Interwar Symphonies and the Imagination

The symphony has long been entangled with ideas of self and value. Though standard historical accounts suggest that composers’ interest in the symphony was almost extinguished in the early 1930s, this book makes plain the genre’s continued cultural dominance, and argues that the symphony can illuminate issues around space/geography, race, and postcolonialism in Germany, France, Mexico, and the United States. Focusing on a number of symphonies composed or premiered in 1933, this book recreates some of the cultural and political landscapes of an uncertain historical moment – a year when Hitler took power in Germany and the Great Depression reached its peak in the United States. *Interwar Symphonies and the Imagination* asks what North American and European symphonies from the early 1930s can tell us about how people imagined selfhood during a period of international insecurity and political upheaval, of expansionist and colonial fantasies, scientised racism, and emergent fascism.

**EMILY MACGREGOR** is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow in the Music Department, King’s College London. She was awarded the 2019 Jerome Roche Prize of the Royal Musical Association for a distinguished article by a scholar at an early stage of their career, and previously held a Marie Curie Global Fellowship. Dr MacGregor appears regularly on BBC Radio 3.
The aim of Music in Context is to illuminate specific musical works, repertoires, or practices in historical, critical, socio-economic, or other contexts; or to illuminate particular cultural and critical contexts in which music operates through the study of specific musical works, repertoires, or practices. A specific musical focus is essential, while avoiding the decontextualization of traditional aesthetics and music analysis. The series title invites engagement with both its main terms; the aim is to challenge notions of what contexts are appropriate or necessary in studies of music, and to extend the conceptual framework of musicology into other disciplines or into new theoretical directions.

Books in the series

Simon P. Keefe, *Mozart’s Requiem: Reception, Work, Completion*
Nancy November, *Beethoven’s Theatrical Quartets: Opp. 59, 74, and 95*
Rufus Hallmark, *‘Frauenliebe und Leben’: Chaminso’s Poems and Schumann’s Songs*
Anna Zayaruznaya, *The Monstrous New Art: Divided Forms in the Late Medieval Motet*
Helen Deeming and Elizabeth Eva Leach, *Manuscripts and Medieval Song: Inscription, Performance, Context*
Emily Kilpatrick, *The Operas of Maurice Ravel*
Roderick Chadwick and Peter Hill, *Olivier Messiaen’s Catalogue d’oiseaux: From Conception to Performance*
Catherine A. Bradley, *Polyphony in Medieval Paris: The Art of Composing with Plainchant*
Daniel M. Grimley, *Delius and the Sound of Place*
Owen Rees, *The Requiem of Tomás Luis de Victoria (1603)*
Nicole Grimes, *Brahms’s Elegies: The Poetics of Loss in Nineteenth-Century German Culture*
Jane D. Hatter, *Composing Community in Late Medieval Music: Self-Reference, Pedagogy, and Practice*
Daniel Elphick, *Music behind the Iron Curtain: Weinberg and His Polish Contemporaries*
Emily MacGregor, *Interwar Symphonies and the Imagination: Politics, Identity, and the Sound of 1933*
Interwar Symphonies and the Imagination

Politics, Identity, and the Sound of 1933

EMILY MACGREGOR
King’s College London
In memory of Philip MacGregor
Contents

List of Figures [page viii]
List of Examples [ix]
Preface [xi]
Acknowledgements [xii]
List of Abbreviations [xv]

1 Between Europe and America: Kurt Weill’s Symphony in a Suitcase [1]
2 Listening for the Intimspäre in Hans Pfitzner’s Symphony in C# Minor
   Berlin [45]
3 Liberalism, Race, and the American West in Roy Harris’s Symphony 1933
   Boston – New York [83]
4 Aaron Copland’s and Carlos Chávez’s Pan-American Bounding Line
   New York – Mexico City [114]
5 Arthur Honegger’s ‘Modernised Eroica’
   Paris – Berlin [169]
6 The Right Kind of Symphonist: Florence Price and Kurt Weill

Select Bibliography [236]
Index [253]
Figures

1.1 Diego Rivera at work on his mural *Man at the Crossroads* at the Rockefeller Center, New York, 24 April 1933. [page 13]

1.2 Harry Beck’s 1931 redesign of the London tube map, released in 1933. [15]

1.3 Selective list of symphonic works composed c.1933. [20]

1.4 Front cover of the original programme for the world premiere of Kurt Weill’s Second Symphony by the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam. [39]

4.1 Photos of Victor Kraft from Aaron Copland’s 1932–3 Mexico trip album. [115]

4.2 Myron’s *Diskobolos*. Second-century copy of the lost Greek original (c.460–450 BC), with an incorrectly restored head set at the wrong angle, British Museum. [122]

4.3 Polykleitus’s *Doryphorus*. Roman Hellenistic copy (c.27 BC–AD 68) of the Greek original (c.450–440 BC), Minneapolis Institute of Arts. [127]

