Musicology in German Universities

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As is generally known, Germany is justly regarded as what may be called "the cradle of modern musicology."[1] "Modern musicology" in this sense stands for scholarly access to music on the basis of the principles and method of empirical learning, in contradistinction to the medieval concept of *ars musica* (with its two major spheres of *scientia* and *usus musicae*) which meant scholarly access to music on the basis of numerical speculation and rational definition of the sounds.

Once an indispensable (and at times even compulsory) component of the academic curriculum and (in the Middle Ages) of the quadrivium, the study of music had slowly petered out and finally come to an end in the German universities between the last decades of the 16th century and the early 18th century. For a certain period there was an almost complete lacuna and the word *musica* was lacking altogether in the programs, although it was a gross exaggeration when Peter Wagner in 1921 pretended that this lacuna had lasted for two centuries. Of all German universities only Leipzig seems to have preserved the Medieval tradition, at least to some extent. The reputation of *musica* as a field of academic learning and the reputation of its teachers had decayed. In some cases professors of mathematics had been offered the chairs of *musica* and in others the teaching of music had been attached to that of physics. Scientific leanings of music theorists dominated in the period of Johannes Kepler, Robert Fludd, Marin Mersenne, etc.—precursors of the division between the historical and the scientific conception of musicology that came to the fore in the 19th century. About the year 1700 the study of music in the German universities reached its lowest level and had completely vanished in most of them.

Very soon, however, while George Philipp Telemann was a student in Leipzig (1701–05), a new drive toward music teaching awoke in the old alma mater (founded in 1409). And when, twenty years later, Lorenz Mizler took his degree in Leipzig (in 1736) and began to lecture on music (besides mathematics and philosophy) this might have meant a fundamentally new start. Mizler, closely connected with the philosopher Christian Wolff in nearby Halle, was a representative of the age of Enlighten-

ment. His counterpart at Leipzig University was the professor of rhetoric and poetics, Johann Christoph Gottsched, the "pope of literature" of his age. Mizler's principal aim was, according to his own words, "to confer on music the shape of a science," which meant to deal with music as if it were a subspecies of mathematics. He lectured in Leipzig until the year 1743 on *Die gelehrte Historie der Musik* which however meant less "history" proper than what he believed to be the true nature of music. He was a friend of Johann Mattheson in Hamburg, and Mattheson declared himself prepared to contribute in his will to the foundation of a chair for music at Leipzig University "if there were some assistants." But the truth was that there were not only no assistants but that Mizler himself was a hermit in the desert of the German universities. As a matter of fact, Jacob Adlung in 1758 complained that there was no professor of music in any German university. Mizler was indeed an isolated phenomenon. He might have become something like a connecting link between the ancient doctrine of *musica* and the new kind of music teaching as developed in the later decades of the 18th century. Yet his bad luck was that for the one end of the development he lived too late, for the other one too early. For both of them he was too paltry a musician.

The trend of the new way of teaching music in the German universities was toward fruitful musicianship. If in Hamburg in the 1730's the *Kantor* (who was Telemann) was expected to teach "the theory and the history" of music in the *Johanneum* and if in the same town Mattheson and Johann Adolf Scheibe advocated the reinstatement of chairs for musical instruction in the German universities in general, no one of them aimed at theory or history in the modern sense of the words, but at a revival and recapitulation of the old subjects and slogans: the well-known mythological and legendary anecdotes, the quotations from Greek theorists and Fathers of the Church, the fairy-tales of the effects of music. They aimed at mathematical calculations on sounds and intervals, at the Medieval modes and their rules, at Orpheus and Amphion, at the Pythagoreans and the Aristoxenians, at all and sundry, but least of all at the period's own musical tradition. "Theory" did not mean harmony or counterpoint or improvisation, etc., "history" did not refer to Bach or Lully or Monteverdi or Lasso. But this was just what the concepts of theory and history came to mean in the next generation.

