the state of actual social consciousness in the compositional process itself; they would do this through transformation of the musical *terminus a quo* into a social *terminus ad quem*. On its lower levels objectivism shows a marked tendency towards such a method. The demand for aesthetically-immanent music conducive to community is transformed with continuity into a call for aesthetically elevated "use" music. When Kurt Weill as the major representative of musical surrealism shows himself vastly superior to such methods and to the inferior ideal of such elevation, it is because he—better informed about the social condition—not only accepts the positive change of society through music as a possibility, but rather because he views the disclosure of these conditions through music as possible. He does not present

man with a primitivized art intended for use; he shows them rather their own "use" music in the distorting mirror of his artistic method, thus revealing it as a commodity. It is not without meaning that the style of Weill's *Three Penny Opera* and *Mahagonny* stand in grater proximity to *L'histoire* than does Hindemith; it is a style based upon montage, which abrogates the "organic" surface structure of neo-classicism and moves together rubble and fragment or constructs actual compositions out of falsehood and illusion—as which the harmony of the 19th century has today been revealed—through the addition of intentionally false notes. The shock with which Weill's compositional practices overexposes common compositional means, unmasking them as ghosts, expresses alarm about the society within which they have their origin and, at the same time, it is the living negation of the possibility of a positive communal music, which collapses in the laughter of devilish vulgar music as which true use music is exposed. With the means of past illusion, present compositional practices confess their own illusory nature and in their crude radiance the coded script of social conditions becomes legible; this prohibits not only every appeasement through an aesthetic image—for the contradiction of this condition appears again in the image itself—but rather approaches man so directly that he will no longer even consider the possibility of the autonomous work of art. The qualitative wealth of results developed out of this constellation by Weill and Brecht is admirable; they sketch innovations of the opera theater in the sudden illumination of moments which simultaneously turn dialectically against the possibility of the opera theater per se. It is beyond question that Weill's music is today the only music of genuine social-polemic impact, which it will remain as long as it resides at the height of its negativity; furthermore, this music has recognized itself as such and has taken its position accordingly. Its problem is the impossibility of remaining at this height; as a musician, Weill must try to escape the responsibilities of a work method which—from the perspective of music—necessarily seems "literary"—similar, in its way, to the pictures of the surrealists. The misunderstanding of the audience which peacefully consumes the songs of the *Three Penny Opera* as hit tunes—hostile as these songs are both to themselves and to this audience—might be legitimized as a vehicle of dialectic communication. The further course of events reveals another danger in ambiguity: illusion blends into false positivity, destruction into communal art within the realm of the status quo. But, as an experimentor, Weill is fundamentally so far removed from any faith in the unconsciously organic that it is hardly to be expected that he will fall victim to the dangers of the undangerous.

Communal and use music in the broadest sphere have become subject to this danger. Their activity asserts itself at the wrong place—in music rather than in society, and therefore they fail in both instances. For in capitalist society the human state of togetherness from which they proceed is a fiction and, where it might be something real, it is impotent when confronted by the capitalist process of production. The fiction of "community" in music

conceals this process without changing it. At the same time, in inner-musical terms, communal music is reactionary: in the same direction as objectivism, only far more coarsely, it rejects the further dialectic movement of musical material as "individualistic" or "intellectual" and seeks instead a static concept of nature in the restitution of immediacy—namely, the "music maker." Rather than engaging in a—certainly justified—criticism of individualism and in the correction of its immanent contradictions, while recognizing it as a necessary step in the liberation of music for mankind, recourse is taken here on all sides to a primitive, pre-individualistic stage, without any further posing of the neo-classic question regarding the reforming of material. The basic error lies in the conception of the function of music in relation to the public. The consciousness of the public is absolutized; in petit bourgeois communal music this consciousness is viewed as "nature," while class-conscious proletarian music—represented by Hanns Eisler—sees it as proletarian class-conscousness which is to be understood positively here and now. In the process it is overlooked that precisely the demands according to which production should orient itself in these cases—i.e., singability, simplicity, collective effectiveness per se—are necessarily dependent upon a state of consciousness suppressed and enchained through class domination, which results in fetters placed upon musically productive forces. No one has formulated this more exactly and extremely than Marx himself. The immanent-aesthetic results of bourgeois history, including that of the last 50 years, cannot simply be brushed aside by the proletarian theory and praxis of art, unless the desire is to eternalize a condition in art produced by class domination. The elimination of this condition within society is, after all, the fixed goal of the proletarian class struggle. In this process, the submissiveness of communal music in its relation to the present state of consciousness is revealed as deceit by this consciousness itself, for a hit song from a film about a nice little officer of the guard is given preference over popularly conceived communal music which glorifies the proletariat. The agitatory value and therewith the political correctness of proletarian communal music—for example, the choruses of Hanns Eisler—is beyond question; only utopian-idealistic thinking could demand in its place a music internally suited to the function of the proletariat, but incomprehensible to the proletariat. However, as soon as music retreats from the front of direct action, where it grows reflective and establishes itself as an artistic form, it is obvious that the structures produced cannot hold their own against progressive bourgeois production, but rather take the form of a questionable mixture of refuse from antiquated inner-bourgeois stylistic forms—including even those of petit bourgeois choral literature and from the remains of progressive "new" music. Through this mixture, the acuteness of the attack and the coherence of every technical formulation is lost. In place of such intermediate solutions, it is conceivable that melodies of vulgar bourgeois music currently in circulation could be provided with new texts which would in this way bring about a dialectic "re-functioning." It is,

nevertheless, worthy of notice that in the figure of the proletarian composer most consequent for the present, Hanns Eisler, the Schoenberg School, from which he came forth, comes into contact with efforts seemingly contrary to the School itself. If this contact is to be fruitful, it must find dialectic employment: this music must intervene actively in consciousness through its own forms and not take instructions from the passive, one-sided position of the consciousness of the user—including the proletariat.