4.4 Kraft, Copland, and Chávez, from Copland’s 1932–3 Mexico trip album. [141]

4.5 Antinous and Hadrian. Second-century Roman marble head (Antinous) and bust (Hadrian), British Museum. [164]

6.1 Front cover of the programme booklet for the New York concert of Weill’s *Symphonic Fantasy*. [210]

viii
Examples

2.1 The opening bars of the first movement of Pfitzner’s Symphony in C# minor, as quoted in Hans Sachße, ‘Hans Pfitzner: Symphonie in cis-moll’, Zeitschrift für Musik 6 (1933): 559–61, 560. [page 61]

2.2 The motto theme: the opening four bars of the first movement of Pfitzner’s String Quartet in C# minor Op. 36. Hans Pfitzner, Quartett in cis-moll für 2 Violinen, Viola und Violoncello, opus 36 (Berlin: Adolph Fürstner Verlag, 1925). [62]

2.3 Main theme of the fourth movement, as printed in Sachße, ‘Symphonie in cis-moll’, 561. [64]

2.4 Fourth movement of Pfitzner’s String Quartet in C# minor Op. 36, figure 65 to end. Pfitzner, Quartett in cis-moll, 63. [66]

2.5 Fourth movement of Pfitzner’s Symphony in C# minor, figure 65 to end. Hans Pfitzner, Symphony cis-moll Op. 36a (London: Eulenburg, 1987), 90–1. [68]

3.1 Roy Harris, Symphony 1933, initial theme, horns and trumpets, bars 11–28. Reproduced from manuscript score (Harris Papers, box 6). [99]

3.2 Harris, Symphony 1933, rhythmic motif r1. Reproduced from manuscript score (Harris Papers, box 6). [99]

3.3 Harris, Symphony 1933, first movement, bars 174–94, violins 1 and 2. From example in Beth E. Levy, ‘Roy Harris and the Crisis of Consonance’, in Tonality 1900–1950: Concept and Practice, ed. Felix Wörner, Ullrich Scheideler, and Philip Ernst Rupprecht (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012), 247–60, 250, modified with reference to manuscript score (Harris Papers, box 6). [100]

3.4 Harris, Symphony 1933, second movement, Andante, bars 66–72. Reproduced from manuscript score (Harris Papers, box 6). [111]


4.2 Copland, Short Symphony (No. 2), movement II, bars 1–2. [123]
List of Examples

4.3 Movement II, solo flute in G with accompaniment, bars 34–8. 
Copland, Short Symphony (No. 2) (New York: Boosey and Hawkes, 1955), 30. [124]

4.4 Movement III, figure 27 and figure 28. Copland, Short Symphony (No. 2), 37–8. [125]

4.5 Melody from the chorus of 'Das gibt's nur einmal', bars 1–8. [127]

4.6 Movement III, figure 31 'Das gibt's nur einmal' theme. Copland, Short Symphony (No. 2), 43–4. [128]

4.7 Movement III, figure 48 'Das gibt's nur einmal' theme reprised. Reproduced from Copland, Short Symphony (No. 2), 62–3. [131]

4.8 Movement II, figure 18. Copland, Short Symphony (No. 2), 27. [159]

4.9 Movement II, figure 25 to end of movement (climax comes at figure 26). Copland, Short Symphony (No. 2), 34–6. [160]

5.1 Allegro marcato, bars 1–10. Arthur Honegger, Mouvement symphonique n° 3 pour orchestre (Paris: Éditions Maurice Senart, 1933), 1–3. [183]

5.2 Allegro marcato, figure 2, first eight bars, second theme. Honegger, Mouvement symphonique n° 3, 6–8. [187]

5.3 Allegro marcato, figure 16 to end of movement, reduced score showing string parts and trombones, omitting woodwinds, percussion, and other brass. Honegger, Mouvement symphonique n° 3, 46–9. [189]

5.4 Adagio, figures 17 to 18. Honegger, Mouvement symphonique n° 3, 50. [193]

5.5 Adagio, figure 20 to end. Honegger, Mouvement symphonique n° 3, 57–60. [197]
Preface

Note on the Structure
By way of initial orientation, I offer the following overview of how the book is structured. Chapter 1 is both the introduction to the tight frame around 1933 and a case study, Kurt Weill’s Symphony No. 2 (1933–4). Composed as Weill made his escape from Nazi Berlin to Paris and premiered in Amsterdam and New York, it sets up the transatlantic scope of the book. I return to Weill’s symphony in light of where the book has been in Chapter 6. In the meantime, Chapter 2 takes us back to Berlin to examine the context for Weill’s exile and the fast-changing political and musical terrain precipitated by Hitler’s rise to power. Chapters 3 and 4 are primarily set on the other side of the Atlantic, dealing with the legacies of Germanic ideals associated with the symphony in the United States and Mexico. Coming full circle, Chapter 5 then returns to Europe to trace in reverse the journey of Weill’s symphony, spotlighting a Parisian symphony premiered in Berlin. In Chapter 6, after, as promised at the outset, revisiting Weill’s symphony at its New York premiere, the book arrives at the present day. It argues for the remarkable persistence of the symphonic genre in conferring cultural and political agency. Focusing on the contemporary revival of Florence Price’s Symphony in E minor (1931–2), it also suggests the potential of symphonies from the turbulent years around 1933 to invigorate a differently dynamic symphonic landscape.