When Johann Nikolaus Forkel in Göttingen and Daniel Gottlob Türk in Halle were appointed "music directors" in their respective universities and started lecturing on the "theory" and the "history" of music (about 1770), the signification of those words had turned around: to Forkel and Türk they meant what they mean to us. While Forkel taught on the theory of music in general and tried to give a general introduction to the knowledge and criticism of music, Türk was able to lecture as early as 1809 on the *Historia artis musicae*—and he meant *history*. Werner Friedrich Kümmel has expounded the facts very clearly and thoroughly, but he has failed to take into account this change of meaning of the words. One must overlook neither this change of meaning nor the fact that these new teachers were distinguished practical musicians. The outcome was, in the end, that music teaching in the universities from this time on meant teaching the technique and practice of empirical music, combined with information on pragmatic history. For about one hundred years distinguished practical musicians with a comprehensive knowledge of all branches of their field took the posts of the former antiquarians, scientists, and mathematicians. Kümmel quotes the résumé written by the Göttingen professor of philosophy, Christian Meiners, in 1802: "In the most recent universities it became customary to appoint at least one eminent draftsman and musician respectively. Such distinguished artists were honored with the title of professor, music director, etc., provided they were not only skilful but also learned artists [*nicht bloss geschickte, sondern auch gelehrte Künstler*] able to lecture on the theory or the history of their arts for those who required such instruction." This, in brief, is a vivid picture of the situation as it presented itself in a good many of the German universities at the beginning of the 19th century. The tradition of scholarly approach to music as inherited from the Middle Ages was dead. The medieval *musicus* had long been replaced by the "cantor." It was from this type of musician, such as Friedrich Chrysander and Guido Adler, who originally did not belong to the university and had nothing whatever to do with scholarship, that the modern type of musicologist sprang up.

This is important to observe and ought to be kept in mind. German musicology has descended from those musical practitioners and by no means from the older theorists, scientists, or mathematicians. To make this clear certainly does not mean to

disparage the men belonging to this interim group. That would be foolish in view of such names as Forkel, Türk, Zelter, Franz Joseph Fröhlich, Heinrich Carl Breidenstein, Adolf Bernhard Marx, Gottfried Heinrich Bellermann, Gottfried Wilhelm Fink, Theodor Mosewius, and many more. Yet it is worth noticing that, notwithstanding the eminence of these names, it took three generations until from these origins emerged the phalanx of persons who, still deeply rooted in practical music, represented the full-fledged musician, coined by scholarship: Eduard Hanslick, Ludwig Nohl, August Wilhelm Ambros, Philipp Spitta, Friedrich Chrysander, Otto Jahn (who actually was a professor of classics), Gustav Jacobsthal, to name only a few of them. Even before they began to teach there had been a rigid differentiation of subjects. As early as about 1810 Türk had divided "theory" into *pars aesthetica*, *arithmetica*, and *acustica*. Fröhlich in Würzburg had devoted lectures to aesthetics (1812) and pedagogics (1819). Carl Friedrich Zelter made similar propositions in Berlin. With Simon Ferdinand Gassner in Giessen, C. Breidenstein in Bonn and others, the subjects of lectures embraced such fields as the history of church music or the history of music in the ancient world, or analysis of important compositions of the past and of different periods. A. B. Marx in Berlin was perhaps the first professor to lecture on "the aims and methods of musical instruction." The word *Musikwissenschaft* occurs in the title of a lecture of his announced for 1833–34, *Einleitung in die Musikwissenschaft*, and the household pattern of "rise and fall" appears about the same time in a lecture on *Blüte und Verfall*.

The process of differentiation is highly interesting and most informative. Kümmel has described it in detail. The history of the instruments, especially the history of the organ, and the history of single genres and forms of composition, mark the progress then made in mid-19th-century music teaching. Lectures on single great masters of the past were added about the same time. The first lectures on J. S. Bach were offered by Th. Mosewius in Breslau in 1845. The names of Beethoven and Mozart appear for the first time in academic catalogues in Basel in 1855 and 1856. In the 1860's Gluck and Haydn, and in the 1870's Wagner and Weber, occur as subjects of lectures in Strassburg, Heidelberg, Munich, Prague, Berlin, etc. Special problems like notation, medieval polyphony, even the history of opera and of instrumental

music, of the Lied, etc., were not infrequently chosen as subjects of academic instruction. It was, therefore, nothing exceptional when young Hugo Riemann in his first two semesters (1878–79) announced that he would teach the development of Western notation (*Die Entwicklung der abendländischen Notenschrift*) and the history of music printing and music selling (*Geschichte des Notendrucks und Musikalienhandels*). On the whole it may be stated that the full breadth of historical subjects from antiquity through the Middle Ages and all later periods had been reached in the 1870's. This means that within the last hundred years the syllabus of lectures on the history of music in the German universities has remained largely the same although, of course, considerably refined and increasingly differentiated.