II. Reproduction—Consumption.

The alienation of music from society is reflected in the antinomies of musical production; it is tangible as an actual social fact in the relation of production to consumption. Musical reproduction mediates between these two realms. It serves production, which can become immediately present only through reproduction. Otherwise it would exist only as a dead text or score. Reproduction is further the form of all musical consumption, for society can participate only in reproduced works and never only in the texts. The demand of reproduction—understood as the demand for authenticity—and that of consumption—the demand for comprehensibility—address reproduction to the same degree and intertwine in it. The postulate of "intelligible" reproduction of the work can apply equally well to the portrayal of the text in terms of its true meaning and to the comprehensibility thereof for the listener. When production and consumption meet in this way within the innermost cells of reproduction, reproduction then becomes the most narrowly defined scene for the conflicts into which they enter with each other. If reproduction involves only alienated music, it cannot hope to reach society; as reproduction for society, it misses the essence of the works involved. For concrete reproduction is concerned—as everyday criticism would always like people to forget—neither with an eternal work per se nor with a listener dependent upon constant natural conditions, but rather with historical conditions. Not only is the consciousness of the audience dependent upon the change in social conditions and not only is the consciousness of those involved in reproduction dependent upon the state of the total musical constitution of society at a given time, the works themselves and their history change within such constitution. Their text is merely a coded script which does not guarantee unequivocal meaning and within which changing thematic contents appear along with the development of the musical dialectic, which in turn encompasses social impulses. The change within works themselves is portrayed in reproduction; this happens under the sign of radical alienation as the reduction of reproductive freedom. Pre-capitalist reproduction was dominated by tradition: the tradition of musical guilds—at times even the tradition of individual families. The impulse of tradition guaranteed a continuing stable relation between music and its public within the stability of reproduction. The work did not stand in a state of isolation from society; rather through reproduction it exerted an influence upon production. Down to the end of the 18th century—i.e., until the elimination of the practice of

general bass through Viennese classicism—production, reproduction and improvisation intermingled without definite boundaries. Even such a strictly-composed form as the Bach fugue which—as the heir of medieval polyphony—did not subordinate itself to the general bass practice permits the interpreter full freedom in tempy and dynamics, factors only occasionally defined in the text. The regulation thereof is assigned to a tradition which remains irrational for several centuries following the introduction of tempered tuning. All this changes with the victory of the bourgeois class. The work itself establishes its independence and, in a rational system of signs, defines itself as commodity in relation to society. The tradition of interpreters and their guilds breaks off with the establishment of free competition; "schools of interpretation" are turned into collectives for learning and ideology with no responsibility towards the transmission of traditional teaching. The remnants of traditional musical practices—as, for example, they were encountered by Mahler in Vienna—are, in his words, transparent "slovenliness"—*Schlamperei.* The intervention of the interpreter in the work, still tolerated in the era before the definitive reification of the work, becomes an arbitrary and evil concern from which the rationally-designed work must keep its distance. The history of musical reproduction in the last century has destroyed reproductive freedom. The interpreter has only the choice between two demands of rational character: either he must limit himself strictly to the realization—at most to the decoding—of the exact language of musical signs, or he must adjust to the demands which society as market makes upon him and within which the configuration of the work perishes. In the 19th century the "interpretive personality" mediated between these two demands as the last musical refuge of irrational reproduction within the capitalist process. This personality stands in a clear relation to the forms of competition and contains an equal amount of irrationality. It serves the work by producing its contents again out of the work itself within the framework of the prescriptive text and its signs; this is possible through the homogeneity of the structure of author and interpreter who are both in the same way bourgeois "individuals" and both perfect the "expression" of bourgeois individuality in the same way. Models of such interpretation are Liszt and Rubinstein, both expressive composers and—as interpreters—"re-creators." The society to which they offer music is just as individualistically constituted as they are; it recognizes itself in them and through them it takes possession of the work offered. In the triumphs which it prepares for the virtuoso—far greater than those with which the composer is celebrated—it celebrates itself. In contrast to the 19th century, the decisive change experienced by contemporary musical reproduction is the destruction of the balance of individualistic society and individualistic production; the freedom of reproduction has therewith grown highly problematic. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism. To be sure, the "interpretive personality" continues within musical life and might well be socially more effective than ever before. Its function, however,

has changed totally and the sovereignty with which it asserts authority over both works and audience conceals in dictatorial fashion the abyss between free interpreter and work. However, musical production—insofar as it asserts any independence from the market—demands total subordination of the interpreter to the text. This subordination is not restricted to present production, but rather becomes the necessary postulate of past production as well—insofar as the reproduction of older works has not become totally impossible in the light of progressive production, causing these works to lie in transparent muteness before the eyes of the strict interpreter. As a composer, Schoenberg eliminated the tonal cadence and all formal means originating in it; at the same time, however, the emancipation of representation which unquestionably belonged to these means and which consequently were not expressly defined were lost; that such means were taken for granted guaranteed the interpreter his freedom. Now the text is annotated down to the last note and to the most subtle nuance of tempo; the interpreter becomes the executor of the unequivocal will of the author. In Schoenberg this strictness has its dialectic origin in the strictness of the compositional method, according to which music is thoroughly "composed out" with no aid from a pre-existing and socially guaranteed material. In Stravinsky, on the other hand, whose text of notes is no less exactly defined, the freedom of the interpreter is eliminated through the style and "taste" of objectivism. This is achieved undialectically, but with similar results. This objectivism, which of course is not purely borne out in construction, demands nonetheless total subordination of the interpreter to its objective attitude. This subordination, even if it is not totally defined in the composition and in the composer's annotation, is intended at least to result in an unemotional manner of performance, similar to that offered by mechanical instruments. The improvements and innovations in the realm of mechanical musical instruments, which make possible a more precise reproduction than that given by mediocre and uncontrolled "free" interpreters, might well have influenced the ideal of reproduction; at any rate, it has affirmed the claims of social interpretation of the conditions of musical production insofar as their immanent complex of problems has brought about the same limitation of reproductive freedom and the same tendencies towards technification and rationalization experienced outside of music in social and economic developments. The perfection of the machine and the replacement of human forces of labor through mechanical forces has become a matter of reality in music as well. These tendencies are not restricted to the reproduction of contemporary music. The historical mutation of works within the framework of ambiguous texts is not an arbitrary process, but rather obeys strictly the insights gained within the realm of musical production. Subjected to more careful observation, older and, above all, "classical" German music—if it is to be realized as its construction presents itself to the eye of today—demands the same strict reproduction as does new music, resisting every improvisational freedom of the interpreter. The demand for a neutrally

adequate reproduction of the work has emancipated itself from the will of the author—which is also a difficult perspective to define—and it is precisely in such emancipation that the historical character of reproduction is responsibly revealed. If an early Beethoven piano sonata were to be played today as "freely," with such arbitrarily improvisational changes—for example, changes of the basic tempi of individual movements—as it was—according to contemporary reports—by Beethoven himself at the piano, the apparently authentic manner of interpretation would strike the listener as contradictory to the meaning of the work in the face of the constructive unity of such movements. This unity has become clear only today and largely through the efforts of later production in music.