Translations
Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own.
Acknowledgements

This book could not have been completed without the support and expertise of many others; any errors or oversights, however, are mine. Several mentors shaped the work in fundamental ways. Daniel M. Grimley oversaw this project in its first incarnation, always asking the right, and most difficult, questions. Anne C. Shreffler then guided its remodelling into a book. Albrecht Riethmüller supported my research while I was based in Berlin, and Peter Franklin supervised the project’s development in its earliest stages. At Cambridge University Press, I would like to thank Kate Brett and Benedict Taylor, as well as J. P. E. Harper-Scott and Julian Rushton, former editors of Music in Context, for their thoughts and guidance. Thank you, all.

My funding came from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC); the Deutsche Akademische Austausch Dienst (DAAD); Worcester College, University of Oxford; a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellowship; and the British Academy.


Much of the research for this project was carried out in Germany and North America, and many research libraries, librarians, and archivists helped bring this book to fruition. In Berlin, I would like to thank Franziska Gulde-Druet at the Stiftung Berliner Philharmoniker and the staff at the Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung and in the newspaper department of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin for their help and advice. In the United States, I am grateful in particular to Robin.
Rausch and James Wintle at the Performing Arts Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC; to Dave Stein at the Weill-Lenya Research Center, New York; and to Suzanne Lovejoy and Richard Boursey at the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library at Yale University. Thanks also to staff at the New York Public Library, the New York Philharmonic Archives, and the Rosenthal Archives in Chicago.

I would like to extend further thanks to the staff of the Oxford University Music Faculty Library, especially Jennifer Legg, and to Liz Berndt-Morris and Kerry Masteller at Harvard Music Library. Lastly, Matt Hill kindly undertook research on my behalf in the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City.

I am grateful for particular conversations and/or correspondence over the past few years with Sarah Able, Chelsea Burns, Lucy Caplan, Christopher Chowrimootoo, Suzannah Clark, Jacob Cohen, Sarah Collins, Timothy F. Coombes, Emily I. Dolan, Grace Edgar, Naomi Graber, David Grundy, Carol A. Hess, Jonathan Hicks, Benjamin Korstvedt, Kim H. Kowalke, Carol J. Oja, Roger Parker, Frankie Perry, Hannah Ryley, Leonora Saavedra, Jürgen Schebera, Kay Kaufman Shelemay, and Christina Taylor Gibson.

The book’s core ideas were developed within a number of different intellectual communities: Oxford University Music Department; the Kluge Center at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC; the Fakultät für Musik- und Theaterwissenschaft at Freie Universität Berlin; and Harvard University Music Department. I revised the manuscript during postdocs at Royal Holloway, University of London, and King’s College London. My thanks to colleagues and friends too numerous to mention by name in those places, whose thoughts and feedback contributed to the shape of my developing arguments. Likewise, I would like to thank intellectual communities meeting at the American Musicological Society, the Royal Musical Association, the Society for American Music, and those who were part of the Hearing Landscapes Critically Network that met in Oxford, Stellenbosch, and at Harvard between 2012 and 2016.

Acknowledgements


I am indebted to Liv-Birte Buchmann, Rouven Kunstmann, Linus Schumacher, and Sebastian Wedler for consulting on my translations of German sources, and to Lola San Martín Arbide for advising on my translations from French. Spanish translations were provided by Sirio Canos Donnay and Lola San Martín Arbide, while David and Jonathan Sanchéz gave further Spanish language research support. Linda Bakkum, Anne Hillebrand, Josephine Kahn, Liselotte Snijders, and Juliana M. Pistorius tackled the Dutch materials. The musical examples that I did not put together myself were generously created by Chris May and Alexander Cowan.

Moral support and motivation came from many friends and several academic writing groups, including the online group set up by Sofie Narbed during the pandemic; the Oxford Writing Group, run by Alice Kelly; and an ad hoc group of graduate students, postdocs, and friends willing to join me in my favourite café to write together in the city in which I was based at the time. Thanks to Oliver Bennett for the many phone calls and for encouraging me to get a dog. Not that I needed much encouraging. Jakob Reckhenrich got me through the manuscript’s final stages and made me believe it was worth doing.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank my family – Heather, Frederick, and Rory – and my father, Phil, who died in 2019. ‘Just finish the book’, he would say. And also, ‘Don’t work too hard.’ I hope I’ve managed to roughly find the balance. His absence is a huge gap.
# Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berlin Philharmonic Archive</td>
<td>Stiftung Berliner Philharmoniker, Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chávez Correspondence</td>
<td>Correspondence and scores belonging to Carlos Chávez, JOB 93–4, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chávez Correspondence</td>
<td>Public Library Music Division, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coolidge Collection</td>
<td>Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copland Collection</td>
<td>Aaron Copland Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris Papers</td>
<td>Roy Harris Papers, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slonimsky Collection</td>
<td>Nicolas Slonimsky Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weill-Lenya</td>
<td>Weill-Lenya Research Center, New York</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>