This was the state of affairs when the first generation of "great" German musicologists (like Ambros, Chrysander, Spitta, etc.) was superseded by the second (born between 1848 amd 1855) that comprises celebrities like Hermann Kretzschmar, Hugo Riemann, Max Friedländer, Guido Adler, etc. (in the order of their dates of birth). To the first should be added Hermann Helmholtz, the eminent physicist, and to the second Carl Stumpf who started in philosophy, both of whom exerted remarkable influence on the development and validity of musicology within the illustrious circle of the humanities in Humboldt's university pattern. In a third generation (born between 1865 and 1877) German musicology excelled with such names as Adolf Sandberger, Peter Wagner, Johannes Wolf, Hermann Abert, Friedrich Ludwig, Theodor Kroyer, Robert Lach, Ludwig Schiedermair, Arnold Schering, and again here one man ought to be mentioned who came from "outside," from science and philosophy into musicology, Erich von Hornbostel. It is on these three generations that the fame of German musicology rests. Their heritage has laid the foundations of all our knowledge about the history of music down to the present day. Later generations of scholars have preserved and enlarged and refined this inheritance admirably, specialized it infinitely and filled in its lacunae to an amazing extent. But when we want to deal with Bach we still resort to Spitta. For the general history of music Ambros or Riemann are still fundamental. Notation is unthinkable without Wolf, as is organum and motetus without Ludwig. This does not mean a depreciation of what later generations have achieved. But the first three have been the

testators; we are the heirs. Their lifetime has been the "golden age" of German musicology. With the heirs it has spread over the world.

The succession of these three generations discloses the incontestable fact that German musicology's recent ancestry has descended from practical musicians. It originated from living music, not from obsolete theory. From Forkel and Türk onward its problems were the actual problems of its time, and scholarly access to these problems was sought for by consulting history. Its idea was to establish a living contact between what actually happened or was wanted in music and what history and older theory had to say to present problems. The permanent question, as it were, was: "How can the music of our day be derived from its historical ancestry, and how can history be brought to fruition for our day?" The learned teachers of the first generation had been practitioners of music or had come from other fields of humanities, while those of the second and the third generation directed their careers, at least as a rule, immediately at research work in music and at musicology as a field of academic teaching. They would no longer have been content to be tolerated as "able artists" with the decorative title of a professor; they felt able to hold university chairs because they felt that their research was as methodical and as valuable as any. This was what Chrysander in 1863 and Adler in 1885 had intended when they set the highest standards for musical studies. Kretzschmar, it is true, had long remained in close contact with practical music (he liked to perform and to conduct far into his old age) and Abert had been a professor of Classics before he definitely turned toward musicology. But on the whole, by the lifetime of this generation musicology had been so firmly established in the academic curriculum, and the field of research in music, especially in its history, had been so unreservedly acknowledged as an equal to others, that the musicologist became, for the first time in history since the Middle Ages and on completely altered premises, a full member of the academic circle.

To be precise: not quite without a last trace of distrust. In the second generation it was still possible that a distinguished scholar of the rank of Hugo Riemann at Leipzig never acquired a full professorship because a friendly literary colleague of his suspected him to be "not perfectly dependable in method," and H. Kretzschmar at Berlin who indeed was a full professor would

have to stand a second musicological chair established next to his own for C. Stumpf as a sort of supervision to *der Musikant*. From that time on Berlin university owned, as an exception for Germany, two musicological chairs until in recent decades the number of professorships (of different ranks) was considerably augmented. In the third generation, however an open insult like this would have been inconceivable.

The rapid rise of "modern musicology," i.e., research in and teaching about music in a scholarly manner, was a tremendous success and has been conceived as such: in little more than a hundred years music had reconquered the place it once had held in the universities. Yet this shining medal had a reverse. The price to be paid for the growing independence and self-assertion of musicology was the rapidly deepening schism between scholarship and practice, between musicology and music. This was, to be sure, an unintentional result of the evolution, but it indisputably was caused by the tendencies prevailing throughout the 19th century. Scholars of the new type were increasingly emancipated from practical music. Eminent scholars like J. Wolf or F. Ludwig not only were unable to compose or to perform but even were not interested in such skills, while others who were able musicians considered themselves *dilettanti*. Strengthening specialization in scholarly problems meant declining interest in artistic skill. Indubitable pride (certainly not unjustified) in what had in a comparatively short time been reached in the field of research, especially in history, soon created some sort of class consciousness and in no time the degradation of the non-scholars was at hand: the relation of the "professor of musicology" with the "music director" very soon resembled the medieval relation of the *musicus* with the *cantor*. As early as 1875 Chrysander stated plainly that the offices of music director and professor were already separated in some places (Kümmel). As a matter of fact, the segregation of music and musicology had started in the "first generation" and may be regarded as a negative landmark of the "golden age." It was Philipp Spitta who in 1883, in an *expertise* for the Prussian government, explicitly demanded that once and for all only musicology (*Kunstwissenschaft*) and not practical music (*praktische Kunst*) should be taught in the universities and that only real scholars (*wirkliche Musikgelehrte*) should be appointed professors. This of course meant a house divided.