In the immanent confrontation with the work, the most progressive interpretation, oriented to the actual state of production, attains to the idea of self-suspension of the work; an open conflict with society necessarily develops, which further develops into a conflict with the audience, which feels itself represented by the interpreter in the work and, through the sacrifice of the work, this audience now feels itself expelled from the work. This process is to be observed most markedly in the best representatives of interpretation, who concentrate upon a pure reproduction of the work. The ambivalence of society regarding realization is revealed still more sharply in regard to reproduction than to production. With the perfection of technical means for the purpose of reducing the labor force and with the progressive development of the independence of music in terms of a unity of commodities subject to exchange as abstract units which then finally divorces itself totally from society, bourgeois society has not only furthered the process of musical rationalization—it is rather that only through this society did such rationalization become possible in the first place. The consequences of rationalization, however, attack the stability of bourgeois order in its basic categories; this order retreats before these consequences into a conceptual world which long ago took leave not only of immanent-musical reality, but of immanent-bourgeois reality as well. Despite this distance, this order has proven itself highly useful in the ideological concealment of the monopoly capitalist development of society. The rationalization of musical production and reproduction—the result of social rationalization—is cloaked in horror as "de-spiritualization," as if it were feared that the irrationality of the social condition which asserts itself despite all "rationalization" had become all too obvious in the light of radical artistic rationality. In so doing, "spirit" is silently equated with the bourgeois-independent private person, whose rights one would like to define ideologically with greater clarity the more they are questioned in economic and social terms. The most pedestrian antitheses are acceptable to the consumer consciousness which wishes to protect itself from the force of true reproduction in terms of its cognitive character, seeking to secure a type of music-making, the major function of which is to conceal reality through dream, intoxication and inward contemplation. At the same time, such reproduction offers the bourgeoisie in aesthetic images precisely

that satisfaction of drives which it prohibits them in reality. The price paid for this by the work of art, however, is its integral configuration. The organic is played off against the mechanical, inwardness against vacuity, and personality against anonymity. Objectivism, in its more conciliatory German form, attempted to counter such objections as were expressed against rational reproduction from the side of production by assimilating the lost reproductive freedom—or at least the appearance thereof in the form of "music-making"—"Musikantentum"—into the text, further developing the text out of instrumental performance methods, as though it were only the free possibility of reproduction which made production itself possible in the first place. The illusory character of this attempted mediation is disclosed by the fact that the function which would necessarily fall to reproduction is assigned to production. This makes the "text" and the concrete composition the final instance for the playing of music and the musicianship of the performer becomes a mere ornamental addition to the composition. As far as the audience is concerned, music for mere music-making has always been ineffective. The will of the public was once realized in the same "interpretive personality" who served the breakthrough of individual expression in music in the 19th century and whose function has now undergone drastic change. This personality must now fulfill a double function. First of all, it has to establish the lost communication between work and public through the sovereignty of its "concept" by exorcizing the configuration of the work in a type of enlargement or bigger-than-life image. This image might, of course, be unsuited to the work; nonetheless, it guarantees the effect upon the public. It must further evoke the work as the expression of individual human dynamics and private animation which it, of course, no longer is. Above all other qualities, it is the ability to present works in a configuration long absent from them—indeed, which they perhaps never possessed at all—which distinguishes the "prominent conductor." The dream image of vital fullness and uninhibited verve, of animated organic quality and direct, non-reified inwardness are provided by him corporally for those to whom capitalist economy denies in reality the fulfillment of all such wishes. It further strengthens them in their faith in their own substance, brought to the fore by those very immortal—i.e., immutable—works evoked by this conductor. By virtue of their education, these listeners are firmly in control of these works which, at the same time, they honor as fetishes. Such a conductor stands in an alien or negating relation to contemporary production—in strict contrast to his predecessors in the 19th century; from time to time he offers a modern work as a horrifying example or permits new music at most the position of a transition to the restoration of the old art of the soul. Otherwise he clings to the heroic-bourgeois past—to Beethoven, or to an author such as Bruckner, who unites the pomp of social event with the same claim to animation and inwardness expressed by the prominent interpreter. The same type of conductor who undertakes an insatiably contemplative celebration of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony lives a life closely akin to that of the head of a

capitalist combine, uniting in his hand as many organizations, institutes and orchestras as possible; this is the exact social corollary to the individual structure of a figure whose task it is to reduce within capitalism the business trust and inwardness to the same common denominator. Several phenomena drawn from the history of types represented by today's prominent interpreters indicate the manner in which the conductor plays the role of a total individual who—like the lord of the monopoly—allegedly overcomes mechanization as the lord of a monopoly who conceals the rational-mechanical apparatus from the view of individuals in order to control it in his own interest. He dominates irresponsibly and without contradiction over the orchestral mechanism, suppressing the free competition of instrumental and vocal virtuosos. He is an individual, but also a "personality" who at one and the same time assumes command over music and public and in the name of the public—but without its conscious will; with gestures of command he quotes the past. Finally, his success is upheld through the gesture of command with which he counters his audience. His ideological domination is supported by a fame in which society reproduces his restorative-reproductive achievement again and again. Class consciousness is so precisely attuned to a fitting ideal of the interpreter that it removes interpreters who do not correspond to it—no matter how indisputable their professional qualifications and even their suggestive force might be. This was done in Vienna before the war in the same way as in present-day Milan and Berlin.

Present-day society demands of music that it serve this society as ideology in the fulfillment of its wishes, as these wishes are manifested dialectically in the problematic realm of reproduction in the figure of the "interpretive personality." It is this demand that dominates the official musical consumption of bourgeois society in toto; this demand is further sanctioned by the institutions of education. In its "musical life"—as it lays claim at present to its traditional locations in opera houses and concert halls—bourgeois society has concluded a type of armistice with alienated music, associating with it in carefully regulated forms of behavior. To be sure, this armistice could be terminated at any time. "Musical life" reacts promptly and exactly to every change of social conditions in the bourgeoisie. For example, the expropriation of the upper middle class through inflation and other crises has expelled this stratum of society from opera and concerts, exiling its members before the radio, the distraction of which adequately expresses the atomization of the bourgeoisie and the exclusion of the bourgeois private person from public affairs. Sitting in front of the loud speaker, the bourgeoisie is subordinated to the monopoly economically and musically, even in terms of a "mixed economic operation." Because musical life registers inner-bourgeois structural changes so directly, analysis must necessarily consider the immanent differences and contradictions of the bourgeoisie. In a sphere in which the autonomous claim of isolated works of art is already broken and replaced by the needs of the market, statistics could assemble essential material for social interpretation. Such material is,

however, not available. Nonetheless, observation can offer a number of findings. First of all, as far as opera is concerned, it has lost its actuality as a vehicle of consumption. Its primary function in the 19th century—i.e., that of representation—has at any rate been taken away from it for the present: the impoverished members of the middle class do not have the economic power to support such representation, nor do they any longer form a cultural unity, capable of such sublimated representation as was once to be found in the opera theater. The most they can do is to commemorate their happier years at performances of *Die Meistersinger*. The upper bourgeoisie, however, which is able and willing to engage in representation, avoids all too open presentation of itself as the dominant and economically competent stratum of society; for the moment, it restricts its representation to more exclusive circles—above all, to those in the loges, accessible to every opera glass. Furthermore, they are totally disinterested in the opera repertory and prefer to establish their musical domain in the large concert organizations which they dominate economically as well as through the politics of programming without exposing themselves to an undue degree. It is nonetheless conceivable that with progressive political development of the forms of domination in monopoly capitalism, opera could regain something of its previous social lustre. On the one hand, opera is attended in part by subscription holders from the older generation of the "educated" middle class, who experience there their own past, enjoying the triumphal bourgeois intoxication which is the particular specialty of Wagner. At the same time—by clinging to a form of art little influenced by social conditions in the breadth of its production—they are able to protest against artistic innovation and related social intentions per se. Another part of the audience which fills opera houses consists of members of other bourgeois circles, such as small merchants, and even of representatives of the artisan professions who still command a certain economic standard, but are excluded from the fruits thereof by "education" in terms of their origin and training. This is the type of opera-goer who is naturally delighted to hear the march from *Aïda* and the aria of Madame Butterfly again—familiar to him from movies and coffee houses and on a level with his musical education. At the same time, he feels that he owes it to his actual economic position and to the possibility of social ascent to receive these bits of commodity in the place consecrated by the old bourgeois ideal of education and which grants the opera-goer—at least in his own eyes—through his presence in the opera house, something of the dignity of that education. It can be assumed that there is a considerable percentage of this type of listener present in the opera audience; this audience is, of course, subject to great modifications. Characteristic today is the total absence of the younger generation of the upper bourgeoisie and of all intellectuals and white-collar workers. The structure envisioned is primarily that encountered in the audience of a provincial opera house. In the metropolitan centers—Berlin, and Vienna as well—the bourgeoisie is still further distracted from the opera through the highly developed mechanism of diversion, so that the

middle class comes less in question for the opera in those cities than in the provinces. On the other hand, opera is granted a representative dignity in the name of truly existent or fictive "foreigners" and this draws the upper bourgeoisie to it, making opera performances as social events possible.

The function of concerts within the bourgeois household is still more significant. In the concert the rather crude subject matter of the opera is absent. It manifests a baroque heritage which has remained largely unaffected by the shift of weight in inner-musical developments from the vocal to the instrumental in recent centuries. The role of opera within bourgeois humanism and idealism is only indirect and beyond question only in the greatest works of the genre: in Mozart, in Beethoven's *Fidelio* and in *Der Freischütz*. It is precisely the subject matter which draws the lower middle class to the opera; in it they seek something similar to a regression into pre-bourgeois culture. However, the same subject matter frightens away the upper stratum of society which finds it "primitive" and "raw." Possibly they sense the danger in the energy of the pre-bourgeois or—in any case—non-bourgeois world of the opera theater—a danger which always seeks to activate itself politically; perhaps they are interested in concealing the character of reality as a world of mere objects, as it is manifested by the opera with uncontrolled joy of discovery. They would like to conceal this precisely because it remains the character of bourgeois reality still today. The upper class retreats from this reality into "inwardness"; the more pleasant its experience, the more it distances itself from social conditions and insight into the contradictions involved therein. This insight can even be presented through music and cloaked in the illusion of immediate collectivity. The upper bourgeoisie loves concerts; in the concert hall it cultivates the humanistic-idealistic educational ideology without compromising itself. This ideology attracts the educated class in large numbers—including its impoverished and petty bourgeois representatives—into such concerts. The ambiguity of "education and property" which achieves ideological reconciliation in the concert hall is expressed conspicuously in the doubling of orchestras in numerous cities: while the "philharmonic" plays for the upper bourgeoisie in expensive concerts, the exclusivity of which is guaranteed by the family subscription system, performing with highly famous guest stars and a very limited number of sanctioned, likewise ceremonial works, the "symphony orchestras" serve the middle educational stratum with cautious doses of novelties within the traditionalist program through the inclusion of resident "local" talent and for low-priced admission. This continues as long as the economy makes such participation possible. Soloist concerts—the number of which shrinks because of increased risk to the concert agent—no longer encounter the former interest; through the reduction in number, they recede more and more from the public consciousness and restrict themselves obviously to the circle of monopolized stars. Concerts such as the offerings of the International Society for New Music, which ostentatiously represent contemporary independent production, demonstrate their isolation through

drastic economic measures; they are attended almost exclusively by musicians —regardless of the direction of modernity that they propagate—and tickets are furnished to the audience gratis. Therefore, these concerts remain within the sphere of musical production and are furthermore economically totally unproductive: they are undertakings dependent upon subvention and deficit financing. The few amateurs who support them—members of the bourgeoisie, for the most part—share in the process of economic production only indirectly or not at all; they have been eliminated from it by the economic crisis. There simply is no such thing as the "consumption" of new music. Insofar as it ever experiences reproduction, this is made possible through organizations of artists among themselves who are hardly capable of bearing the economic burden or through international meetings of political flavor that prove fictive in terms both of the position taken by the individual nations toward current musical production and of their interest in "spiritual exchange." Consequently, a life span of any considerable length cannot be forecast for such organizations. Such concerts and conventions—by clinging liberalistically to the fuction of consumption and "exchange" for economic reasons—have sacrificed any mutually binding effect or responsibility through the compromises involved in the politics of their program. This is true even from the perspective of musical immanence.