The antagonism of craftsmanship versus scholarship is another

heritage we have taken over from the generations of the "Great." The edifice of practical music teaching in the universities had always been feeble. As a rule it had rested, since Forkel and Türk, on a single pair of shoulders in each university. Now with the strengthening and stabilization of musicology it was pressed more and more into the background. In some of the German universities the question was raised whether music teaching should be retained in the academic curriculum at all or whether it was not sufficient to let some young assistant conduct a chorus and a students' orchestra and spare all further activity. Professors increasingly nurtured the concept of scholarship as an isolated field, cautiously screened from practical music, and proceeded to lock themselves up in their ivory towers. As late as 1960 Walther Vetter (Professor at Humboldt University) was able to write: "Whoever as a scholar feels the urge to display his capacity as conductor or instrument player therewith proves that as a scholar he rests on weak foundations." Which again means a house divided. That a modest strain of music teaching has trickled down into present times in the German universities is probably due to the fact that without such help too many students would have remained bare of adequate training in harmony, thorough bass, score reading, and other indispensable prerequisites for the study of musicology. But just this meant degrading practical music teaching into the propeadeutic role of a mere *ancilla musicologiae* and was certainly not very apt to improve the relations of the two fields and of their representatives. The battle between "music" and "musicology" reached a climax in the 1920's but lasted well into the 1950's and 60's. The still unsettled relation of the two quarrelling brethren has roused a feeling of animosity; it has even poisoned the atmosphere in many a university for decades.

The historical evolution of musicology in the German universities largely explains the diversity of the situation in America and Germany. Many (or perhaps most) of the American universities boast a solid and comprehensive fabric of music teaching. The programs of American music schools reach from elementary instruction through singing, instrument playing, harmony, etc., up into the regions of composition and conducting. These schools, much to the astonishment (and envy) of European spectators, have remained efficient from the time of their founding into our own days. An admirable number of illustrious names

is inextricably interwoven with the history of these institutions. When reading the endless list of professors of music in the American universities (cf. *MGG* XIII, 1118 *seq.*), the German musicologist is particularly impressed by two facts: by this abundance of well-known names and by the difficulty of distinguishing professors of "music" from those of "musicology" proper. The catalogues of the German universities show musicologists only (just as Spitta had demanded almost one century ago), apart from a few scattered musicians, the so-called "music directors."

This is a natural consequence of the historical development in both countries. Musicology proper (in the German sense) was, notwithstanding the activities of single scholars like Oscar G. Sonneck, Waldo S. Pratt, Carl Engel, and others, nonexistent in American universities well into the 20th century. A full professorship was established no earlier than 1930 for Otto Kinkeldey at Cornell and in 1933 a second one for the bearer of this Festschrift, Paul Henry Lang, at Columbia. But in the 1930's a long procession of German musicologists who had left the German universities, much to the latter's detriment, were hospitably received in the United States. Men like Curt Sachs, Erich von Hornbostel, Carl Geiringer, Erich Hertzmann, Leo Schrade, Edward Lowinsky, Manfred Bukofzer, Otto Gombosi, Hans Th. David, Gerhard Herz, Paul Nettl, and many more distinguished scholars were in due course of time appointed professors in American universities. A striking number of them came right from the headquarters of German musicology, the old Berlin University (now Humboldt University). They brought with them the heritage of German tradition in all its respects, with all its advantages and disadvantages. Small wonder that, apart from their scholarly erudition and experience, they brought with them also their unsettled relation toward music. The sudden influx of so many foreign musicologists and the speedy divulgence of a hitherto almost unknown branch of musical studies in the American universities seems to have at first caused some misgivings. In his *Harvard Dictionary of Music* Willi Apel hinted at the problem in 1944 with a few memorable sentences (p. 473):