The consumers' consciousness of official musical life cannot be reduced to any simple formula; any comment upon the ideological character of bourgeois musical consumption demands explanation. It is incorrect to believe that no actual need lies at the basis of the consumption of music—as though all musical life were nothing but some type of resounding cultural backdrop, erected by bourgeois society for the concealment of its own true purposes, while its authentic, economic-political life takes place offstage. Regardless of the degree to which musical life assimilates such functions and no matter how great its share in the representation of the specifically "social" —i.e., in matters divorced from actual musical needs—these factors alone do not offer the complete picture. It is rather that the ideological power of musical consumption is all the greater, the less it is transparent as mere illusion and as a thin surface gloss and the more precisely it communicates in terms of true needs—doing so, however, in such a way that a "false consciousness" is the result and that the actual social situation is hidden from the consumer. The need for music is present in bourgeois society and this need increases with the problematic social conditions that cause the individual to seek satisfaction beyond immediate social reality, which denies him this satisfaction. This satisfaction is "ideologically" provided by musical life through its acceptance of the bourgeois tendency—again a dialectical product—to flee from social reality and to reinterpret this reality for them by providing them with contents which social reality never possessed or—at best —lost long ago. The clinging to these contents involves the objective intention of thwarting change within society, which would necessarily unmask the true identity of these contents. The ideological essence of musical life is its ability

to satisfy the needs of the bourgeoisie adequately, but to do so by means of a form of satisfaction which accepts and stabilizes the existing consciousness, rather than revealing through its own form social contradictions, translating them into form and cognition regarding the structure of society. When Nietzsche condemned the "intoxication" which music produces as an unproductive intoxication, incapable of activation, impure and dangerous, he correctly recognized the relation between the satisfaction of needs and ideological obscurement—the basic law of bourgeois musical practices—and further identified the unconscious as the setting of that relation. He achieved this despite the doubtfulness of his categories and the unconditional orientation of his musical concepts in terms of the work of Wagner. The association of the bourgeoisie with music takes place under the protection of the unconscious; this is true both of the "legal" association within "musical life" and—to a greater degree—the "illegal" within "light music." The unconsciousness of the relation simultaneously guarantees the fetish character of music-objects; reverence, projected rather distortedly from the theological realm into the aesthetic, forbids any conscious "analyzing" concern with music, the comprehension of which is reserved for "feeling." The uncontrollability of the private-bourgeois manner of reaction to music corresponds to the fetish-like isolation of the musical structure itself. Every technological reflection which might illuminate something of the social function of music along with an explanation of its formal aspects is refused in the name of feeling; at the same time, knowledge of general and meaningless concepts of style is promoted in the name of education. Reverence and feeling cling to the celebrities of the past, before whom all criticism grows silent and in whom the bourgeoisie loves to affirm its own origins and the source of all heroism. Today, since apology is the primary obligation of official musical culture in rationalized society, equal use is made of bourgeois-revolutionary objectivity—"Classicism"—and resigned bourgeois subjectivity—"Romanticism"; the glorification of the victory of bourgeois ratio as well as the suffering of the individual under the sole domination of this ratio is the object of bourgeois musical life, expressed in its canonical works. The ambivalence of a feeling which finds equal satisfaction in Classicism and Romanticism is the ambivalence of the bourgeoisie toward its own ratio. Beyond the tension between rationally constituted objectivity and irrationally emphasized, private inwardness, the bourgeoisie registers the phases of its ascent to the heights of capitalism in "musical life." In *Die Meistersinger*, one of the most informative and—not without reason—socially popular of all works, the theme is the ascent of the bourgeois entrepreneur and his "national-liberal" reconciliation with feudalism in a type of dream displacement. The dream wish of the entrepreneur who has arrived economically makes it possible that not he is received by the feudal lord, but rather the feudal lord by the rich bourgeois; the dreamer is not the bourgeois, but the Junker, whose dream song simultaneously re-establishes lost, pre-capitalistic immediacy in contrast to the rational system of rules developed by the bourgeois "master." The

suffering of the bourgeois individual under his own—and at the same time, isolated—reality—the *Tristan* side of *Die Meistersinger*—is united in hatred against the petty bourgeois Beckmesser with the consciousness of the entrepreneur whose interest is worldwide economic expansion. The entrepreneur has experienced existing conditions of production as fetters upon the forces of production and perhaps already longs for monopoly in place of free competition—in the romantic image of the feudal lord. On the Festival Meadow in Act III of the opera, competition is actually no longer present; only a parody thereof is offered in the confrontation between the Junker Walther and Beckmesser. In the aesthetic triumph of Hans Sachs and the Junker, balance is achieved between the ideals of the privateer and the exporter in their struggle with each other. In Richard Strauss, the last significant bourgeois composer whose music is consumed by the bourgeoisie, international economics—as Ernst Bloch was the first to recognize—have attained the upper hand. Inwardness and pessimism have been liquidated. "Ardour"—as the spirit of the entrepreneur—emancipates itself. Chromaticism and dissonance—previously means of liberation for bourgeois music from a proscribed, irrational system and vehicle for a dialectic which attacks and transforms the material of music—lose their revolutionary-dialectical force and become—like exoticism and perversity in the subject matter—the mere emblem of worldwide economic maneuverability. Technically, they are arbitrarily related as though they were ink blots which at any moment can be liquidated by the healthy optimism of the six-four chord. The material which finally emerges in Strauss' music is to a degree the primal material of all bourgeois music, diatonic-tonal, to which the bourgeoisie, in spite of all changes in structure, clings in truth as faithfully as it does to the principles of profit and interest. In Strauss this makes its appearance with some cynicism by subordinating to itself such foreign markets as literature, the Orient, antiquity and the 18th century. There is a sharp divergence between Strauss' often and verbosely praised "technical sophistication"—i.e., a sophistication imposed from without and not immanent to the material, intended for the arbitrary and actually irrational "domination" of the apparatus—and an historically innocent, harmless and jovial musical substance. This divergence is not only quite suitable to the empirical state of consciousness of the upper bourgeois industrial entrepreneur around 1900, it further denotes with clarity the self-estrangement of the bourgeoisie from its own ratio, which it must intensify and curb simultaneously. Nonetheless, within the post-Wagnerian musical situation, through the social development and the immanent dialectic of Wagner's work, the alienation of musical material from society has advanced to such a degree that a productive force such as that of Strauss could not simply and unconditionally ignore the material demands and adapt itself to society. To be sure, in his best works—*Salome* and *Electra*—the divergence is already indicated; in the music of John the Baptist and in the entire final section of *Electra* banality is dominant. But at the beginning of *Salome*, in Electra's monologue and in her scene with Klytemnestra, his

compositional material declares—as it were—its independence and advances, against its will, to the very boundary of the tonal realm. This boundary is also the boundary of consumption: in the face of both works, the audience was shocked by both music and content and consequently denied them—if not the stages of all opera houses—at least a secure place in the repertory. This audience drew the line of its tolerance with Strauss and this line, in turn, affected his later work. But, in another sense, Strauss drew the line himself. Of all the composers of the bourgeoisie, he was perhaps the most class conscious; *Der Rosenkavalier* was his greatest success and in it the dialectic of material is invalidated from without. The diatonic is cleansed of all dangerous fermatas and Octavian, the young man of good family—a trouser role, to top it off—is married to the daughter of newly ennobled wealth, while the Marschallin—simultaneously the heir of Hans Sachs and Isolde—has all the difficulty and finds consolation only in the abstract consciousness of transitoriness. With this intellectual sacrifice to consumer consciousness, Strauss' productive power is extinguished: everything that follows *Rosenkavalier* is either applied or commercial art. The break between production and consumption to which Strauss fell victim as a producer first took on extreme form only in Germany. In France, where the process of industrialization was less far advanced—thus expressing within itself the antinomies of bourgeois order less radically—both remain in harmony for a longer time. The bourgeoisie which was interested in music had extensive free time at its disposal and, trained by the painting of Impressionism, it was able to follow the movement further. Music, not yet isolated and not dialectical within itself by virtue of its polemic position toward society, could sublimate the means of this society within itself without making a substantial attack upon society. Debussy, an autonomous artist like the Impressionist painters, whose technology he transposes into music, can take with him into his highly fastidious artistic method elements of bourgeois culinary music and even of salon music in terms of sound and melody. Of course, just as in Strauss, the diatonic emerges in Debussy, too—barren and archaic. This happens in his theory as well—in the dogma of natural overtones and the resulting Rousseauean diction, the consequence of the total sublimation of the primal musical material of the bourgeoisie. Ravel, with his knowing eye, can find no other means of adjustment to this situation than through psychological-literary appeasement: he resorts to gentle irony. Even in France, however, this marks the end of reconciliation. The composers of the post-Ravel generation manifest the most suspicious lack from which French artists could possibly suffer: the lack of métier. Tradition, which lasted for such a long time, has been broken; a replacement through isolated musical training in Schoenberg's sense has not yet come into being. Between serious production and bourgeois consumption a vacuum is openly revealed everywhere. Production within which immanence achieved crystallization remains inaccessible; that production, however, which adjusted to consumption is rejected in its subaltern faint-heartedness by the upper bourgeoisie itself as

"epigonal." The bourgeoisie thus sees itself thrown back ever more definitely upon the limited circle of "classic" production which is no longer capable of extension. The recourse to pre-liberalist classicism, the refusal even of the "moderately modern" corresponds precisely to the economic-political recourse to pre-liberalist forms, as this recourse is dialectically conditioned by liberalism itself, wherever it has no desire to move progressively beyond itself.

Below the realm of "musical life," below education and representation, stretches the vast realm of "light" music. Along with commercial art and song, literature for male chorus and sophisticated jazz it extends musical life without interruption, assimilating as much from above as is accessible to it. It reaches downward into the bottomless underworld far beyond the bourgeois "hit song" and from which at only occasional junctures eruptions such as the horrifying song "Drink, Drink, Dear Brother, Drink," ascend into consciousness. Light music satisfies immediate needs, not only those of the bourgeoisie, but of all of society. At the same time, however, as pure commodity, it is most alien of all music to society; it no longer expresses anything of social misery and contradiction, but forms rather in itself one single contradiction to this society. This it does by falsifying the cognition of reality through the satisfaction of desires which it grants to man. He is forced away from reality and divorced from both music and social history. Society tolerates light music as "kitsch," which, of course, lays no claim to aesthetic rights; as a means of diversion, however, it is not subject to any criticism. Thus in its way, society adjusts to the paradox of light music which of all music at one and the same time is the closest to and the most distant from man. The same products which as daydreams fulfill the conscious and unconscious desires of men are forced upon the same people by capitalism with all its technique with no influence from those affected whatsoever; they are not asked—indeed, they have not the slightest chance of defending themselves. Light music is protected in many ways from the grasp of cognition. First of all, it is looked upon as harmless—as a minor happiness of which man must not be robbed. Further, it is viewed as lacking in seriousness and unworthy of educated consideration. Finally, however, the mechanism of wish fulfillment is rooted so deeply in the unconscious and is assigned so cautiously to the darkness of the unconscious that this mechanism—precisely in the most important cases—is hardly accessible without the aid of theory. Reference to such an "absurd" hit song as "Who Rolled the Cheese to the Depot?" makes this sufficiently clear. Such study demands highly exact interpretation—the bourgeoisie would speak of "artistic" interpretation; indeed, even very precise psychological training is called for. Observations upon technique, such as are applied to art music, reveal very little, for they are able only to characterize vulgar music in terms of its inability to develop an autonomous technique, through which it might easily have met the demands of consumption as a commodity. The place of technical analysis should be taken by an indication of the few, regressively preserved and obviously archaic-symbolic types and figures with which vulgar music operates.

Furthermore, a scheme of depravation should be worked out, in which only light music registers history, integrating it into the archaic mechanism of drives. Finally, changes within light music demand description and documentation of their economic constitution; in spite of the "ahistoricism" of their types, they are extensive and important. Organized scholarship has paid no attention to any of this; the material involved has not even been philologically prepared. Such study has not gotten beyond the obvious relation between contemporary and older vulgar music—i.e., traditional dance forms, the communal song, opera buffa, and the *Singspiel*—and the confirmation of "primal motives" along with the folkloristic satisfaction that they offer. Here, however, where the invariables are completely obvious, the concern should be less with their definition than with their functional interpretation; it should be shown that the same components and the identical drive structures to which light music adjusts take on totally different meanings depending upon the given state of social progress. The same vulgar song type, for example, with the profanity of which the the youthful bourgeoisie of the 17th and 18th centuries unmasked feudal hierarchy and made fun of it today serves the transfiguration and apology of the rational bourgeois profane world, whose typewriters—despite all rationalization—are transformed into music and sung—i.e., they are capable of transforming them into "immediacy." Furthermore, the formal changes encountered in all types of light music should be studied in connection with change in function. If the apocryphal character of light music complicates its social study, it could be simplified through the disappearance within it of any autonomous dialectic of production. The exposure of vulgar music need not be mediated through the technological indication of its immanent contradictions, because, in obedience to social dictates, it offers far less opposition to social categories than do independent production and educated musical life. However, the obscure realm of light music remains unexamined; there is, therefore, nothing to be gained from prejudging its topography, for the limited number of basic types, along with the drastic ideological function of many phenomena within this music, are misleading, resulting in premature anticipation of the entire sphere without definition of its "idea" with the necessary pragmatic discipline. Social interpretation is thus deprived not only of its reliability, but probably of its productivity as well. Even the conceitedly summary treatment of light music remains obedient; by borrowing from it that ambiguous irony with which light music—like many contemporary films—inclines to smile at itself in order to pass by without being challenged, such observation accepts as an object of the game that which should be seen by the inexorable eye, untouched by laughter, as the fateful power of deception concentrated in light music. Until such observation becomes possible, fragmentary indications must suffice.