> [All definitions] indicate the tendency to interpret musicology as a broad category of "musical science," including everything that is not clearly "practical" music (composition and performance). Thus, traditional fields of study such as harmony, counter-

> point, music history would fall under the term musicology. One might argue whether this tendency is desirable and commendable. The unfavorable reception which, on the whole, musicology has encountered since its introduction in this country some 30 years ago may well be due largely to the somewhat boastful manner in which its champions have laid claim upon fields which had an old standing of their own. Another undesirable aspect of the present situation is the fact that, owing to the very broad interpretation of the term, people have been able to call themselves "musicologists" who are not good in any musical field at all.

This seems to reflect a situation that in Germany had been engendered by history but in the United States, given a time-honored and solid structure of music teaching, had not existed prior to the immigration and expansion of German musicology. In the imported goods was hidden the worm of dissent like the snake in the bunch of bananas.

In referring to this dissent Willi Apel has indeed pointed to a weak spot of some significance to the universities of both countries. That is the question of what we mean by the term "musicology." Is it possible to restrict "musicology" to some particular fields such as history of music, history of its theory, the physical basis of music, musical folklore, music ethnology, bibliography, etc.? Can we put these fields on a par with other fields of music studies and learning such as counterpoint, conducting, etc., forming in this way a reservation where musicology may feel at home and well-screened from others where a menacing sign says: "No admittance!"? Or is musicology, as a field of scholarly learning, entitled to deal with the total of "music" (whatever this may mean)? P. H. Lang has written somewhere (I quote from Apel, *loc. cit.*): "Musicology unites in its domain all the sciences which deal with the production, appearance, and application of the physical phenomenon called sound." This agrees in principle with the definitions of *Musikwissenschaft* as laid down by its classical masters, by Friedrich Chrysander in his famous introduction to the *Jahrbuch für musikalische Wissenschaft* (I, 1863) and by Guido Adler in his fundamental article, "Umfang, Methodik und Ziel der Musikwissenschaft" in *Vierteljahrsschrift für Musikwissenschaft* (I, 1885). And it is indeed hard to understand how a field of scholarship that deals with "music" could be deprived of some of its aspects or could waive the claim to comprise the totality of the subject, even if one may question

the degree to which musicology at present is able to materialize this claim.

This seems to be the underlying problem. No sooner had musicology (in the modern sense of the word) come into being in the German universities than it began to expand into all and sundry fields connected with music—and it cannot help doing so. Totalitarianism is in the nature of any science. The inevitable consequence was, and is, that in the German universities, where practical music was just loosely installed, musicology almost superseded and thwarted music, whereas in the American universities, where music teaching is deep-rooted, the introduction of the new sphere of musical scholarship at first led to its falling out with the older citizens of the realm. On the other hand, in neither case can musicology dispense with music practice and music teaching. Here the dilemma comes to the fore: the dissenting brethren are dependent on each other although the junior by his nature must claim to have access to any field even if legally administered and dominated by his seniors. The mutual relation is more complicated than it seems at first sight.

In the long run the American universities have the better chance to surmount the hurdle because their well-founded fabric of music teaching offers a favorable prospect for fruitful cooperation. In the German universities the basis of musical practice is almost a void. Music is taught in the *Hochschulen* and conservatories, and these schools are often on bad terms with the universities. Musicology constantly runs the risk of losing the ground under its feet. Musicians and musicologists should, in both countries, bear in mind that they are bound up with music and that music's fate, in their respective countries, is their fate. The musicologist will never teach counterpoint, or conducting, or opera composition. The fear that he might do so all the same stands behind the frightening sentence of Walther Vetter (quoted above). Common sense will prevent him from interfering with tasks that need the well-trained practitioner and specialist which he is not and cannot be. On the other hand, he must be and remain privileged to engage in any sort of scholarly investigation and in teaching any given field even if it be counterpoint, or composition, or *Aufführungspraxis*, provided he deals with them under the auspices of scientific method, not with a view to technical perfection. It depends on their starting-points if musi-

cologists and musicians do or do not find the ways of cooperating in their joint aims. And here American thought and the structure of American universities clearly have the lead over their musicological ancestors.

NOTE

[1] The word "German" in this article stands for "German-speaking."

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