As old as the tension between art music and vulgar music is, it became radical only in high capitalism. In earlier epochs, art music was able to regenerate its material from time to time and enlarge its sphere by recourse to

vulgar music. This is seen in medieval polyphony, which drew upon folk songs for its cantus firmi, and also in Mozart, when he combined peep-show cosmology with opera seria and *Singspiel* in *The Magic Flute*. Even the masters of the 19th century operetta, Offenbach and Johann Strauss, remained sufficiently in command of the divergence between these two spheres of musical production. Today the possibility of balance has vanished and attempts at amalgamation—such as those undertaken by diligent art composers at the time of the rage for jazz, remain unproductive. There is no longer any "folk" whose songs and games could be taken up and sublimated by art; the opening up of markets and the bourgeois process of rationalization have subordinated all society to bourgeois categories. This subordination extends to ideology as well. The categories of contemporary vulgar music are in their entirety those of bourgeois rational society, which—only in order that they remain subject to consumption—are kept within the limits of consciousness imposed by bourgeois society not only upon the suppressed classes, but upon itself as well. The material of vulgar music is the obsolete or depraved material of art music. The music of Johann Strauss is set off from the art music of the time through its "genre," but this separation is not total; his waltzes leave room for harmonic differentiation and, furthermore, they are formed thematically out of small, contrasting units never subject merely to empty repetition. It is the surprising connection of these fragments which gives the Strauss waltz its charm, its "pungency," relating it at the same time to the tradition of Viennese classicism, from which it is derived via Strauss senior, Lanner and Schubert. It is the decisive factor in the history of recent vulgar music that the definitive break, the sacrifice of its relation to independent production, the growing vacuity and banalization of light music corresponds exactly to the industrialization of production. The authors of light music were forced into mass production by inconceivably intense competition. Those among them who succeeded—back before the war already—banned together in compositional trusts; they settled down in the Austrian Salzkammergut and, in carefully planned cooperation with librettists and theater directors, kept outsiders and novices at a distance. Through restriction of production to their own limited number, they established norms for the manufacture of the operetta, defining, above all, the quantity and type of the individual "numbers." At the same time, they calculated the sale of their creations in advance, avoiding for that reason all difficulties that might hinder remembrance and singing of their melodies—a practice of which the Viennese or Parisian bourgeoisie of 1880 was still capable. The sign of the industrialization of musical production was the total elimination of all contrast within melodies and the sole domination of the sequence, which of course had been employed previously as a means by which music impressed itself on the listener. Exemplary for the establishment of the new style is the Waltz from *The Merry Widow*; the jubilation with which the bourgeoisie received Lehar's operetta is comparable to the success of the first department stores. Oscar Strauss, for example, who was still rooted in the

Viennese tradition, had learned his handicraft and had exerted great effort toward a richer and more complex operetta music. However, he had to earn his living either through commercial music—from which the social effectiveness of Johann Strauss was lacking—or adjust to industrialization. Leo Fall is the last composer who withdrew from this affair with some dignity. All these composers, however, were still on intimate terms with bourgeois art music—expressed within the operetta form itself as a unity or a "totality," even if in a parodistic manner—which demanded of them musical architecture, strong personal contours in the characters of their works and, finally, originality and inspiration as well. The industrial development of light music annuled the last aesthetic responsibility and transformed light music into a market article. The material subject matter of the revue liquidated the subjective, formal element of the operetta and, in its appeal to the listener, the operetta was undercut by it. This it did not only by offering the audience "girls," but further by liberating it from the last demands of intellectual activity, of thinking participation in the events presented to it and in their unity. The stage thus surrenders to irresponsible play with wishes and desires, through which the revue-operetta—strangely enough—approached certain intentions of independent production. This aspect of the revue made the Viennese operetta and its Hungarian byproduct institutions of serious competition. The sound film then eliminated all original musical inspiration. While a hit such as "Valencia"—in order to dominate the market—was still called upon to make a distinction between the banality of its second steps through asymmetrical, "cute" meter and other banalities, the totally rationalized factories of sound film hits with their capitalistic division of labor are excused from such efforts. No matter how their products look and sound, they are "successes"; listeners are forced to sing them to themselves, not only because the most finely tooled machinery hammers them into them, but above all, because the monopoly of the sound film prevents all other musical commodities—from which they might choose something else—from reaching them. Here monopoly capitalism has asserted itself purely and extremely; in clumsy efforts such as *Bombs on the Monte Carlo*, it has further defined the political dimension of the omnipotence. Even if vulgar music in terms of its form and structure is thus removed from the educational categories of bourgeois society—categories about whose continuation this music is deeply concerned—it clings nonetheless to the materials of education as fetishes. The industrialization of light music and the abrasion of the bourgeois educational heritage which it accomplishes go hand in hand. It is no coincidence that at the same time in which the last chances of authentic production of light music have been eliminated, the operetta undertakes the glorification of the "creative" artist by stealing his melodies: *Das Dreimäderlhaus*, with its abuse of Schubert's music, is a necessary component of the economic substructure of hit song fabrication—both as an advertisement and ideology—and every further development of the industrial apparatus has strengthened the fetish character of the educational heritage within which light music still lives more

extremely. Friederike and *Das Land des Lächelns* with all its exoticism are sister-works; the ready-made jazz industry lives from the arrangements of "classical" music, for this heritage provides jazz with raw materials. This heritage, in turn, is strengthened—as a fetish—through the happiness of renewed encounter. The ideological function of jazz when it first asserted itself as the upper bourgeois form of contemporary vulgar music was to conceal the commodity character and alienated manner of production of this music; it was to be offered under the trademark of "quality goods." Jazz was to evoke the appearance of improvisational freedom and immediacy in the sphere of light music; this is why it could be so adapted so conveniently by efforts of similar intention in art music. The maneuver of jazz has been psychologically successful for years thanks to the structure of a society whose mechanism of rationalization inevitably produces the necessity of disguising itself in the interest of turnover on the marketplace. In jazz there can be no talk of "immediate" production; the division of labor into "inventor," proof reader, harmonizer and specialist for instrumentation is, if possible, still further advanced in this case than in the manufacture of operetta. The apparent improvisations of "hot" music are totally the expression of set norms which can be traced back to a very few basic types. In the same manner, in jazz, freedom and rhythmic wealth are illusory from the perspective of musical immanence: metrically the eight-bar structure dominates, making use of syncopes and the interpolation of an "illusory" beat only as ornaments. In its harmonic-formal relations, however, this structure asserts itself without challenge, and rhythmic emancipation is restricted to the sustained fourths of the bass drum. Beneath the opulent surface of jazz lies the most primitive harmonic—tonal scheme—barren, unchanged, clearly detachable—with its breakdown into half- and full-cadences and equally primitive meter and form. It is socially and musically equally revealing that jazz bands and jazz composition were able to obey the fashion of military marches with ease when political reversal took place within the crisis which proclaimed the upper bourgeoisie drive of the entrepreneur in place of world-market expansion and the exotic-folkloristic corollary thereof in the vulgar music of national autarchy, which it further demanded of commercial art. The bass drum, whose previous purpose was the representation of the dance-like primal feelings of colonial peoples, now regulates the march step of local formations. The elements of musical impressions used by jazz—the whole-tone scale, the ninth chord, chordal parallel movements—change nothing in this situation. It is not merely that they do not appear until after the dialectic of art music has left them far behind, following the exhaustion of their value as stimuli—in the same manner, vulgar music of the second half of the 19th century took over chromaticism from preceding Romanticism. More essential, however, is that these means totally lost every formative power in jazz. All the old salon pieces, waltzes, character pieces and reveries inserted into jazz employed chromaticism only in the form of intermediate notes alien to harmony without chromaticization of the harmonic foundation itself. In like manner,

in jazz, impressionistic flourishes appear only as interpolations without disturbing the harmonic-metric scheme. Light music clings rigidly to the diatonic as its "base in nature," and it is the more certain of this base the sooner it can permit itself—as jazz does—an excess under this sign.

If the scheme of depravation of light music is anticipated by its immanence in the static basic material of bourgeois art music—i.e., in tonality—and if in these terms the relation of light music to art music offers no terribly great difficulties—even in terms of social interpretation—the difficulties involved in a theory of all types are all the greater. Even the very basic state of affairs in light music, the division into couplet and refrain, is not easily accessible. If the historical origins thereof in the exchange between solo and choral song is considered, and if it is compared with the trick of many contemporary hits which narrate the story of their refrain in the couplet, as it were, the following interpretation seems probable: in its stereotyped figures, light music attempts to master the fact of its alienation by absorbing the reporting, observing and detached individual—as soon as he begins the refrain—into a fictive collective. This individual, in turn, finds his significance enforced through his participation in the objectivity of the refrain; indeed, he experiences the content of the refrain text as his own content in the couplet. He then recognizes this content in the refrain with astonishment and elevation as a collective content. The psychological mechanism of hit song production, consequently, is narcissistic; the demand for arbitrary singability or hit tunes corresponds to this: in his ability to resing the melody with which he is manipulated, every listener identifies with the original vehicles of the melody, with leading personalities or with a collective of warriors which intones the song. He thus forgets his own isolation and accepts the illusion either that he is embraced by the collective or that he himself is a leading personality. Be that as it may, this mechanism does not prevail without exception: even if the major portion of hit song production clings to the division between couplet and refrain, several of the most successful hits of the post-war period—such as "The Dancing Tambourine" and "The Wedding of the Painted Doll"—sidestepped this division. The first of these songs is a dance movement with trio; the second, a type of "character piece" in the sense of the 19th century. In such pieces, the success of which is not to be ascribed to their texts, the psychological mechanism cannot be defined so easily. In "Tambourine," it might be a certain melodic contour, particularly in the trio; in the "Doll" song, the impulse of infantilism has an influence, but such definitions are far less meaningful than psychoanalytical characteristics provoked by every hit song. This it does in order that a second and more dangerous significance can be concealed behind the psychoanalytic individual meaning: i.e., the social significance of the song. If, however, in these two instrumental songs, the role of the music is so considerable in the effect produced, one is hardly justified in ignoring this effect in those songs with text. No method for the analysis of the psychological effect of music has been developed and even Ernst Kurth's psychology of music offers no sufficient instructions on this problem which is

perhaps in reality the most important one in the social interpretation of music. There is the further question, whether psychology in this case is sufficient; whether the decisive categories are not rather to be provided by social theory. The "psychology" of hit songs in the traditional sense leads to constants in the realm of drives. Thus, in the explanation of the "absurd" type of hit, it is illuminating to make reference to anal regression along with its sadistic components which are seldom lacking in the song texts at hand. Absurdity is portrayed as blanks created by censorship which can, however, easily be filled in. With the definition of the anal-sadistic structure of those hits, nothing is said about their present social function; their effect is rather traced back to a natural disposition of drives and the conflict thereof with society in general, an aspect which at any given time is equally specific, while the origin and function of the hit song within capitalism is not questioned at all. However, as long as the social dialectic and the analysis of the structure of drives stand discretely or merely complementarily beside each other, the concrete effect of light music has not been seen through; it remains rather assigned to various individual disciplines, which—in the sense of bourgeois systematic scholarship—proceed in isolation, underscoring in their separation one of the most questionable disjunctions of bourgeois thought itself: the disjunction between nature and history. The social interpretation of light and—in the final analysis—of all music is faced by the one central question: what method is it to employ to avoid still further presumption in methodology of the ambiguity of the static state of nature—in the components of drives—and of dynamic historical quality—in its social function. If music—as it has done up to the present—is to escape the schematism of individual psychology, if the most elementary of its effects presupposes a concrete social condition of which it offers a tendentious indication, and if nature itself does not appear in music other than in historic images, then the material character of music might offer an indication that dialectical materialism might not answer the "question" about the relation of nature and history, but that it might rather contribute to the elimination of this question both in theory and praxis.